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ON THE COVER UW doctoral student Sara Brown lost her leg in a smokejumping accident, but pushed onward with her recovery and is on schedule to earn her doctorate in 2011.
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UWyO
Spring 2010
Volume 11
Number 3
The Magazine for Alumni
and Friends of the
University of Wyoming

Director of Institutional
Communications
Jessica Lowell
Managing Editor
Dave Shelles

We talk a lot about energy at the University of Wyoming. As we develop our energy programs through the colleges and the School of Energy Resources, the energy we refer to is the kind that makes electricity, heats our homes and offices, and makes our vehicles run.

This issue of UWyO magazine is all about energy, but energy of a different kind: it’s the energy needed to get things done.

I suppose I am thinking that because commencement takes place in May, and we’re all reflecting on the accomplishments of our graduates as well as the accomplishments of our faculty in guiding them to their graduations.

On our cover is Sara Brown, who you will meet in one of our features. She has a remarkable story to tell of survival and perseverance. It begins on page 18.

You’ll also meet Mohammed Piri and some of the doctoral candidates who work in his lab in the College of Engineering. When he couldn’t find the machine to do what he needed for his work in petroleum engineering, he built his own. His story starts on page 36.

There are other tales of energy and accomplishment in this edition, but I will let you discover them for yourself.

Jessica Lowell
Director,
Institutional Communications

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Promo: Alumni
A mammoth skull now on museum tour

A mammoth that roamed Wyoming 11,500 years ago is going on the road.

University of Wyoming paleontologist Mark Clementz says the Columbian mammoth skull, housed in the university's Geological Museum for decades, will be part of a traveling exhibition of mammoths and mastodons. UW contributed the skull at the request of scientists at Chicago's Field Museum.

“Mammoth skull now on museum tour

We're very excited to contribute to this exhibit and view this as an opportunity to promote the quality of specimens housed in our museum as well as the quality of scientific research being carried out at the University of Wyoming," Clementz says.

The preparators at the Field Museum will clean and repair the skull and tusks so that not only will they be showroom quality, they will also be in better shape for long-term curation," he adds.

The specimen will be displayed through September 6 at the Field Museum. The exhibition is then scheduled to be displayed through March 2014 at several museums: The Museum of Natural Science in Houston, Texas; Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, New Jersey; the Anchorage Museum in Alaska; Boston's Museum of Science; the Denver Museum of Nature & Science; and London's Natural History Museum.

Different names, better programs

A college and an academic program have changed their names to better reflect changes in the interests of their students.

The College of Agriculture announced in December that it will be known as the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The African-American Studies department, housed within the College of Arts and Sciences, will go forward as the African-American and Diaspora Studies department.

Dean Frank Galey heard favorable comments about renaming the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at meetings around the state and from commodity groups. Galey also polled college faculty members and academic professionals. More than 90 percent approved the change in name.

“Our agriculture is completely interwoven into natural resource issues important to the state and its land and people,” says Galey. “The college name change will help attract students and other interested folks, who are passionate about the land and rural communities, but may not have seen themselves under a more traditional name and rubric.”

In A&S, department head Tracey Patton says the experience of black people in the world extends far beyond African-Americans, thus it became necessary for the department to adjust its curriculum and its mission to that fact.

“We add the word ‘diaspora,’ that opens up the breadth that you can offer within an African-American studies program,” she says. “You can have classes that are Caribbean in nature, that are East African in nature, that are West African in nature, or U.S. Southern in nature. Since then we've had many more people attracted to the program, who otherwise might not have been.”

Follow Beck at twitter.com/butterbob

Beck earns honor from Washington Post

There won't be a plaque with his latest journalism award, but Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck says he's just honored.

Chris Cillizza, who writes a Web log about politics for The Washington Post, published a list of the best political journalists in each state late in 2009. Beck was the only reporter listed for Wyoming.

"It was surprising, maybe a little embarrassing, but at the same time it's nice that I got nominated for it, that someone thought I was doing a good job," Beck says.

Cillizza, who calls his blog The Fix, writes that his goal was to compile the list of the nation's best political journalists in advance of the 2010 midterm elections so readers would know whose work to follow as the campaigns go on.

This year marked Beck's 25th consecutive year covering the Wyoming Legislature, a job that caught him more or less by surprise. He started out in radio in his native Illinois, then moved to Sheridan, Wyoming, to do news and sports, followed by a stint at Laramie's KOWB in the same capacity, though he did cover Laramie issues at the Capitol. In 1988, about to take another job, Beck received a call from Wyoming Public Radio about a new opening. He became KUWR's news director, a position he's had ever since.

Beck says he is excited to contribute to this exhibit and view this as an opportunity to promote the quality of specimens housed in our museum as well as the quality of scientific research being carried out at the University of Wyoming," Clementz says.

"They came to us because our mammoth skull is special—it's a complete skull with lower jaw and tusks that came from a well-preserved specimen of a large individual," says Clementz, an assistant professor in the department of geology and geophysics. "It will make an impressive display.

UW geology professor Brainerd Mears Jr. recovered the skull in 1961 at a bog deposit near Rawlins in Carbon County, Wyoming. Radiocarbon dating indicates it is about 11,500 years old.
Conference attracts girls to science

Shawna McBride didn’t have anything like the Women in Science Conference when she was younger, so she’s making sure aspiring female scientists have a conference of their own. The associate director of the Wyoming NASA Space Grant Consortium is the coordinator of the Women in Science Conference, which took place in the Yellowstone Ballroom of the University of Wyoming May 11. Originally sponsored and hosted by the National Weather Service in Cheyenne, Wyoming, the conference began in 1999 and has grown each year. The conference drew $50 in the first year and $10 in 2009. Panelists include scientists from Wyoming Game and Fish, doctors, dentists and engineers, among others.

“Last year we started doing a career panel to get more professional women involved, because I think it’s hard for them to put on a full hour of a hands-on workshop,” McBride says. “So we had a really good turnout for that. Several women from Laramie and Cheyenne came and sat on the career panel—doctors, dentists, obstetricians, an eye doctor, [several] people from Game and Fish and some engineers.” McBride says she can show the next generation of female scientists the opportunities offered at UW.

“It’s a great opportunity for young women to come to the university, learn about some career possibilities, get some hands-on experience with science, get exposed to all the different possibilities there are in science,” she says. “I don’t think people realize there’s a lot of neat research that goes on. There are people who study polar bears in Alaska and birds down in Chile, so there are all kinds of opportunities.”

Find more information about Women in Science 2010 at wyomingspacegrant.uwyo.edu.

Mead joins UW trustees

Brad Mead’s ties to the University of Wyoming got stronger last spring. The Jackson, Wyoming, lawyer and rancher, who was appointed to UW’s Board of Trustees by Gov. Dave Freudenthal, is the grandson of former Wyoming governor and U.S. Senator Cliff Hansen, and is following in his grandfather’s footsteps.

“My grandfather was on the board of trustees, and he told me that was one thing in his life that he most enjoyed,” Mead says. “So I guess in the back of my mind I thought that would be great.” Mead earned his undergraduate degree from UW in 1981, then returned to UW to earn his law degree in 1986. He says he feels his goals for the six-year term are in line with what the rest of the board has in mind.

“I want to improve relations between the university and community colleges, advance our expertise in energy and mineral development, and to continue what I really think is a trend that started way before I got there, that of amazing academic excellence, including great faculty,” he says. “It seems like it would be a missed opportunity not to advance the university by leaps and bounds, given the great position it has in terms of its peer group in other states.”

Mead currently serves on the College of Agriculture’s advisory board, and that term ends this year. He is a partner in the law firm of Mead & Mead, along with his wife, Kate, a 1987 UW graduate.

UW earns national acclaim

National media have taken notice of the University of Wyoming in recent years, both for its affordability and its quality of life.

This year, Forbes.com honored UW as one of its best colleges. UW is listed 17th among “America’s Best Public Colleges” in rankings released recently by Forbes.com. Additionally, Forbes.com—the online home for Forbes magazine, Forbes Global magazine, and Forbes FYI magazine—ranked UW fifth among its “America’s Best College Buys.”

UW Provost Myron Allen noted people should be skeptical of oversimplified college rankings.

“Still, it’s gratifying to see that UW scores well when rated on factors we regard as meaningful, like satisfaction with teaching, graduates’ success and graduation rates,” he said.

This isn’t the first time UW has made it into a national set of rankings. In 2003, Outside magazine rated UW No. 34 on a list of the 40 best campuses for outdoor recreation. Barron’s Best Buys in College Education ranked UW among the top four-year institutions in its fifth edition.

In addition, UW now participates in the Voluntary System of Accountability, which is designed to improve public understanding of how the university functions, and help prospective students and their parents have a valuable tool to compare colleges and universities and decide which is best for them. UW’s profile can be found at www.collegeportraits.org/WY/UW.

ASUW helps count Laramie

The federal government declared April 1 Census Day, but getting an accurate count of Laramie’s population is no joke.

So the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming joined with the City of Laramie to make sure everyone in Laramie will be counted. ASUW Director of Policy Planning C.J. Young says the community and university stand to gain quite a bit by having an accurate count of the city’s population. It’s estimated that 30 percent of Laramie’s population was not counted in the 2000 census.

“Basically what it amounted to is $800 per person per year lost for the city of Laramie. When you talk about the number of people we have, that’s a lot of money,” he says. “Part of it is federal money. Some of it is also state money, because the state awards matching grants based on population. But a lot of it is federal money. That kind of money goes to roads, hospitals, supporting local law enforcement.”

ASUW helped with that 2000 census, but Young says this time around student government got involved much earlier and with greater intensity. Young took his position in the fall and started work immediately on the count. ASUW formed a standing committee and joined with the city in its census efforts.
While the University of Wyoming men’s Nordic Ski club team secured its second consecutive Division II United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSSA) National Championship, the UW women’s team hoped more modestly for winning the final team relay event. The Cowgirls did that and more, winning a second straight national title as well.

They needed everything to go right for them on the competition’s final day in late January at Black Mountain near Rumford, Maine, for the team to win its fifth USCSSA national title since 2003. The UW Cowboys have won three championships in that same time.

The UW women were third in the overall standings heading into the final 15km team relay, trailing leader St. Olaf College by 14 points and runner-up Whitman College by eight points. The team hoped only to catch Whitman College and settle for national runner-up.

The Cowgirls won the relay by 15 seconds, but because St. Olaf slipped into fourth, the Cowgirls had the points to win the overall title by a single point over Whitman.

“For a team that just wanted to win the relay, wow! They surpassed our expectations. They really, really showed a lot of heart,” UW coach Christi Boggs says.

By winning half the men’s events during the week, the Cowboys dominated the field. Evgeniy Panzhinskiy of Khabaravsk, Russia, tied for first in the overall individual points standings, while Eliah Pedersen of Lander, Wyoming, was fifth. Daniel Lewis of Jackson, Wyoming was seventh and John Kirlin of Casper, Wyoming, was ninth. UW was the only team with four members in the overall top 10.

The Cowgirls were the only club with three members in the top 10—Gracey Lewis of Jackson, Wyoming tied for second, Gwynn Barrows of Laramie was sixth, and Marie Cartwright of Lander, Wyoming, placed seventh overall.

The UW law school’s moot court team of Temple Stevenson, Maryt Fredrickson, and Christiney Marrins finished second nationally in the Pace Environmental Law Competition in New York City in February. The same trio made the quarterfinal round of the same competition in February 2009.

Rey Fuentes earned yet another academic honor. The senior from Evanston, Wyoming, received a Marshall Scholarship to study comparative politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science beginning next fall. He was one of 35 students from around the United States to earn this prestigious honor.

Ed Barbier helped source an article in *Time* magazine’s March 6, 2010 issue. The article assesses the importance of putting real economic value on components of nature to help protect the environment and promote biodiversity. He also contributed to an article in *Science News* on reversing biodiversity declines.
The Flower Girls
UW Physical Plant

(left to right)
Samantha Thomas
Sara Primus
Ava Bell
Courtney Skinner
Charity Thomas

Photo by Ted Brummond
Jeffery Dannemiller

Jeffery Dannemiller of Cody, Wyoming, carries with him a rare honor—one that might help him rise to the top of the United States Army.

A senior in UW’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, he earned the No. 1 cadet ranking based on his performance during training and testing at the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC), which took place at Fort Lewis in Washington state. Being recognized as the top performer in a regiment is a significant achievement and places Dannemiller among the top Army ROTC cadets in the nation.

It also helps Dannemiller determine his own direction within the Army.

“The thing it really helps is my assessment. You get assessed for how your grade-point average is, what you did on campus throughout your three years in ROTC, and another big chunk of it is how you did at Warrior Forge. All those go into points, and then you get ranked again on a national level. They choose your branch from there. That’s what all that means—getting what you want in the Army,” says Dannemiller, who wants to go into infantry.

The 29-day course, also known as Operation Warrior Forge, is Army ROTC’s capstone training and assessment exercise. Cadets at Warrior Forge are tested on their physical stamina, endurance, ability to navigate over difficult terrain, and their team-building and leadership skills. Every cadet in an ROTC program must take Warrior Forge at some point; Dannemiller says most of the cadets in his regiment were seniors-to-be, though some cadets go through Warrior Forge after graduating.

The criminal justice major was presented an engraved sword at a July 27 ceremony at Fort Lewis.

Wyoming’s ROTC program originated as the Cowboy Battalion, founded in 1891. After the Army established ROTC in 1916, UW’s unit was one of the first seven established. Among the more well-known ROTC alumni are former Vice President Dick Cheney, former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson and former Chief of Staff of the United States Army Peter Schoomaker.

Dannemiller’s family military service includes one grandfather who served in the U.S. Marine Corps and another grandfather who served in the U.S. Navy. Dannemiller spent a year and a half in the U.S. National Guard as a medic but determined it wasn’t for him. “That’s when he discovered ROTC. Being in the military is something I’ve wanted to do since I was very young,” he says. “I didn’t know exactly what routes I was going to take, but when I came to UW, I saw the posters for the ROTC program, and I decided I wanted to be an Army officer.”

Upon graduation, a master’s from Northwestern University, and a bachelor’s from Kent State University—has focused her research on how all media must adapt to a changing media landscape in the 21st century. Thanks to the World Wide Web and its 24-hour news cycle, newspapers need to embrace alternative ways to tell the stories of their communities.

Lawson-Borders says she didn’t have time to ponder such things against the daily grind of putting out a newspaper. “I had not really thought about that way, because at a newspaper you have daily deadlines,” she says. “What my research has looked at is media management, how we manage as organizations, and how we use technology, particularly the Internet and its related technologies. Some days in the newsroom you’d be, ‘I’d really like to think about this someday, but right now I have a deadline.’”

Now firmly ensconced in academe, Lawson-Borders gets to think about a lot of things in a lot of different ways, from assisting with departmental concerns to promoting the research her departments are doing.

“Administration is completely different from teaching, because you have to look at everything, and not just your one area,” she says. “Now it’s about the entire college and university. That’s the biggest change.”

Gracie Lawson-Borders

Gracie Lawson-Borders

Given that asking questions drives higher education, former journalist Gracie Lawson-Borders is uniquely qualified for her position as associate dean in the University of Wyoming’s College of Arts and Sciences.

“I tell people the journalist in me never dies,” she says. “It’s always there, always asking questions.”

Lawson-Borders came to UW in 2006 on a joint appointment for the college’s department of communication and journalism and African-American studies after 14 years in the newspaper business as well as appointments at Kent State University and Southern Methodist University. She served as a reporter and editor at the Akron (Ohio) Beacon-Journal, the Oakland (Michigan) Press and the Chicago Tribune. She was director of the African-American studies department for three years while also serving as an associate professor in communication and journalism.

As associate dean, Lawson-Borders oversees biological sciences, fine arts, humanities and mathematical sciences. She also oversees two support units: fine arts outreach and cultural programs. Like a good journalist, Lawson-Borders says learning about her new responsibilities is only a matter of making a phone call.

“When you get a chance, you call up the department head, and either they’ll fill you in or they’ll refer you to someone in the department who knows about a particular topic,” she says. “Then you go and come away with a whole new appreciation for what your colleagues are doing. You keep getting this insight.

“One of the things I hold on to from being a journalist is you ask questions, and you find things out. If you stayed open-minded and asked questions, you’d always find out something you didn’t know. I treat this role in the same way. That is a part of what journalism does for you—it makes you curious all the time. I feel that’s one quality I brought to the academy—the curiosity that goes with research. We may have been doing it in a different way to put out a paper or do a broadcast production, but you still have to do the legwork to figure out what was going on.”

Lawson-Borders—who has a doctorate from Wayne State (Michigan) University, and a master’s from Northwestern University, and a bachelor’s from Kent State University—has focused her research on how all media must adapt to a changing media landscape in the 21st century. Thanks to the World Wide Web and its 24-hour news cycle, newspapers need to embrace alternative ways to tell the stories of their communities.

Lawson-Borders says she didn’t have time to ponder such things against the daily grind of putting out a newspaper.

“I had not really thought about it that way, because at a newspaper you have daily deadlines,” she says. “What my research has looked at is media management, how we...
Will Ross

After more than a decade of working behind the scenes with musicians in and around Laramie, Will Ross played the headliner in May. The University of Wyoming hosted an art exhibit featuring his works in oil, watercolor and print making.

Ross says he is interested in the ability of everyday people to organize cooperatively and help one other in ways that contribute to the community. While Ross says his art comments on the ways media, technology, and industry can create disconnects within communities, he also contends his renderings of the photographs, sometimes overlaying the mythic onto the everyday.

In 1999, Ross began working as a live sound technician for ASTEC, a UW organization that provides sound and technical support for UW events. He later spent two years as ASTEC coordinator. After earning a bachelor's degree in secondary social studies education, Ross continued to work with musicians and venues in the area. Realizing he could earn a living pursuing interests he loves, he returned to school for a bachelor of fine arts degree.

“I was making money doing what I wanted to be doing, but I wasn’t using any of my academic training,” he says. “I thought that I should probably go back to school and do what I really want, which is making art and remaining creative.”

Since returning for his BFA, Ross has remained creative musically. As part of a collaborative project, he and fellow UW student Adrian Molina contributed four songs to Papers, a 2009 film chronicling undocumented youth in the United States as they reach legal adult status and attempt to enter the workforce.

Will admits to a touch of butterflies about his first solo exhibit but says he is excited.

“We’re our own worst critics. Sometimes it’s good to keep your self-criticisms silent,” he says. “It’s a whole new concept for me to be public about my expression.”

Mark Branch

On a Friday night in January, second-year wrestling coach Mark Branch brought the University of Wyoming team into a dual match at the Arena-Auditorium in Laramie, taking on the Oklahoma State Cowboys.

That UW hosted a home meet against the then-No. 5 team in the country was a big enough accomplishment, as multiple-time national champion teams don’t travel for matches against unranked opponents. That UW hosted the meet in the 15,000-seat Arena-Auditorium (the wrestlers usually host home meets at the UniWyo Sports Complex) shows the direction Branch wants to take the wrestling program.

“I want to build a wrestling tradition here, a big-time wrestling tradition,” Branch says. “I want to build a program that’s expected to produce All-Americans and NCAA champions year in and year out. Obviously the ultimate goal would be to win a national championship as a team.”

“I also want to build the popularity of wrestling here. I want to build up our fan support and I think we’ve done that in the first year that we’ve been here. The crowd we had [against Oklahoma State] was spectacular, but we can do better than that. We’re looking to bring big events to Laramie every year and really get people excited about wrestling here.”

If anybody can take UW to wrestling’s Promised Land, it’s Branch. He spent 16 years at Oklahoma State, covering his undergraduate years and 11 years as top assistant coach under two-time Olympic gold medalist John Smith. Branch was a four-time All-American and a two-time national champion at 167 pounds before joining Smith’s staff; Oklahoma State won four team championships in Branch’s 11 years on staff.

Already Branch has made an impact. UW won the Western Wrestling Conference championship in 2009 and 2010. Sophomore Nick LeBlanc earned All-American honors at 184 pounds both seasons, UW’s first All-American since 1996. Still, Branch says UW has a long way to go to get to where he wants to take the wrestling program.

“A guy from Wyoming sent me the history of Oklahoma State wrestling and a history of Wyoming wrestling. The history of Oklahoma State wrestling takes up about five pages, and the history of Wyoming wrestling takes up one,” he says. “Obviously they’re on two different playing fields when it comes to that, but I think wrestling, a sport the people of Wyoming can embrace and be excited about.”

LeBlanc says that excitement is evident already. The meet against Oklahoma State drew 2,500 fans to the A-A, a record crowd for a UW wrestling meet.

Between the crowd and the formidable opponent, the wrestlers could have been intimidated, but LeBlanc says that was reason enough for them to step up their game. Indeed, six of UW’s nine individual match losses were decided by five points or fewer.

That night in January, Oklahoma State, which has won 34 national championships in wrestling, defeated UW 31-3. Branch shook hands with his mentor and friend, Smith, after the meet, unhappy with the result but looking ahead to a day when UW might be the spitting image of Oklahoma State.
Brown always knew she wanted to do something in the outdoors having to do with the environment. She grew up in Oakridge, Oregon, a logging town 39 miles southeast of Eugene in the Cascade Range, where she hiked, camped, cycled, and ran. So it stood to reason that her occupation kept her active.

“Going back to the hometown—which, I think, is where everybody builds some character—that was one of the only jobs, to fight fires,” she says. “You graduate high school, and if you’re lucky you go to college, and if you’re luckier you get a firefighting job. I was in both categories—the lucky and the luckier—and I really enjoyed it.”

Brown earned her undergraduate degree in environmental science from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. She spent her summers fighting fires in Oregon, and on graduation, with the question of what to do hanging over her, she turned to firefighting. Given her yen for physical activity, her academic work studying the effects of wildfires on the ecosystem near her hometown, and her experience fighting fires, it was a natural fit.

Brown’s first job out of college put her in Cedar City, Utah, monitoring the high desert around Zion National Park. She joined a helicopter crew, which is different from smokejumping in that the crew fights fires on the ground while using the helicopter as a means to get from fire to fire. She traveled throughout the West on the helicopter crew and met smokejumpers, who planted the seeds for her future as a firefighter.

“They were all the same—very interesting people,” Brown says. “Some of them were well-educated, others barely graduated high school, but all of them had something interesting or special about them. They told me, ‘You should come try it, you’d totally fit in, you should do it.’ I guess it must have stuck.”

The first thing she did was join what’s called a hot shot crew, a 20-person hand crew that spends months on end fighting the big fires around the country. It’s a prerequisite for becoming a smokejumper as many of the skills translate—mainly the courage to go in to the largest, hottest fires to protect land and life. After a season of that, Brown applied to be a smokejumper.

That application was submitted to the chagrin of Ben Krupski. The Casper, Wyoming, native crossed paths with Brown in 2002 when both were working in Pocatello, Idaho. Brown was nursing a sprained ankle and working dispatch while Krupski worked on an engine crew. One day, he went to the dispatch center to file some paperwork and noticed

From 100 feet in the air, smokejumper Sara Brown hit the New Mexico earth with a thud.

Immediately the pain shot through her body, starting with her shattered right leg and radiating from there. “I screamed bloody murder,” she said of the moments after impact. Her co-workers ran to her side, radioing for help and doing what they could to comfort her. Brown finally heard the rescue helicopter coming and breathed a sigh of relief through her tears. Still, she didn’t pass out from the pain, and she wanted medication. “And the helicopter radios to us that it can’t land,” Brown says. “It’s too hot, it’s too high in elevation, we can’t land. Well, we can land but we won’t be able to get back off the ground.” So the helicopter flies away, and there I lie in the dirt with my jumper buddies. Well, what do we do?” Brown thought about all she’d accomplished to become one of 20 female smokejumpers in a pool of 450 nationwide. And she thought about her upcoming doctoral program in ecology at Colorado State University, under the tutelage of professor Ingrid Burke. Indeed, what do you do?
“There’s always an underlying fear, I suppose. It makes it exciting. When you make it, you feel elation and those endorphins are going. You fight the fire, you’re tired. Then you get back in the plane and do it again.”
me. That’s not the norm; we usually are flying away from each other. Meanwhile, we’re dropping really fast, faster than normal, and eventually we collide. His body hits my para-chute, it collapses my chute, and when that happens you fall.”

After the first helicopter determined it couldn’t do the job, another helicopter came by, downloaded enough fuel to land and take off again, and took Brown to the hospital in Silver City. Doctors in Fort Collins determined her injuries were too severe for them to treat, so the next stop was El Paso, Texas, roughly 150 miles southeast of Silver City. From the time she hit the ground to the time she was admitted to a hospital in El Paso, six hours had passed.

Near the Continental Divide between Montana and Idaho, after learning of the accident, Krupski got in motion immediately. Based in Island Park, Idaho, a half-hour south of West Yellowstone, Montana, he worked on an engine team there, and was conducting fire training when his radio-cracked with some bad news. Fortunately, the insular world of wildland firefighting allowed Krupski an inside track to information.

“It was an aircraft out of McCall that they jumped out of, and so it happened that the pilot knew I was dating Sara, and she knew my brother, who also is a smokejumper and sister-in-law as well,” Krupski said. “When the pilot landed, she called my sister-in-law and told her what she knew, and my sister-in-law got that information to me.”

With this news, training was done for the day, and Krupski made some phone calls and arranged to meet Brown at the hospital in El Paso. He says a bag was packed for him and he was on the plane in short order. Nothing prepared him for the shock of his arrival at the hospital hours later.

“That was actually the toughest part of the whole thing,” he says. “You get the information of what it is, and at that point you’re already saying shit. It’s going to be bad. I couldn’t even approach the bed. There were so many machines hooked up to her.”

Four days after arriving at the hospital, Brown woke up. The diagnosis was dire: She broke every bone in her right leg, broke her right wrist, and severely injured her left ankle. On a scale of 1 to 10, she says, her right ankle was a 9.8, nearly the worst it could be. Her right wrist was so injured she had she’d the most goal-directed person you would ever meet.”

Fortunately, smokejumping left Brown in excellent physical condition, and her recovery progressed to the point where she started her graduate work in Fort Collins in the fall semester in 2007. Flat on her back in a reclining wheelchair, and with her mother pushing her, Brown helped Burke teach and grade papers for a freshman biology course. “The students in that class didn’t whine very much,” Burke says. “For instance, I had one guy who broke his finger and didn’t come to class for a couple weeks. I always have my graduate students go after the freshmen who aren’t coming to class. They call them on the phone because freshmen can have disasters and disappear and nobody knows they’re gone. Sara called him repeatedly to get him to come to class.”

Finally, he comes in and says, ‘I broke my finger, I couldn’t make it to class.’ He’s looking right at her. I was right there, too. She was lying there and says, ‘I feel your pain.’”

The rest of 2007 and much of 2008 were spent going to class, doing research, rehabilitating her leg, and seeing Krupski when he could make the trip from his home base in Island Park, Idaho. There still was a major decision to be made in late 2008. During the summer, while on crutches, Brown conducted field research near Red Feather Lakes in Colorado. Originally, Brown tried to jury-rig a cart with her equipment and provisions, but it was nearly impossible to control the cart and herself on the rugged terrain. So Burke sent her daughter, Mia, to help out on the logistically difficult research.

“Mia carried about a 40-pound backpack filled with water. We would use a little water at each site, and by the end of the day she’d have no weight,” Brown says. “She was my mule and my entertainment, and I’m sure I provided her some entertainment, falling over on crutches. She gave me a new perspective on things I have to do every day. I couldn’t even approach the bed. There were so many machines hooked up to her.”

In the summer of 2009, with the help of a prosthetic and her father, Brown returned back to the field to continue her research of the previous summer. She also consulted a prosthetist with the aim of being active regardless of the activity. A little less than a year later, she has an entire arsenal of legs—five, to be exact. “If you’d thought about what [Brown] had been through and what she was doing you’d be overwhelmed, but on a day-to-day basis, being with some who’s consistent, thoughtful, has ambition, gets things done, and is well-organized, it was a pretty amazing experience,” Burke says. “It became impossible for [Mia] to feel like she had so many excesses in her life that made it too hard for her to do things, which is how the way teenagers want to feel. I have too much to do, I can’t get that done, life is too hard for me, how can I balance all these important things I have to do? Sara has been a real role model.”

Between trips to the Red Feather Lakes, Brown continued her rehabilitation. She says her doctor in Fort Collins took an experimental approach, trying different methods just to see what might work. “The scientist in Brown found the whole process fascinating.”

“The technology is amazing, though. It doesn’t feel like I have a prosthetic on unless I stop and think about it. Or I walk down stairs. Walking up the
East meets the West as UW continues its involvement with China

by Dave Shelles

What strikes you most about Brown is her spirit, her attitude, and her determination, none of which suffered in the wake of a horrific accident. She’s on schedule to earn her doctorate December 2011, and after that there are options. She’s been in contact with her jumping buddies with the U.S. Forest Service, which has consulted with her on changes to smokejumping protocol. She’s also looking into post-doctoral positions at colleges around the West, the better to be within driving distance of Krupski.

But she has hit a couple of low points, Brown says. One was immediately after the accident, when there was a slight chance she might not walk again. All it took were some positive words from a nurse at the Fort Collins Trauma Center.

“I get to Fort Collins and I had a nurse say to me, ‘There’s no doubt in my mind, you’re going to walk. All you have to do is cut your legs off, and you can run,’” Brown says. “At the time, there was some sort of a race going on with amputees, and she turned on the TV, and there were runners there. I said, ‘You know what, she’s right.’ That comment just turned me around.

The next low point came just after her foot was amputated, but again, it didn’t last long. Facing another operation, surgeons warned her they might have to amputate above her knee because of an infection. That would mean another bout of rehabilitation, and it inspired much second-guessing.

“In the back of my mind I’m thinking, ‘Why am I so selfish to cut off my leg just because I want to run?’ I should have just fused my ankle, which was the other option, and been happy walking, hiking, biking,” Brown says. “I was really kicking myself for about a month or so, thinking I’d made the wrong choice. The people around me were saying, ‘You made the right choice, just hold on, you’re going to be fine.’ I wouldn’t believe them.

“I had another operation where they were going to do the revised amputation, but when I woke up from surgery there was no revision. He was able to remove the infection and stitch it back up. At that point I was like, ‘It’s going my way again. I’m going to be fine. I can run.’”

Burke says she’s not surprised Brown has come through the experience like a champion. Her orientation toward goals is what spurred her into smokejumping and into her studies in environmental science, so it stands to reason that being goal-driven helped get her through her rehabilitation.

“What makes her really special and different is that she didn’t let what happened hold her back from what she really wanted to do,” Burke says. “She can see ahead and be optimistic when things are unimaginably bad. After she got that leg removed and had an infection was as low as I’ve seen her. But she was still focused on, ‘when I get my leg and I’m running again.’ She has more determination than anyone I’ve ever known.”

Krupski saw that determination, too. During the holiday break last December, he and Brown went to Nepal and Tibet for three weeks, hiking mile after mile and camping at the base of the world’s highest peaks.

“On the one-year anniversary of her amputation, we did a 10-mile hike in the Himalayas,” he says. “That right there speaks volumes about her. She’s truly amazing, definitely a role model for so many people.”

“It can be done,” Brown says. “It’s just a matter of relearning how to live. If you can be patient, you can do anything.”
In 2002, University of Wyoming music professor Theresa Bogard was in China and needed a place to practice the piano for a performance she was to give while she was there. Shanghai University student Yu Zhang had a key to a rehearsal space that contained the only grand piano on campus, and he had one request.

“After her rehearsal, I asked if I could play something for her,” Zhang says. “I played ‘Ballade in G Minor’ by Frederic Chopin for her. She heard me playing and we talked for about 15 minutes. I played that piece again that night during the party. Afterward, she gave me her folder and her card and told me to keep in touch.”

Before long, Bogard had a new student, and UW had another connection with China.

The chance encounter between Yu and Bogard perfectly illustrates one of UW’s greatest accomplishments: Building a relationship with China through its institutes of higher learning. Anne Alexander, UW’s director of international programs, says UW has formal agreements with 10 universities in China, most notably Shanghai University and Shanghai Normal University. The relationships extend across all colleges and all departments, from Bogard’s encounter with a talented young pianist to the petroleum engineering department’s alliance with China University of Petroleum in Shandong Province.

Bogard and Zhang’s story points out how most of the UW-China connections get started. One professor sees a need for international interaction, and makes it happen, through a faculty exchange or a student exchange. During the 2008–09 school year, the student councils from Shanghai Normal and Shanghai Universities observed ASUW in action, and ASUW President Kelsey Day and Vice President Jonathon McBride spent time in China as well. In October, UW vocal group The Happy Jacks made a cultural trip to Shanghai and Shanghai Normal universities, and performed several shows for the 60th anniversary celebrations of Shanghai Normal.

Alexander says Yan Zhang, UW’s lecturer in Chinese, will take students to an intensive basic language camp at Shanghai University this summer. For several summers, Zhang has arranged for UW students to study Chinese in immersion
Courses in China.

“Mandarin must be practiced and used in context,” Alexander says. “We’re really happy we’re able to get students over there to do that, even if they’re studying a discipline completely not related to Mandarin. They get good experience.”

The relationships with China extend well beyond intensive language study, too. Naturally, both countries face challenges in energy, including how to burn coal cleanly, thus UW has connected with China University of Petroleum, which Alexander describes as China’s answer to Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

There also are relationships in agriculture, environmental issues, the arts, and international studies. International studies lecturer Yarong Jiang Ashley came to UW from Shanghai University and has helped foster connections with that university. Because of the relations Ashley has nurtured, students can travel with her on a faculty-led program every other summer on a course called “Shanghai: Past and Present.”

These connections have stood the test of time, Walter says, as more faculty members have gotten on board.

“What we find in these kinds of contacts—generally faculty makes the contact to a particular university, and they’ll ask the faculty members to come here, and it’s usually enthusiastic,” Walter says. “But when that faculty member is gone or loses interest, there goes the relationship. So these are much more extensive relationships that we have, and hopefully they’ll be ongoing. They involve more than one faculty member in more than one department.”

Under Walter, who has been the dean of UW’s largest college since 1989, UW’s relationships with China have expanded dramatically and will continue to expand. Walter is the chair of the international education steering committee, and he says the committee is not only committed to increasing the number of faculty exchanges in China but growing the international student population as well.

The current academic plan started with this year and goes through 2014, and the goal is to have 700 international students by the end of the plan; currently 652 students from other nations are enrolled at UW. Walter estimates more than a third of those students are from China. Indeed, there are 145 students from China enrolled at UW, and 113 of them are graduate students. Alexander says 30 faculty members from China are teaching at UW as well.

“We have our Shanghai connections—and we have a lot of students from there—because we’ve worked at them a long time,” he says. “Now that everybody’s visible on the Web, it’s possible for more people to learn about us. We have a lot of students from Suzhou, which is a town of probably half a million people about 50 miles from Shanghai. I have 50 Chinese students in my class and I’ll bet a third of them are from Suzhou. That’s just word of mouth. Some people start coming to Wyoming, and then they talk to other people.”

Word of mouth is one of the best ways to build a business, and it’s helped UW build its relationships with China’s institutes of higher learning. But if it weren’t for the positive experiences of students, there would be no word of mouth between UW students from China and potential students.

Zhang, for one, says he hasn’t felt much

“It had no doubt at all that the relationship would grow. Everybody, especially America, gets so much good out of Asia…. I’ve always had the feeling that the relationship is good.”

—Winberg Chai
in the way of culture shock. He says he’s from a smaller town in Sichuan Province, in southwestern China near Tibet, so it wasn’t hard to adjust to Laramie. Furthermore, with Shanghai University located more than 1,000 miles from Sichuan, Zhang was used to being a long way from home.

“Surprisingly, it didn’t feel like a big, big change from China to America,” he says. “To be honest, both are big countries and are kind of counterparts.”

“On the other hand, the physical things, like things we use... I was surprised that Americans use the same toothpaste and shampoo as the Chinese,” he says, laughing. “I didn’t see much good out of Asia… I’ve always had the feeling that we better, and on the other side, to help American people to know Chinese people.”

Alexander takes a harder line on the importance of engaging with China.

“You ignore China at your peril,” Alexander says. “We would ill-equip our students if we said it was too far or too expensive or whatever to engage China. We would do a terrible disservice to our students. We’d do a disservice to our faculty if we didn’t promote the effort they’ve put forth for their research and their teaching exchanges. This is a university. This is what we do.”

Walter says between China’s rapidly growing economy and its steadily growing population, it’s an essential experience for UW students to study abroad in the Far East.

“China is the cutting edge these days. I read that they’ve increased their exports by 50 percent over the last year. It’s simply a huge market, and you’ve got 1 billion people there,” he says. “From a university’s perspective, to get our students to study abroad in China, or anywhere else for that matter, is kind of an eye-opening experience for them. It’s part of a liberal arts education.”

Chai sits back and looks at these connections like a proud father. Twenty-one years after he took his delegation to China, the relationship is as strong as ever.

“I had no doubt at all that the relationship would grow,” he says. “Everybody, especially America, gets so much good out of Asia… I’ve always had the feeling that the relationship is good.”

The Happy Jacks, a UW vocal ensemble, tour Shanghai and perform at concerts with one country or another, but I think it’s good that
Building a pipeline to better research

Thanks to a University of Wyoming program designed to bolster biomedical research, Mike Hautala had the consummate college experience, and then some. The 44-year-old Rock Springs, Wyoming, resident transferred two years ago from Western Wyoming College to study physiology. He did that, published an abstract, worked in four different laboratories, and even served as team manager for the UW wrestling team.

An award from the National Institutes of Health assures the program will bring many more students down his path.

The program, called INBRE, recently received $16.0 million from the National Institutes of Health. The award will support faculty and student research in the area of biomedical science, and establish a pipeline of students in biomedical fields from Wyoming’s seven community colleges to UW.

Overall, it’s a major victory both for UW and its INBRE program (see “Alphabet Soup” on page 35), an eight-year initiative to foster research in biomedical issues.

“It’s a great program that needs to be supported,” Hautala says. “It brings in lots of outside money for researchers to come in for the INBRE projects, but it provides a great opportunity for Wyoming students to be involved in research.”

Part of this particular initiative from NIH is right up UW’s alley—funneling research dollars to states that don’t have to obtain extramural funding on a routine basis to support faculty and student research in the area of biomedical science, and establish a pipeline of students in biomedical fields from Wyoming’s seven community colleges to UW.

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Another teacher suggested that I should try doing research in Dr. Seville’s lab. That’s when I first became interested in research, and that’s when I got focused on my career goals."

\[48x373\]

In fact, Smith credits Casper College biology professor Will Robinson for sending him in the direction of research, though he says Seville helped him out as well.

\[59x438\]

For Hautala, it was Western Wyoming Community College professor Bud Chew, who is funded through the INBRE program. Hautala started college 20 years after graduating high school. While serving as a head emergency medical technician for ExxonMobil, he discovered a love for the scientific aspects of his job, and decided to take early retirement to return to school.

\[660x61\]

Five years later, Hautala will earn his bachelor’s degree in physiology, and plans to teach science at the secondary level.

\[660x74\]

"That’s one of the great things about INBRE. I was able to do things with the scholarship that I wouldn’t have done normally because I would have been more focused on getting in [to school] quickly and getting out [quickly],” he says. “I ended up making a four-year degree a five-year degree, which normally because I would have been more focused on getting done with my education, at least for now. While he remembers fondly his time at Western Wyoming and harbors some thoughts of helping out there, he says he won’t have time to go through master’s and doctoral programs. Instead, he says he hopes to teach high school science, specifically in his native Rock Springs—and possibly fill the pipeline with a student who shares his inspiration.

\[706x65\]

"I might not end up being the complete product of INBRE, but hopefully in the next few years I’ll be able to provide some younger students that meet the goals," Hautala says. "Maybe in the end I’m not going to end up where I should have, but maybe I can help put someone there."
Mohammad Piri wanted to examine enhanced oil recovery and carbon sequestration techniques by watching how various fluids would behave inside rocks under pressure and temperature conditions seen in underground reservoirs.

Trouble was, no such device was available. So Piri decided to build his own.
career. He knew UW was committed to solving energy problems and establishing programs in energy research, but he says UW also expressed support for his idea of a facility that could see inside rock samples at multiple angles and under various flow conditions.

Piri started building his machine in June 2006, not long after he arrived in Laramie. It began with the lab space, a two-story corner of the College of Engineering and Applied Science building, neglected for years and full of discarded furniture, burned-out electrical equipment, and dust.

The professor got to work, cleaning every inch of the space and clearing out the old equipment and furniture, after full days of teaching senior- and graduate-level classes, advising doctoral students, and raising money for his research. It was all in the name of making sure he had the best possible facility while continuing to be the best professor he could be.

Fortunately, Encana stepped forward with a $2 million donation, and the state of Wyoming matched those funds, and Piri proceeded with the plans for the lab.

There also was the issue of finding a CT scanner that rotated the way Piri wanted. Where patients in the hospital lie horizontally on a table as the scanner rolls over them, Piri wanted a scanner that could rotate 90 degrees and offer multiple views of a core sample placed vertically—not exactly a CT scanner found on the market. So Piri shared the floor plans for his facility with an Ohio-based company that had come up with a similar scanner for a fiber optics company.

"After having initial discussions, we talked to an Ohio-based company," Piri says. "They are in touch with us to obtain my recommen-
dation that can train the graduate students properly to operate this type of equipment," Piri says. "So when there are graduates who have been working in this lab and go on to something similar [in the business sector], they will be a very valuable work force for the state of Wyoming and the country."

"More than half the problem is building it and integrating and making it operational to do what you want it to do," Piri says. "Also, it’s not just about equipment. It’s about all the other things you need: a lab to make it functional."

In April 2008, Piri, UW president Tom Buchanan, CEO Randy Eresman and John Schopp of Encana, and others cut the ribbon on the facility, and days later Piri conducted the first experiment.

"I am indeed very grateful to Encana, UW, and the state of Wyoming for their support, without which this project wouldn’t have gotten to the stage it has," Piri says.

Make no mistake, it’s not a matter of plugging into a sample of rock and letting the CT scanner do its work. An experiment in the lab is a 24-hour-a-day job, and experiments of this nature can take several weeks to complete; indeed, doctoral student Mortez Akbarabadi shows visitors the bed in the lab’s office where grad students can catch a few minutes of sleep between making observations.

"When you start the experiment you cannot leave the lab," he says. "We are trying to do our best to get the best result out of the work that we are doing."

Oil companies are highly interested in the work on enhanced oil recovery and carbon sequestration being done in this lab, as it becomes more incumbent upon them to preserve the environment while fueling our future. Alizadeh says oil companies count on academic research such as that being done at UW to figure out how best to solve this problem.

"When you are going to produce more oil, not only do you need to understand the multiphase flow displacement mechanisms encoun-
tered in reservoirs but also you need to have access to facilities such as this one to verify your ideas before any investment. The compa-
nies do not necessarily have large labs. In many cases they don’t invest much in in-house research," he says. "They usually need research groups like ours to work on the problems and generate data using facilities like ours. They need experimen-
tal data because they can be used to reduce the uncertainty associated with predictions made by reser-
voir simulators when they are run for various field development projects."

Alizadeh is studying enhanced oil recovery while Akbarabadi is studying carbon dioxide sequestration—two very important aspects in energy research as the world con-
tinues to tap its oil and gas resources. The two say they’re grateful to Piri for the opportunity to work in the lab.

Piri says with this lab, the graduate students who work in it become a valued commodity as well, gaining experience acquired at very few places around the world.

"There simply weren’t any labs at this level of sophis-
tication that can train the graduate students properly to operate this type of equipment," Piri says. "So when there are graduates who have been working in this lab and go on to something similar [in the business sector], they will be a very valuable work force for the state of Wyoming and the country."

Certainly, Piri would be a valuable asset in the private sector as well, but his love for teaching and interactions with students transcend his desire for money. Further, he says he derives inspiration for what he does every day from knowing that his unique facility is inspiring other research teams around the world to solve the world’s energy problems.

"For instance, my colleagues from Imperial College London visited here to get inspired for their facilities," he says. "They are in touch with us to obtain my recommen-
dation in regard to how they should build their facility that they are working on. So we are proud of this, of course."

For more on this world-class facility and the Piri research group, including before and after pictures of the laboratory space, go to wwweng.uwyo.edu/chemical/research/piri/.
In her own world

by Dave Shelles

Don’t talk to Stephanie Ortiz before she dives.

The University of Wyoming senior is in her own world before she takes to the board, usually with headphones in and music cranked. Even UW diving coach Kevin Breitling knows to leave her alone before she dives.

She will listen to the announcement of her dive, however. And that’s the last thing she hears before her pre-dive routine starts.

She’s been diving only for six years, and she’s achieved incredible success in a sport where athletes sometimes spend a lifetime perfecting the craft.

“I had no idea what the sport of diving even was,” says Ortiz, who had trained in gymnastics until a career-ending injury halted that. “My friend [Melissa Shafer] said, ‘Hey, you should try diving.’ I didn’t really like the water, and I didn’t know about it. I went to state my first year, though.”

She credits an intense coach and her own competitive desire for getting past her dislike of water and her fear of hitting the board.

“I cried many tears, I balked a million times, I didn’t go on the first try,” Ortiz says. “Just having [the coach] tell me, ‘You have to do this in order to compete, so either do it or be a girl and quit’ made the difference.”

The graduate of Liberty High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, won the Class 4A state meet as a senior and signed with UW. Only then did she realize where the sport could take her.

“Wyoming was the only school to offer me a scholarship,” she says. “I didn’t really know how wide-open the sport of diving is for opportunities. When I signed here I realized it was do-or-die time.”

Ortiz’ music of choice is metal band Disturbed, in particular a song called Liberate. She says it gets her into the right mindset to dive—angry. When it comes to diving, she says, angry is good. Nervous is not. Anger keeps her focused. Nervousness infringes upon that focus.

Now the earphones are out and the announcement is made. She hears her dive—dive 305C, a reverse two-and-a-half somersault in the tuck position, with a 2.8 degree of difficulty. It’s her favorite dive, one on which she scored 8.0s and 8.5s on a scale of 10 at this year’s conference championships, helping her to a second-place finish on the 3-meter board.

Before climbing the ladder to the board, she says she likes to move around a bit and get her heart rate steady. She holds the small chamois towel common among divers in her mouth as she strides up the ladder. Chamois towels absorb water better than terry cloth towels, and divers need to be completely dry so they can grab and hold easily on their pikes and tucks.

Every diving board has a fulcrum to encourage spring, and every diver has a preferred setting. Once Ortiz sets the fulcrum and drops her chamois, it’s a matter of, as her song of choice goes, liberating her mind.

“I always have to have my face wet, I always rub my hands, and I breathe in and out,” she says. “From then on, I try not to think about anything. I have to put faith in what I know. I do my flips, kick out, and hit the water. You can usually tell how good of a dive it is by the way you enter the water. Most of the time it’s a good feeling.”

Like a baseball player knowing when he’s hit a home run from the instant the ball leaves the bat, Ortiz knows when she’s nailed one. She’s also aware when she balks on a dive, which is where the midair body awareness developed as a gymnast comes into play. Still, sometimes a dive can’t be saved, something every diver experiences. Ortiz says she recalls one meet where she balked on a dive on the 3-meter board and failed a dive during the 1-meter competition.

“I wished there was a little hole that you could swim through so that no one would have to see me,” she says. “It taught me humility. It does crazy things to you.”

Ortiz says she never looks at her scores during the meet because she always has a feeling, a hunch about where she stands in the competition. And when her dives feel right because she always has a feeling, a hunch about where she stands in the competition.

“I’ve never told anyone this, but usually I curl up in a ball of the water smiling and be perceived as cocky. Of course, you mean to do that every time, but an athlete has to be gracious as well so I save that other stuff for underwater.”

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ATHLETICS

Outstanding Ortiz

Sophomore
Conference: 2nd on 1-meter, 4th on 3-meter, 8th on platform
Zone: 15th on platform, 25th on 1-meter, 27th on 3-meter

Junior
Conference: 1st on 3-meter, 2nd on 1-meter, 8th on platform, MWCC co-diver of the year
Zone: 7th on 1-meter, 7th on 3-meter, 22nd on platform

Senior
Conference: 4th on 1-meter, 2nd on 3-meter, 4th on platform
Zone: 3rd on 3-meter, 6th on 1-meter
NCAA: 33rd on 1-meter, 35th on 3-meter

School records held
1-meter, 3-meter; second all-time on platform
“lift, lift, O lift, If thou didst ever thy dear Father love”  

Pete Simpson, Sr. claimed he’d never done a Shakespeare play before April’s University of Wyoming production of Hamlet.

His namesake quickly reminded him of his one previous turn with Shakespeare, at Kendrick Park in Sheridan, Wyoming.

“When we talk about Shakespeare, the first thing we talk about is the language,” the younger Simpson says. “Dad got to tackle Julius Caesar. He was given the role by the Montana Shakespeare Festival, which is a half of a touring company. So when I heard Dad was playing Julius Caesar in the park, I was excited. But it turns out they were doing excerpts, and they wanted Dad for his dead-body skills. So he was playing Julius Caesar after the fact, underneath a bloody sheet. I see Dad wearing these crazy latex wounds.”

“I had completely forgotten about that,” the senior Simpson says, “probably because it was such a forgettable role.”

Simpson the father had more of a challenge this spring. No one will soon forget the striking family resemblance and performance of the ghost of Hamlet’s father and Hamlet, played by the two Simpsons.

The younger Simpson says he can’t overstate the thrill of being on stage with his father, in a play that’s a timeless tale about fathers and sons. That thrill started at the first reading of the script in February, specifically Act I, Scene 5, when the ghost first speaks to Hamlet.

“There’s no way to recreate that first moment when I’m looking in my dad’s eyes with copy in my hands,” Simpson the son says. “The reality that we’re getting to walk the boards together in this absolutely amazing, essentially father-son play—it’s hard to put words to that.”

It marked the first time the two performed together since 2000. A decade ago, the elder Simpson’s wife, Lynne, was honored as a recipient of the Governor’s Arts Award, and the Simpson family—Pete Sr. and the three children, Pete Jr., Maggie and Milward—performed and the Simpson family—Pete Sr. and the three children, was honored as a recipient of the Governor’s Arts Award, since 2000. A decade ago, the elder Simpson’s wife, Lynne, boards together in this absolutely amazing, essentially father-the son says. “The reality that we’re getting to walk the ladder gets narrower and narrower. When you get that high, that’s impressive. A working actor who doesn’t have to send home for cash—we’re very proud of that. And it’s fun.”

The younger Simpson established his own performing career, despite keeping theater at arm’s length. Instead of majoring in theater at UW, he minored in it while majoring in English. Instead of throwing himself headlong into theater productions, he also played in Western Thunder, UW’s marching band, and spent his summer playing drums in the Troopers Drum and Bugle Corps.

Who knew he would get to use all of those abilities and more in his career? Since 1996 he’s been a member of the Blue Man Group, and since 1998 his cast has had a permanent home at the Astor Place Theatre in New York City. Current UW theater department head Leigh Selting says the younger Simpson showed his versatility from his undergraduate days.

“He was probably one of the more eclectic theater students we had,” Selting says. “He had an interest in a wide variety of things. He just seemed to have a wide interest in life and in academia. That might be one of the reason he’s been so successful. All those interests make for a better actor.”

Hamlet brought full-circle the younger Simpson’s experience with UW theater. As a senior in his final production, he played the male lead in Romeo and Juliet, under Selting’s direction.

“It’s kind of a neat reunion because I left undergrad with Leigh directing Romeo and now I come back with him directing Hamlet,” Simpson said. “Basically, I exited UW’s stage in tights, and I’m re-entering it in tights.”
You might feel high expectations on your first day on the job, but 1992 University of Wyoming graduate Catherine Keene might have blown the curve for the rest of us. Two months after starting as chief executive officer for Wind River Health Systems in Riverton, Wyoming, Keene opened a community medical clinic.

Before sympathizing, understand that she has experience running a health clinic, and she had recently served on the board issuing the charge.

“Toward the end of my degree program, I was looking for a change, and the board of directors asked me to apply for the CEO position,” Keene says of her sister’s children while attending college full-time.

Keene welcomes a challenge, and opening a community health clinic in Riverton is no different.

“She is able to look past today and figure out what we need to do to meet people’s needs,” says Dolores Jimerson, who heads up the clinic’s mental health department.

Keene first came to UW in 1977 and completed roughly one year of studies before returning to the oil fields, where she drove a service truck.

“My first time around in college, I had fun. I was a straight-A student in high school and in college and had to choose between school, work and having fun with my friends, so I gave up [school],” Keene says.

Keene’s return came via a detour through Central Wyoming College in Riverton from 1988–90 and finally back to Laramie from 1990–92. The native of Fremont County walked the campus, volunteered and took an interest in her development.

Keene joined and became president of the accounting fraternity Alpha Beta Psi, helped organize the women’s business summit, was on the selection committee to choose a new business college dean and spoke at commencement.

She earned her MBA in health administration through an executive program at the University of Colorado in 2002.

Gary Keene, Catherine’s husband of 29 years in July, also holds a UW degree in biology and fisheries management. He works for the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality in Central Wyoming. The Keenes have an 11-year-old daughter, Kali, the third child the couple have raised.

Operating in the present with an eye to the future

Just two years after the clinic has opened, the challenges of running a startup remain, but the results are tremendous. Personnel at the clinic have treated 4,300 individual patients who have been seen at the clinic a total of 13,400 times. That’s higher than the clinic estimates of serving 3,000 individual patients over its three years. Starting with only six employees, the clinic now has more than 30 employed to meet the day-to-day challenges of an economy lacking in health insurance and access to medical care.

While work is ahead of schedule, it’s a long way from done. Jimerson says she’s confident the health center has the right person for the job.

“What I like about her management style is it is very strengths-based, very transparent, and she encourages you to go create to meet our mission and our vision. She encourages you to grow to see the big picture,” Jimerson says.

Currently, the clinic offers mental health services and primary medical care, and it will have a dental program to relieve a backlog of Medicaid patients once a dentist can be recruited. Already Keene has enticed University of Wyoming Trustee Dr. Howard Wilson of Thermopolis to work part-time at the clinic. Two family nurse practitioners are on staff as well as a full-time orthopedic physician, and a doctor practicing in obstetrics and gynecology also has offered four hours bi-weekly to the clinic and the cause.
The year was 1948. World War II had ended. Warner Brothers produced the first color newsreel of the Tournaments of Roses Parade and the Rose Bowl. The Winter Olympics were in St. Moritz, Switzerland. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that religious instruction in public schools violates the Constitution. The Hells Angels were founded. California. T. S. Eliot won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Harry S. Truman was elected president.

During the first half of the 20th century in Europe, modernism had taken hold in the art circles. Its premise was one of “newness,” that individualism and uniqueness of personal expression were essential if one was “modern.” American artists traveled to Europe to study, an essential requirement to be successful. With the shift in political power following WWII, modernism began to take hold in the United States during the 1940s. It set the stage for the development of America’s first artisti genre, abstract expressionism.

Three artists who later contributed to the development of the modernist dialogues in America came to teach at the University of Wyoming, George McNeil, (American, 1908–1999), Ilya Bolotowsky (American/Russian, 1907–1981), and Leon Kelly (American/French, 1901–1982) were mid-career artists at the time, and each was exploring a different form of abstraction. Together, they demonstrate key elements of major artistic movements of the time—abstract expressionism, geometric abstraction and surrealism. However, each considered his work individualistic, unique and outside such larger groups or movements.

McNeil worked in the abstract expressionist style, creating nonrepresentational work with broad swaths of color, texture and depth. In this form of abstraction, the essential aspects of the medium are more fully exposed and acknowledged. McNeil’s work emphasized spontaneous and subconscious creation. He combined the theories of the abstract expressionists with the emotional intensity of the German expressionists and the anti-figural aesthetic of futurism and cubism. McNeil taught at UW for two years, 1946–1948, before moving to New York City to teach at the Pratt Institute.

Bolotowsky was a geometric abstractionist who took the purely optical premise from the cubist tradition to create the illusion of depth by eliminating the use of the figure altogether and solely using the juxtaposition and location of different planes of color. This approach sought to carry the abstract beyond what is depicted, to the underlying sense of emotional charge. Bolotowsky later became known for his tonal—is—large, circular canvases of delineated color and shape, which he first created while in Wyoming. In addition to teaching art at the university, Bolotowsky also taught local ranchers who gave him several large wagon wheels. He removed the spokes and used the circular frames as stretchers for his canvases. He found that the form created an interesting composition as the straight lines became affected by the circular shape of the canvas. Bolotowsky was at UW from 1948 to 1957.

Kelly was a leading American surrealist who was stylistically influenced by some of the major contributors to the European surrealist movement, including Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy. Kelly worked within a new canon of modernist painting, elaborating on the precedent of the collage, and using novel forms of montage to create works that combined themes central to the surrealist movement from Europe and new forms of American abstraction. After studying art in Paris, Kelly worked and exhibited largely in New York. However, in 1947, he and his family moved to Wyoming so he could teach in the art department. Although he stayed at UW only two years, he took the opportunity to study Native American art, traveling to study petroglyphs and meet with contemporary potters.

The unique opportunity to work with these three artists was not lost on UW student Harold Garde (American, b. 1923). Attending UW on the GI Bill after three years in the military, Garde readily acknowledges the influence of his professors on him as a young artist.

“I have an abstract expressionist background,” he wrote on his Web site. “It was the most excitingly new development in art when I was a young painter. Much of that training remains. I am interested in what paint can do, making marks that expressively respond to my thoughts and actions. Now, although I rarely choose to allow the non-figurative (the ‘abstract’ of ‘abstract expressionism’) to remain as the final work, from the first non-figurative state I will continue working until I find an image that becomes an identifiable subject. When I have decided on this image, then comes the careful exploring and developing necessary to finalize each work, each with its own unique integrity.”

Garde graduated from UW with a bachelor of fine arts in 1949. Fifty years later, Harold Garde continues to paint in a palette of bright colors, thick impasto and abstracted figures. His evocative compositions and rich surfaces convey forms or figures that range from highly simplistic to psychologically complex. Throughout his extensive career, Garde has explored a range of subjects, including vases, portraits, figures, chairs, puppets, pinnacles, crossroads and sightings.

Harold Garde, Yellow Chair, 1983, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 56 inches. Courtesy Museum of Florida Art.

1948: A Year of Modernist Convergence at the University of Wyoming

by Susan Moldenhauer

GALLERY
Wyoming Athletics Legacy Wall Campaign

Cement Your Name in Wyoming History!

Don't miss your opportunity to get your Wyoming Athletics Legacy Wall paver and Cement Your Name in Wyoming History! Beginning Fall 2010, facing east, directly outside of the renovated War Memorial Stadium, Wyoming Cowboys and Cowgirls fans will have the opportunity of a lifetime when the Wyoming Athletics Legacy Wall is constructed as part of the University of Wyoming War Memorial Stadium premium seating and concourse improvement project. Personalized pavers, prominently displayed on the Legacy Wall, will serve as a lasting tribute to the great fans that have made Cowboy and Cowgirl Athletics a Wyoming legacy. Your paver will become a visible piece of War Memorial Stadium for all to see, any day or night of the week.

Quick recap of the program...
- 4"x8", 8"x16" and 16"x10" personalized pavers are available for as little as $100
- The pavers will be installed prior to the 2010 football season, outside of War Memorial Stadium as part of the new Wildcat Stadium Club and Suites War Memorial Stadium Improvement project
- Your paver will be accessible any day of the week, including game days, and will be attached to War Memorial Stadium for the life of the stadium
- Pavers are a great opportunity to recognize your love for the Cowboys and Cowgirls, your business, a special moment in time, a loved one, and/or a special event
- All proceeds of this campaign will go directly to the student-athletes of UW through scholarship and educational resource support
- The University of Wyoming has contracted the services of Fund Raisers Ltd. out of Boise, Idaho. Fund Raisers Inc. specializes in the processing and engraving of bricks and they will handle all orders. Each month Fund Raisers Ltd. sends the Cowboy Joe Club all profits from this program

Again, please be advised there is still time to get your Wyoming Athletics Legacy Wall Paver and Cement Your Name in Wyoming History! This unique opportunity won't last forever – please order your paver today!

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CALL 1-877-WYO-BRIX (1-877-996-2749)
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photo by Trice Megginson
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LOOK AHEAD TO UWyo

Meet UW’s Eminent Artist-In-Residence for the 2010–2011 school year.

UW alum Dan Haley has ink running through his veins.

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