Preparing for the Next Big Burn: How Risk Perception Affects Californians’ Support for Fire Prevention Policies

also:

Interview with Peace Studies Alumna Jessica Cho, ’05
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

This issue of our Wilkinson Review is the first we are publishing under the banner of our newly named and reorganized college: Wilkinson College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Composed of the departments of Political Science, Sociology, History, Communication Studies, English, Religious Studies, Philosophy and Languages, we also proudly include the Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education, the Peace Studies Program, the Ludie and David C. Henley Social Science Research Laboratory and the Albert Schweitzer Institute. The award-winning student newspaper, the Chapman Panther, is a product of our journalism program, and Radio Chapman is broadcast through our department of Communication Studies. Students work with our distinguished faculty in these programs and in a variety of individualized scholarly projects and research efforts.

I am proud to present this issue exemplifying Wilkinson faculty scholarship in both the humanities and the social sciences. The essays provide a look at faculty research and also reveal the way in which our faculty members, who pride themselves on being “Teacher Scholars,” inform their teaching through their ongoing thoughtful and critical scholarship. English Professor Richard Ruppel describes the way in which his piercing examination of the works of author Joseph Conrad engages his students in exploring the historical and contemporary world through the lens of literature. Through studying Conrad, Professor Ruppel guides his students to join him in considering war and peace, the rise and fall of colonial régimes and the interplay of human behavioral and moral actions on such a world stage. Dr. David Shafie, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science who specializes in environmental policy, writes about the research that he and his colleagues have conducted on the social psychological responses of California wildfire victims. Dr. Shafie demonstrates the need for public policy to be grounded in research answers, arguing that human responses must be understood in order to formulate workable wildfire prevention and intervention policies—a lesson not only for California, but for the world. The research is going on in our Henley Social Science Research Center, where students have the opportunity to work with active faculty researchers. In this issue, we are also pleased to present an interview with a Wilkinson College alumna, Jessica Cho. Jessica’s recent experiences as a Peace Corp volunteer in Jordan could not be a better example of our Wilkinson motto: Passion for Knowledge. Commitment to the World.

I’m excited about this new issue of the Wilkinson Review and I hope that you will enjoy the contributions as much as I do. We appreciate hearing from our alumni, our friends in the community, and our Chapman University colleagues everywhere. Please give us your responses and let us know what you would like to see in upcoming issues.

Roberta Lessor, Ph.D.
Dean of Wilkinson College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Anyone who has lived in California has long known the devastation that wildfire can unleash. It has become routine, even predictable, for several fires to scorch the boundaries of the state’s urban areas in a single season. In a 1968 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*, author and native daughter Joan Didion reflected on life in California with the perennial threat of wildfire:

At first prediction of a Santa Ana, the Forest Service flies men and equipment from Northern California into the southern forests, and the Los Angeles Fire Department cancels its ordinary non-firefighting routines. The Santa Ana caused Malibu to burn the way it did in 1957, Bel Air in 1961, and Santa Barbara in 1964. In the winter of 1966-67 eleven men were killed fighting a Santa Ana fire that spread through the San Gabriel Mountains.

Last season, the ferocious wildfires of fall 2007 destroyed thousands of homes, forced one of the largest evacuations in state history, and are expected to have lasting social and economic impacts. More than 6,000 acres burned in San Diego County alone, as 175-kilometer per hour Santa Ana winds fanned flames across Orange and San Diego Counties. One person died and several others were injured in the hasty evacuation that ensued.

A group of researchers at Chapman University’s Wilkinson College of Social Science and Humanities became interested in the long-term effects of the disaster. Communications scholars Lisa Sparks and Jennifer Bevan, and political scientist Ann Gordon and I set out to examine residents’ attitudes, interpersonal communications, and perceptions of risk in the wake of the fires. Working in the Ludie and David C. Henley Social Science Research Laboratory in Wilkinson College, we collected survey data from Orange and San Diego County residents in the months following the fires. We wanted to learn why some residents were skeptical about government action to reduce the risk of future wildfires and why they were divided on such questions as limiting development in fire-prone areas and spending on fire protection. We also wanted to know how the experience of the fire might have affected their attitudes.

Suburban development has exacerbated the risk of fire damage in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). This refers to the zone, mainly in Western states, where homes are constructed adjacent to vast tracts of flammable vegetation. During the 1990s, 61 percent of new housing in California, Washington and Oregon was constructed in this area.

As the risk of damage from wildfire increases, so does the cost to taxpayers. A report from the state legislative analyst estimated the annual cost of fighting wildfires in California rose from $408 million in 1997 to more than $1 billion in 2007. In an earlier era, when most development was limited to the flatlands of coastal basins and valleys, the cost of fire protection was low and simple to calculate: it was a function of the number of houses constructed. Increasing development in canyons and hillsides has multiplied that cost, since residences are surrounded by explosive fuel, property values are higher, and fires are more difficult to fight in the WUI. In 2007,
wildfires burned more than 42,000 acres of California, a sharp increase over the five-year average of 30,000 acres. During the last decade, 7.24 million acres burned annually, double what it was in the 1990s.

The increasing cost of fighting fires suggests a need for more aggressive policy responses, such as the extraordinary step taken by Los Angeles County to ban wood-shingle roofs on new houses in the 1980s. As rapid growth drove more development onto hillsides and canyons, governments have pondered a number of policy instruments to reduce wildfire risk. The ability of public agencies to effectively prepare for these regular and predictable disasters depends, in part, upon the likelihood that individuals in a community will accept policy interventions as necessary and reasonable. Most of the alternatives regularly debated involve tax expenditures or some form of restriction on individual behavior or private property. Therefore, the perceived institutional legitimacy of government agencies affects the range of policy alternatives that can be placed on the table for consideration.

Residents of the WUI generally expect firefighters to protect their property and look out for their safety. Residents may not be able to take this for granted if the continued strain on resources forces local authorities to rethink that arrangement. Rancho Santa Fe, a 5,000-home subdivision in Northern San Diego County, is experimenting with a "stay or go" policy, borrowed from Australia, which shifts responsibility to the property owner. Under the policy, homeowners must adhere to a strict fire prevention code and are required to stay in their homes during a fire rather than evacuate under dangerous conditions, but it stops short of forcing them to aid firefighters.

In Australia, where wildfire risk is greater and firefighting resources at the WUI are scarce, residents are trained to fight fires. As a matter of policy, residents are required to evacuate at the first sign of fire or stay and assist with firefighting efforts. The policy has reduced the cost of fighting fires in Australia, as well as the number of deaths and injuries from last-minute evacuations, as occurred in the Cedar Fire in Northern San Diego County when a late evacuation under hazardous conditions resulted in nine deaths in 2003.

San Diego County notwithstanding, communities in the U.S. are not rushing to embrace a stay-or-go policy. There is a standard, narrow range of fuel management approaches that policymakers tend to actively consider, such as prescribed burning and defensible space ordinances. These types of alternatives were debated after the deadly fire season of 2007, but the scale of destruction forced some policymakers to seriously consider actions that would normally be considered "off the table."

In the current legislative session, California’s lawmakers introduced a number of proposals to try to limit or contain wildfire risk, and five bills made it out of committee. Senate Bill (SB) 1595 and Assembly Bill (AB) 2859 require property owners to create defensible space around homes and communities as well as mandate the use of fire resistant building materials. These provisions also appear in an alternative proposal, SB 1617, along with a requirement that homeowners pay fees to fund fire prevention programs. Two stricter measures, AB 2447 and SB 1500, were more controversial. These two bills would strengthen community planning measures and place new limits on development in fire-prone areas. The bills would require local governments to certify that they followed state regulations on water pressure and road construction to accommodate fire crews. New subdivisions proposed for

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high fire-risk areas would have to be certified by local fire authorities to verify that adequate protection will be available. Finally, local governments would be prohibited from approving dead-end subdivisions which lack alternative fire and evacuation routes. Not surprisingly, both bills are opposed by the California Chamber of Commerce and local governments, and supported by firefighters’ unions and the Sierra Club.

Designing policy solutions that the public will embrace can be a challenge partly because of public attitudes toward risk. Social psychologists have documented the tendency of experts, policymakers and the mass public to think about risk differently. Experts focus on the quantitative aspects, such as the probability that an event will occur and the number of injuries and deaths, while the layperson is just as likely to consider qualitative aspects, including past experiences, intuition and their own ability to control the hazard. Policymakers may rely upon the best scientific information available, but their solutions might not be accepted if residents consistently underestimate wildfire risk.

The capacity for government to deal with future wildfires effectively depends upon institutional legitimacy, that is, popular support for public policies to reduce wildfire risk. Our survey of Orange and San Diego County residents conducted after the wildfires identified some of the psychological factors that explain whether people support proposed government regulations to reduce wildfires.

Chief among these factors is risk perception. Some residents are inclined to see wildfires as inevitable as opposed to others who are more likely to see wildfires as not inevitable at all, but rather the result of poor public decisions. Those who see wildfires as exacerbated by poor public decisions are also more likely to see them as manageable. Another factor influencing support for public policies is trust. Overall, social trust is on the decline, with successive generations of Americans less likely to consider others “trustworthy.” This has implications for public problems such as fire risk mitigation because people favor public spending on a policy problem when trust in government is high. Individuals tend to favor government intervention if they perceive the risk as “public,” meaning that the actions of others contribute to the severity of the risk.

The question of trust has implications for wildfire management because political trust is related to the willingness of residents to accept government action to solve public problems. Research by the U.S. Forest Service has found that individuals with lower levels of knowledge rely more upon trust when judging wildfire risks and the benefits of fire prevention strategies. Since these low-information voters have as much say as those with higher levels of knowledge, it is as important for government officials to build trust as it is to educate residents about wildfire risk.

Residents with high levels of trust are more likely to agree that government should engage in all types of policies to reduce fire risk. These residents are more likely to agree with a variety of policy alternatives, including education, improving land management, fireproofing requirements, restrictive building codes, more restrictive zoning, tougher fire safety laws, investments in firefighting equipment, preventative burning and encouraging property owners to take more responsibility for fire prevention.

One interesting pattern is that ethnic communities within Southern California showed different levels of trust. Asians displayed the highest level of political trust. Whites showed a significantly lower level of trust than did Asians, and Hispanic residents had a slightly lower level of trust than Whites (too few African Americans appeared in the sample for us to make generalizations). These differences add support to the notion that there are communities within communities where policymakers should concentrate their efforts to build support for various fire management strategies.
Despite these patterns, it turns out that trust has a relatively weak effect on support for fire prevention policies, compared to risk perception. A high level of trust is associated with support for just two alternatives: providing more information about fire safety and improved land management. When trust is high, people tend to favor both forms of action. Those exhibiting a high level of trust in government support the provision of more fire safety information and programs for improving land management; however, their support for other policy alternatives is not significantly different from those whose trust is low.

Besides showing higher levels of political trust, Asian-Americans are significantly more likely to support government policies to reduce fire risk. Asians are more likely to agree that individual property owners should take more responsibility for fire safety, and that homeowners should be required to fireproof their property; further, Asians are more likely to support tougher fire safety laws and favor investments in firefighting equipment. Hispanics were more likely to oppose all nine policy alternatives, but the difference with non-Hispanic whites was insignificant.

Risk perception is a larger factor than trust. Those who view development as responsible for wildfire risk are more likely to support several policy options. The issues of trust, personal experience and ethnicity aside, those who believe that wildfire risk is manageable support policies to provide more information, to improve land management, and to increase individual responsibility, fireproofing requirements, stricter building codes and more restrictive zoning.

Personal experience with wildfire is another significant factor predicting support for government action. Residents who evacuated were more likely to support two of the most sweeping and coercive policy alternatives (tougher fire safety laws and more restrictive zoning). Those who evacuated were also more likely to agree with statements that emphasized individual actions (fireproofing requirements for private property and individuals taking more responsibility for fire safety). As expected, all four relationships were in the direction of favoring (rather than opposing) increased government action; however, there was significant variety in the types of policies they favored.

Another way to gauge personal experience with fire is to measure the emotional impact of the ordeal. However, in our study, emotional immediacy explained very little about the respondents' policy preferences. While a significant number of residents reported feeling scared, anxious, depressed and confused during the crisis, these measures of emotional impact were related only to the view that individual property owners should take more responsibility for fire safety.

Personal experience with wildfire did not matter the way we thought it would. Residents who evacuated were much more open to government action to reduce fire risk, but our measure of the emotional immediacy failed to explain their support for most policies. These results of our survey, so far, are consistent with prior research that found opinions about fire management vary by race and ethnicity. The implication is that there are communities in which authorities need to concentrate their efforts.

As public officials consider policy alternatives to reduce the damage from wildfires and the cost of fighting them, it is instructive to determine why some residents are more likely to embrace government action than others. Risk perception is the variable that best predicts institutional legitimacy, or in other words, the government's right and duty to act to protect citizens from wild fires. Residents who believe that damage from wildfires is manageable—as opposed to inevitable—were more likely to support most of the regulatory policy alternatives presented to them in the survey.

This seems to support the notion that educating the public about wildfire risk as a consequence of development decisions offers the best prospects for policy change.

Roadside fire during the Yorba Linda fire in November 2008. Photography by Mike Margol - mike.margol@photoeditinc.com
The period of Joseph Conrad’s great works began in 1897 and ended in 1911 (with the publication of Under Western Eyes) – late-Victorian, early-20th-century Great Britain was a very different place from 21st century Orange County, California. Born in 1857 of Polish parents in what is now the Ukraine, Conrad was christened Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, and he was a szlachcic, or member of the Polish nobility. English was his third language, after Polish and French. Before he became a novelist, half his working life was spent on the sea as a sailor, mate and ship’s captain. So Conrad’s background and distinctive use of English, and the profound difference between his contemporary audience and today’s audience, create complexities that many readers today would prefer to avoid.
THOUGHTS: Why Conrad (Still) Matters

My students remind me of this every semester¹.

Yet of all the British novelists from what literary critics call the period of “High Modernism” – D.H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce – Conrad is the most contemporary. The best evidence of this is the number of his stories and novels adapted for film. The Internet Movie Database (IMDb) lists 56 films based on Conrad's work – from Victory (1919), based on Conrad's 1915 novel, to Apocalypse Oz (2006), a conflation of The Wizard of Oz and Apocalypse Now. The best known (and best) of these films is the original Apocalypse Now (1979), a brilliant adaptation of Conrad's Heart of Darkness. Orson Welles directed Citizen Kane only after failing to write a successful screenplay of Heart of Darkness, and Alfred Hitchcock based his Sabotage on Conrad's The Secret Agent.

Filmmakers are drawn to Conrad because of the cinematic approach he often took to his material. (The murder scene in The Secret Agent presents one stunning example, from the shadow of the plunging knife to the accelerating drip of the victim's blood.) But as a literary and cultural critic, my own appreciation for his contemporary value derives from the way he anticipated the 20th and 21st centuries. His vision was uncannily prophetic.

Heart of Darkness, the first great anti-colonial novel, presents the best known and most obvious example. Marlow, the protagonist, takes a job as a steamboat captain on an unnamed African river in an unnamed colony. Conrad's contemporaries would immediately have recognized the Congo River and the Belgian Congo, but Conrad eliminated references to nationalities and place names to ensure his complex story condemned all imperial adventures, not just those of the Belgians. Marlow, the story's narrator (and Conrad's imperfect surrogate), praises Britain's imperial past, but then quietly undercutts all imperial conquests, noting that the Romans, whom British imperialists looked to as their glorious model, “were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others.” As an expatriate Pole, Conrad worked hard to avoid antagonizing his British hosts directly, but when he has Marlow belittle the Romans, we can detect Conrad's criticism of Great Britain and its imperial conquests and ambitions. He adds “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much” (495).

Marlow has been hired to captain a steamboat on the Congo River, and he passes through the colonial capital on his way from London to the Central Station (now Kinshasa) and his command. Along the way, he sees some of the Africans (forced to work for the Belgians in what is now Matadi) crawl off to die in a grove of trees; Conrad's description of this Grove of Death has come to symbolize the injustice and suffering endemic to all imperial conquests. In 1975, Chinua Achebe, who wrote the great postcolonial novel Things Fall Apart (1959), complained that Heart of Darkness is “racist” and should no longer be taught because of its dehumanizing representations of Africans – some of whom are cannibals, who seldom speak for themselves, and who communicate via “grunts.” But this criticism – which provoked a renaissance in Conrad studies – has been successfully addressed by hosts of Conrad scholars: European, American and African. Achebe's own Things Fall Apart itself was influenced by Heart of Darkness and other Conrad fiction.

¹ Since I began teaching at Chapman in 2006, I’ve been privileged and challenged to teach the novels and stories of Joseph Conrad three different semesters, to graduate and senior undergraduate students. I’ve read and written about his work for nearly a quarter century, so my biggest problem is to read with fresh eyes and to anticipate the multiple and formidable difficulties my students must face.
Heart of Darkness continues to sensitize students to the pitfalls of direct, imperial meddling in other cultures, but Nostromo (1904) anticipates the evils of indirect, economic imperialism. In fact, Nostromo is the first great post-colonial novel. At its heart is a lucrative South American silver mine in “Costaguana” (a conflation of Chile, Argentina, Costa Rica and several other South American countries). One postcolonial power, Great Britain, oversees the construction of Costaguana’s railroads, and another, the United States, is represented by a wealthy financier, based on Andrew Carnegie and other of the so-called robber barons. Holroyd, the financier, is an Evangelical Christian who endows churches, using his financial empire to promote his sect. We see his missionaries at work in Costaguana at the end of the novel. (In this way, Holroyd anticipates the founder of Domino’s Pizza, Tom Monaghan, who has used his fortune to promote Catholicism both in the United States and in South and Central America.) But the novel focuses less on Holroyd the philanthropic evangelist than on Holroyd the imperial financier. In this latter role, Holroyd prophesizes with uncanny accuracy about America’s future as a dominant economic power:

We [Americans] can sit and watch [the economic development of Costaguana and elsewhere]. Of course, some day we shall step in. We are bound to. But there’s no hurry. Time itself has got to wait on the greatest country in the whole of God’s Universe. We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics, and religion, from Cape Horn clear over to Smith’s Sound, and beyond, too, if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole. And then we shall have the leisure to take in hand the outlying islands and continents of the earth. We shall run the world’s business whether the world likes it or not. The world can’t help it—and neither can we, I guess. (94-95)

Holroyd is the main financial backer of the silver mine, working from his offices in San Francisco. The silver mine, which draws the world to Costaguana, corrupts nearly every important character and poisons the life of the novel’s one incorruptible figure. Nostromo therefore anticipates how, in a postcolonial world, former imperial powers could continue to corrupt and exploit their former colonies economically and politically. Though Conrad himself exhibited some anti-Semitism², his depiction of the torture and death of a Jewish hide merchant in Nostromo eerily anticipated the Holocaust and other horrors of the 20th century. In an absolutely harrowing scene, an army colonel believes the Jewish merchant, Hirsch, knows where a treasure is buried, so he ties his hands behind his back and another rope around his wrists, throws the rope over a roof beam, and has him lifted off the ground. “Speak, thou Jewish child of the devil! The silver! The silver, I say! Where is it? Where have you foreign rogues hidden it? Confess or—” When the colonel begins to whip the hanging man, Hirsch finally lifts his head and spits on his torturer, provoking the colonel to kill him (375). In this scene and elsewhere in Nostromo, Conrad anticipates the systematic torture and murder committed by army officers and despot in the 20th century on nearly every continent.

ill-used, hapless French mechanic caught up in a phony anarchist plot. The real “anarchists” are the capitalists whose wealth puts them beyond national laws and other restraints. The narrator is a faintly ridiculous lepidopterist who spends time collecting his butterflies on an island off the coast of South America. The island is owned by the BOS Ltd., an international producer of synthetic foods. Here is the narrator’s description of the corporation and its advertising scheme:

B.O.S. Bos. You have seen the three magic letters on the advertisement pages of magazines and newspapers, in the windows of provision merchants, and on calendars for next year you receive by post in the month of November. They scatter pamphlets also, written in a sickly enthusiastic style . . . . The “art” illustrating that “literature” represents in vivid and shining colours a large and enraged black bull stamping upon a yellow snake writhing in emerald-green grass, with a cobalt-blue sky for a background. It is atrocious and it is an allegory. The snake symbolizes disease, weakness—perhaps mere hunger, which last is the chronic disease of the majority of mankind. Of course everybody knows the B. O. S. Ltd., with its unrivalled products: Vinobos, Jellybos, and the latest unequalled perfection, Tribos, whose nourishment is offered to you not only highly concentrated, but already half digested. Such apparently is the love that Limited Company bears to its fellowmen—even as the love of the father and mother penguin for their hungry fledglings.

Of course the capital of a country must be productively employed. I have nothing to say against the company. But being myself animated by feelings of affection towards my fellow-men, I am saddened by the modern system of advertising. Whatever evidence it offers of enterprise, ingenuity, impudence, and resource in certain individuals, it proves to my mind the wide prevalence of that form of mental degradation which is called gullibility. (406)

Though written in the opening years of the 20th century, “An Anarchist” uncannily predicted the explosive growth of advertising and its effects, effects that include what the narrator in the story calls our increased “gullibility” and, I would add, our bland acceptance that the titles “citizen” and “consumer” are equivalent.

The Secret Agent includes Conrad’s most unsettling prophesies. In it, Vladimir, a highly ranked member of the embassy of a Central European power (usually identified as Russia) pays a double agent to perpetrate a terrorist outrage against Great Britain. Vladimir wants the British to feel threatened by anarchists and other radicals so they will renounce their own civil liberties and begin jailing radicals before they act. Perhaps, one character suggests, the British will begin violating their constitutional principles and have the radicals “shot at sight like mad dogs” (76) by the police. Vladimir settles on the Greenwich Observatory, the great symbol of scientific rationality, as the perfect target. Because it represents science, and because the British believe science undergirds their economic prosperity, the destruction of the Observatory will inspire people with the necessary terror and insecurity. In the novel, the
secret agent fails to topple the Observatory, but the parallels between the terrorist attack envisioned by Vladimir and the attacks on the World Trade Center, and the immediate consequences of that attack, are inescapable.

In the same novel, a frustrated scientist nicknamed The Professor leaves academia and spends the rest of his life making bombs to be used against the social order, a social order he finds complacent and corrupt. Though Verloc, the phony anarchist employed by the embassy, is killed in the novel, the Professor lives on. Here is the last paragraph:

And the incorruptible Professor walked [on], averting his eyes from the odious multitude of mankind. He had no future. He disdained it. He was a force. His thoughts caressed the images of ruin and destruction. He walked frail, insignificant, shabby, miserable—and terrible in the simplicity of his idea calling madness and despair to the regeneration of the world. Nobody looked at him. He passed on unsuspected and deadly, like a pest in the street full of men. (246)

Conrad’s nightmarish vision in The Secret Agent of a modern culture capable of alienating, so completely, certain individuals within it, seemed almost to foretell the creation of a Unabomber.

The Secret Agent is Ted Kaczynski's favorite book.

Works Cited
AN INTERVIEW WITH
PEACE STUDIES MAJOR JESSICA CHO

Describe the work that you did in Jordan.
What one or two events, incidents, etc., did you find most fulfilling?

My first year was slow, learning Arabic and trying to convince my new community of my reasons for leaving a “life of luxury” in America. I began tutoring girls in their final year of high school. In Jordan, students must pass a rigorous exam to get into university. This exam includes a difficult English portion that many girls in rural communities often fail, ruining their chances for higher education. I tutored 2 girls in English and test-taking strategy for a semester before their exams. Both girls passed their exam, and seeing the pride in their parents’ faces, all of whom didn’t finish high school, was my first truly fulfilling experience.

In my second year I worked with three other volunteers to start Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) in Jordan. Camp GLOW aimed to offer economically challenged, rural girls the opportunity to leave home and participate in a five-night camp focusing on empowerment and leadership. This camp was the first time that many of these girls had met other talented and ambitious young women outside their own villages. It was also their first opportunity to do something completely independent of their families. With Camp GLOW we tried to create an “anything is possible” environment where girls could not only dream big, but focus pragmatically on how to achieve their dreams. By the end of camp it was apparent that girls left with a new sense of confidence about their futures. Camp GLOW was a wonderful way to end my service as it gave me hope for the future of young women from rural areas in the Middle East.

What led to your decision to join the Peace Corps?

I graduated from Chapman in 2005 and then moved to Washington DC. I found a job working for lobbyists at an association, but realized I wanted something more challenging and rewarding. After nine months of working 60-70 hour weeks it, was clear that I needed to move in a different direction. Peace Corps offered me the opportunity to serve abroad and gain important job experience. After the Iraq war I became more and more interested in the Middle East, and the role of the US in the area. I knew that becoming a volunteer in Jordan would satisfy both my need for experience abroad and my desire to create a better understanding between Arabs and Americans.
What aspects of Jordan do you feel are least understood by US citizens?
Living in a secular country it is extremely difficult for Americans to truly understand how deeply religion is tied to every part of society. While Jordan is a fairly liberal country, Muslims must still adhere to Islamic law. Religion is a portion of college entrance exams and a person can be jailed for breaking fast in public during Ramadan. I feel many Americans, including myself prior to living in Jordan, don't understand why people don't just change their circumstances. As Americans we often take for granted how free we really are. Because religion and culture are one and the same in Jordan, especially rural Jordan, people are tied to their circumstances. Change comes slowly in the third world, unlike the often instant gratification we get in the west.

Any other observations that you might wish to make about the experience?
When I found out I was going to be an English teacher at a girls high school, I thought, “no problem.” I figured Muslim girls born and raised in small villages with Islamic values would surely make for quiet disciplined students. To my surprise I found that teen-aged girls are teen-aged girls all over the world. They terrorized their teachers the same way my friends and I did, and broke the rules whenever possible. While it made for an utterly impossible classroom, it was refreshing in a way. Often religion and politics focus so much on differences that we lose sight of humanity. As global citizens we must constantly remind ourselves that people are ultimately very similar despite their religious or political beliefs.

What are your plans for the future?
I would like to go to graduate school in the next five years. In the meantime, I hope to work in the Middle East policy arena, specifically in areas of communication. I think living in a rural Muslim village for two years has given me a unique perspective on how we as Americans can better understand the Middle East and vice versa.
In the liberal arts, we take pride in educating students who can, throughout their lives, think critically and analytically about issues that they will face as knowledgeable citizens and professionals. Becoming a knowledgeable thinker requires not only grounding in the key disciplines that make up our majors, but also the educational experience of doing such independent thinking. One of the ways in which we prepare our students in becoming such thinkers is through undergraduate student research. While independent scholarly research comes to mind in association with graduate school, in recent years, it has become clear that also enabling undergraduate students to do research adds value to their baccalaureate education and better prepares them for graduate education and for success in work.

Ludie and David C. Henley Social Sciences Research Laboratory

Our faculty members work with students in undergraduate research across the disciplines. For example, work may take the form of preparing a paper for presentation at a national meeting of a student honors society, such as Sigma Tau Delta, the honors society for English, or a student panel presentation at a professional meeting such as the American Political Science Association. In the case of the social sciences, undergraduate research is based on the collection and analysis of empirical data, that is, concrete observations that are gathered and systematically analyzed. We are very fortunate to have the Ludie and David C. Henley Social Science Research Laboratory, made possible by a gift from trustee David C. Henley and his wife Ludie. Specialized computer software in the laboratory makes possible collection of data through surveys, analysis of data from a number of large data banks, and the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions.

The “Henley Lab” provides a valuable resource for faculty work and faculty collaborative work with students, and a number of our students have gained the skills to design their own research projects. Of course we provide guidance, advice and critical review, but we are exceptionally pleased in watching our students excel in their endeavors, as they did on several occasions in the past year highlighted below.

7th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences

Seven sophomores accompanied Dr. Ann Gordon, associate professor of political science, to the 7th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Social Sciences in Honolulu. Each student presented her own research completed in the Ludie and David C. Henley Social Sciences Research Laboratory. The presentations were so well received that the Chapman students were frequently asked by faculty and researchers attending the conference if their research was part of a doctoral program, the questioners were amazed to learn that such sophisticated work could be conducted at the undergraduate level.

- Laryn Finnegan ’10
  “ELECTING A WOMAN PRESIDENT: UNDERLYING CORE VALUES IN VOTER ASSESSMENT AND GENDER STEREOTYPES”

- Abigail Stecker ’10
  “AMERICA’S SEAL OF APPROVAL: SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC COMPONENTS TO PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY”

- Erika Gonzalez ’10
  “YOU ARE WHAT YOU WATCH!: GENDER DIFFERENCES ON THE EFFECTS OF MASS MEDIA ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT (VOTING), KNOWLEDGE, AND GOVERNMENTAL TRUST”

- Lauren Pont ’10
  “GOT FAITH?: HOW RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY AFFECT PARTISANSHIP AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR”
2008 Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society Southern California Regional Conference

Twenty-three Chapman history majors presented papers and served as panel commentators at the conference hosted by Chapman’s chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national History Honors Society. For the second straight year in a row, Chapman history majors mentored by Professor Lee Estes won the top awards at the conference. Students Sarah Kuiken and Elsa Lindstrom won first and second places in the undergraduate history paper competition, written as part of their senior history theses. Faculty and students from Chapman successfully organized the largest regional conference to date, drawing 149 student presenters and commentators, and faculty advisors from 21 regional Phi Alpha Theta chapters to Chapman’s campus.

• Sarah Kuiken ’08
  “Breeches and the Softer Sex, Gender and Seafaring in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Britain”

• Elsa Lindstrom ’08
  “A Capponi Family Transaction: A Study of Lenders, Collateral and Interest in Sixteenth-Century Florence”

• Jonathan Cohen ’10
  “The Semantic Migration of Language”

35th Annual Western Undergraduate Research Conference at Santa Clara University

Under the direction of sociology department chair Dr. Tekle Woldemikael, several sociology students presented research papers during the 35th Annual Western Departments of Anthropology and Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference at Santa Clara University.

• Amberia Allen ’08
  “Perceptions of African American Women in Rap and Hip Hop Music Videos”

• Michaela D. Brown ’08
  “Sibling Influence on the Socialization of Traditional Gender Roles”

• Joshua Kaplan-Lyman ’08
  “The Cultural and Social Implications of Fine Dining”
Two sociology students were selected to present at the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Conference held in Portland, Oregon. The theme of the conference was “The Messiness of Human Social Life: Complexity, Contradiction, Tension & Ambiguity.”

- **Janine Miller ’08**
  “Discrimination and Stigma toward the Mentally Ill”

- **Jessica Porquez ’08**
  “Personal Transformation and Gang Disaffiliation for Mexican American Males in Southern California”

Dr. Lynn Horton, assistant professor of sociology, accompanied five students to the Southern California Conference for Undergraduate Research, held at California State University, Los Angeles.

- **Erin Turner ’08**
  “Factors Influencing Southern California Faith Communities to join the Sanctuary Movement”

- **Sooji Han ’07**
  “An Exploration of Science Professors’ Views and Attitudes Towards the Teaching of Evolution and Intelligent Design in College Science Courses”
Wilkinson
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## Wilkinson Events

Check [http://www.chapman.edu/wcls/upcomingEvents.asp](http://www.chapman.edu/wcls/upcomingEvents.asp) for up-to-date listings

### FALL 2008

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<td>Dr. Debórah Dwork, Holocaust Scholar and Author</td>
<td>“Music, Luck and the History of Mariánka Zadikow and Her Terezin Album”</td>
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<td>SEPTEMBER 23</td>
<td>Dr. Robert Fisk, Journalist</td>
<td>“The Age of the Warrior”</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 14</td>
<td>Ilan Ziv, Israeli Filmmaker</td>
<td>West Coast premiere of “Jesus Politics”</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 20</td>
<td>Rigoberta Menchú, Noble Peace Prize Recipient</td>
<td>“Human Rights and the Struggle for Peace”</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 24</td>
<td>Bill McKibben, Environmentalist and Writer</td>
<td>“The Most Important Number on Earth: Dealing with Global Warming Before It’s Too Late”</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 27</td>
<td>Doug Cooney, Playwright, Screenwriter and Novelist</td>
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<td>NOVEMBER 18</td>
<td>Saul Friedländer, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author and Hokaulist Historian</td>
<td>“The Voice of the Witness in the History of the Shoah”</td>
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### SPRING 2009

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<td>Dr. Michael Berenbaum, Holocaust Scholar and Author</td>
<td>“Victims’ Time/Perpetrators’ Time: The Lives of Jews and the Policies of Nazi Germany”</td>
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<td>An Evening of Holocaust Remembrance</td>
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<td>APRIL 27</td>
<td>Pasquale Verdicchio, Author</td>
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