

the same way: something collectively understood as false but maintained anyway.

Young is poetry editor at *The New Yorker* and director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and his body of work, both as a poet and a scholar of black history, make him well-suited to engage this material. In the same way that Suzan-Lori Parks uses drama as an apt scalpel for history, Young uses creative nonfiction, often employing the same elegant puns and pivots that appear in his verse. Where Parks in her play *Topdog/Underdog* used three-card monte and the arcade as symbolic showcases for American violence and its bloody repetition, Young demonstrates in *Bunk* how the “con” works in more abstract ways. In the early twentieth century, the so-called long-con went from being perpetrated nomadically to taking place in a “store,” a semi-permanent set of displays meant to resemble a real shop that targets could visit repeatedly. His use of the conman’s “store” as a metaphor for America’s repository of dubious racial ideas and gender stereotypes is particularly insightful. Along with his winking approach to the material, his bemused attitude helps to detract from the horror, offering a model for processing current national affairs. *Bunk* suggests that one has to smirk at this stuff once in awhile, to avoid getting too freaked out.

Young’s compendium does have a noticeable gap. What about the counter-cons enacted by non-white people? What of passing for white, or the Internet folk who pass

Chapter & Verse

Correspondence on not-so-famous lost words

Tobe Kemp asks if anyone can identify sources for two compliments occasionally used by relatives hailing from East Texas: “upstanding and downsitting” and “ambidextrous as well as bifocal.”

Eve Golden is seeking a source for the phrase about an individual who “shall remain nameless, but his initials are Johann Sebastian Bach [or whoever]”—an ex-

pression “in wide circulation in many slight variants, but likely encountered in an old movie, one of the romantic/screwball comedies of the 1930s or ’40s. It’s driving me nuts. Any help?”

Send inquiries and answers to “Chapter and Verse,” *Harvard Magazine*, 7 Ware Street, Cambridge 02138 or via email to chapterandverse@harvardmag.com.

along Sophia Stewart out of an impulse to redress historical theft? For that, readers might turn to Young’s *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness* (2011), where he writes about a tradition that he calls “storying,” a “counterfeit tradition” that he frames “not as mere distraction from oppression but as a derailing of it.” Although there is a mention of how the pioneering black nineteenth-century novelist Harriet Wilson utilized phony Spiritualism to subversive effect, *Bunk* offers no real contemporary examples of that kind of counter-ingenuity.

Yet this is a small gripe. *Bunk* is a consistently incisive look at the nature of American imposture and epistemology itself: How do we know what we know, how do we learn? How do we undo what we learn, and how do we avoid making the same mistakes? As of

this writing, there’s a controversy regarding the PEN Awards and a writer, John Smelcer, pretending to be Native American. Joanne the Scammer is a cult hero, *Catfish* a hit TV show. As Young writes in the book’s epilogue, “This is the world we’ve made; one that we can only hope from here on out is not entirely made up.”

Niela Orr is a columnist for The Baffler and a contributing editor of The Organist podcast. Her work has also appeared in The New York Times Book Review, Elle, McSweeney’s, The Believer, and BuzzFeed.

Kevin Young was first interviewed in this magazine after the release of his verse collection For the Confederate Dead (“Rhythms of Race,” September-October 2007); he is also a member of the Dark Room Collective (profiled in “Elbow Room,” March-April 2016).

ALUMNI

This Land Was Made For...

A Utah activist reflects on 40 years of land conservation—and what’s coming next.

by NELL PORTER BROWN

A WEEK after defending his biology dissertation, Bill Hedden ’73, Ph.D. ’76, and his wife, Eleanor Bliss ’73, packed their stuff into a pickup truck and drove west. They settled in southeastern Utah, near the city of Moab, on nine acres of unspoiled valley

land framed by coral sandstone cliffs, snow-topped mountains, and the Colorado River.

With no power or water well, they camped out for two years—cooking on an open fire, bathing under a waterfall. When they needed money, he worked as a river guide, a carpenter, or on a construction

crew for local mining company Atlas Uranium. “We slept in the back of our truck and watched the sky,” Hedden says. “When you do that for awhile, you realize the universe spins around you all the time.”

The New Jersey boy was in love with the American West. He’d never experi-

enced wide-open, wild country, or been so attuned to the sun, rain, and clouds, in a place where it seemed he could walk forever and not see a person.

It helped that Bliss, from Salt Lake City, knew her way around red rock and rattlesnakes. They had \$5,000 in savings to slowly build a homestead, and for emergencies. But even without that, says Hedden, who is now the executive director of the Grand Canyon Trust, nothing, not even a promising career in neurobiology, would have stopped him from at least trying to build a life among boundless beauty. “The canyons stunned me,” he said in a speech last year at the University of Colorado Law School’s Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment. “If my life of activism has amounted to anything, it was all nascent in those first days of awe and delight.”

Within two years Hedden was more than reveling in this “desert idyll”; he began protecting it. Prompted by the Arab oil embargo and the energy crisis, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) was looking to build a nuclear waste dump. Moab, a uranium hub since the 1950s, was home to generations of mining and ranching families used to industrial jobs and detritus, and southeastern Utah officials were in favor of the project. Hedden was not.

For one, it would have sacrificed Canyonlands National Park: nearly 336,000 acres where the Green and Colorado Rivers meet in primitive high desert filled with sandstone canyons, buttes, mesas—unique rock formations millions of years in the making. “They would have had a train running through Moab and some of the country’s most extraordinary and historic landscapes, carrying nuclear waste from all over the United States,” he says. He wrote an op-ed for the local newspaper, went to a few meetings, and then the governor appointed him to a task force on the issue, where Hedden became the leading voice of opposition.

The waste repository search dragged on until 1984, when the DOE named 10 sites for further study, none of them in Utah. (Congress ultimately chose Yucca Mountain, in Nevada; nothing’s been built yet.) Hedden kept up with land-use issues across the West,



Hedden in the northern section of Utah’s Bears Ears National Monument. Behind him are the Six Shooter Peaks, where, he says, “the U.S. Department of Energy wanted to build a nuclear waste plant.”

but was absorbed with family life—he and Bliss had built a small house on their land in Castle Valley, had daughters in 1979 and 1982, and kept a garden and fruit trees, which produced much of their food. “We were lucky if we had \$1,000 in the bank, but it was really a rich time for us,” he says, “rich in *time*.” He’d also started making furniture, eventually selling pieces at a fashionable Santa Fe gallery.

They were among a small but noticed influx of newcomers living largely off the land around Moab. The local culture was relatively conservative, and the Sagebrush Rebellion, which has never really died away in Utah, was actively promoting local control over public lands. “Tensions were in the air,” Hedden says. Grand County sheriff’s deputies often came to the valley, suspicious of what else was being cultivated in those vegetable plots. “And they were right,” he says, laughing now. “I think it’s OK to say that—the statute of limitations must be up. Oh, I don’t care!”

The true threat, however, was the death of the region’s economic engine, in 1984. “Everyone voted for Ronald Reagan here in Utah, and then when he did what he said he was going to do—pull the energy subsidies—the uranium industry was over, and within days Moab had lost 35 percent of its employment and went into a pretty long and desperate economic slump in the middle of the 1980s,” Hedden recalls. Then it began to catch on as a mountain-biking mecca.

That “turned Moab’s trickle of tourists into a torrent,” according to a 1996 *Christian Science Monitor* article, and helped trigger a larger demographic shift that’s still transforming the region’s economy and politics: “In what some see as the emergence of the ‘New West,’ there’s a growing movement here to forge a consensus around preserving the natural environment.” Some did foresee (and fear) what Moab would become today—a booming commercial gateway for outdoor recreation that includes thousands of world-class rock-climbing routes. The city of 5,200 residents bloats to between 15,000 to 30,000 people on weekends, and reaps a fair share of the state’s \$8.4-billion tourist industry. Arches National Park alone, a 10-minute drive from downtown, reported 211,706 “recreation visits” in June, up nearly five-fold from the same period in 1979. Construction of hotels, restaurants, outdoor-service companies, and second homes has basically kept pace.

Back in the early 1990s, at the start of this transition, Hedden mostly stayed out of the political fray, but admits he was always appalled by what he heard: debates over grazing “rights” (“Grazing on public land is a privi-



TIM PETERSON

Hedden doing what he loves on Warner Lake in Manti-La Sal National Forest, not that far from his backyard

lege, not a right,” he notes, and cows wreak havoc on fragile, arid land); the sacrosanct “right” most Utahans seemed to voice about being able to do “whatever they wanted, wherever they wanted”; the simplistic blaming of the federal government for the mining-

industry collapse.

But then, he says, one controversial “boondoggle” known as the Book Cliffs Highway became a crisis. The 43-mile truck route was to run “through the largest unprotected roadless area in the Lower 48,” Hedden says, from the hydrocarbon fields in the Uinta Basin through wilderness to Interstate 70, and connect to trans-

continental rail lines. Amid public outcry, the Grand County government—a three-man “old boy” commission that he says had long run the show—was replaced by a seven-seat council. Asked by fellow county residents to run for a spot, Hedden did, and won it in early 1993, beating out a dozen others on a “nonideological” platform that emphasized practical concerns. The Book Cliffs Highway was defeated, although just last year a coalition of county officials put it

back on the table—evidence to Hedden “that no truly terrible idea ever goes away.”

As a new councilman, he focused on shifting precious mineral-lease monies and revenues from royalties on federal lands away from supporting the highway and toward keeping the local hospital afloat, upgrading telecommunications infrastructure, and improving the school system.

It was a wild time. Every meeting of the new council “was standing-room only and filled with angry people. The Sagebrush Rebellion [proponents] were sure,” he says, that “a bunch of crazy environmentalists were taking over, that we would re-introduce wolves onto public lands”—but really those first two years in office were consumed with “dealing with financial mismanagement that had left us with a county budget a half a million dollars in the red.” At the next election, the galvanized traditional forces won back some seats, so the body, he says, was ideologically split between progressives and mining and rancher-minded councilors, and one person who was “just a nice guy.”

Hedden quickly saw that this group of relative amateurs—he includes himself de-

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spite his scientific training—was routinely charged with making hugely consequential decisions about public-land use and influencing federal policy. The “nice guy” cast the deciding vote to open part of Moab’s watershed, the Mill Creek Canyon, to development, Hedden says, yet after the meeting asked if the land in question was “up behind the old drive-in movie theater?” It’s far from the only example of locals “not knowing best” that Hedden can reel off after four decades of conservation work.

Hedden does understand scientific data and debates over balancing uses of terrain, especially over the long haul. He went to Harvard wanting to be a marine biologist, then shifted focus as a student of Gurd research professor of neurosciences John E. Dowling. But, he says, “At that point all the experiments were mortal and I just decided I couldn’t kill animals anymore.” He’d already taken a few trips out west with Bliss, and decided he’d “go out there and do something else. I figured if that didn’t work out, I could go back to science.”

THREE YEARS into his new political life, Hedden was hired by the Grand Canyon Trust (GCT) as the Utah conservation director, which meant expanding his activism and no longer relying on woodworking to support his family. Then he took the helm in 2002.

The environmental-advocacy organization was founded by a group that included then-Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt, LL.B. ’65, in

1985. It seeks to safeguard the greater Grand Canyon region from destructive mining and other development, and is currently involved in the six-year battle against the proposed Grand Canyon Escalade resort and gondola (meant to take up to 10,000 visitors from the East Rim to the canyon floor each day), in support of the Native American campaign against the project, Save the Confluence. (The project is up for a vote by the Navajo Nation Council in October). GCT also joins in the long-running fight that includes Native Americans, against a massive commercial complex on the South Rim—hotels, homes, shops, restaurants—proposed by the Italian-owned Stilo Development Group USA. That would require drilling into the aquifer that supplies seeps, springs, and streams in the Grand Canyon. “They would dry up the things that support wildlife and even make it impossible for people to hike there,” Hedden says. “Water is already such a precious resource.”

GCT encompasses the entire Colorado Plateau. Its roughly 130,000 square miles sprawl across the Four Corners region and include the Colorado River and its tributaries (on which 40 million people depend for water); 55 national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas; and the territory of the Navajo Nation, which covers the lower third of the plateau, south of Moab. Proj-

ects are based primarily in northern Arizona and southern Utah. GCT was instrumental in obtaining protection for Bears Ears, a 1.35-million-acre tract located north of the Navajo Nation, designated a National



Arches National Park, near Moab, Utah

Monument by the Obama administration. Named for two 8,700-foot buttes and, Hedden notes, among the richest archaeological districts in the country, Bears Ears is considered sacred ancestral homelands by many of the area’s Native American tribes. GCT is now in full-on defense mode because Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (also within the plateau) are under threat from U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. At press time, a



COURTESY OF THE HARVARD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Aloian Scholars

The Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) has named Aldís Elfarsdóttir ’18, of Eliot House, and Hannah Smati ’18, of Adams House, the 2017 David and Mimi Aloian Memorial Scholars for enriching communal life of the Houses.

As the Resource Efficiency Program (REP) undergraduate representative for her House and a former member of the University’s Climate Change Task Force, Elfarsdóttir, of Belmont, Massachusetts, is committed to sustainability issues. She has created programming for compostables and zero waste at House events. Her project, “Networked Energy-saving Temperature Sensors (NETS),” investigated Eliot’s winter heating system and produced a data-driven model to improve thermal comfort and building-energy maintenance.

Smati, of Houston, is co-chair of the House Committee and has helped the governing body become more inclusive and dynamic. She developed the Student Photography Initiative, and formed a system of liaisons with the tutors for each House team (race relations, LGBTQ, music, wellness, etc.) to encourage open discussions. Smati is also co-president of the Harvard Undergraduate Global Health Forum, a peer counselor for Room 13, and was director of operations for the 2016 Harvard Arab Weekend.



STEVE GREENWOOD/ALAMY/STOCK PHOTO

A glimpse of the Bears Ears National Monument, which is under threat of shrinkage by the Trump administration

leaked copy of Zinke's memo showed radical shrinkage recommended for both those monuments, as well as others, along with changes to the land management plans in many places to allow, Hedden says, for "traditional uses. Meaning: oil and gas and mining. In essence, it's an attempt administratively to make the American Antiquities Act of 1906 meaningless." GCT and many other groups, including the tribes who worked

for the designation of Bears Ears, he adds, are "ready to sue as soon as the president does something like that that is beyond his authority."

During his tenure, Hedden has established new and stronger relationships with tribal communities and developed a program that fosters inter-tribal collaboration and sustainable economic development. He has also doubled GCT's budget to \$4 million, (mostly from major donors and foundations, but helped by dues from 3,500 members) and has bolstered an already powerful board of trustees. That includes Native American Rights Fund executive director John E. Echohawk and University of Arizona law school professor Rebecca Tsosie, an expert on indigenous peoples' law, along with Hansjörg Wyss, M.B.A. '65, a funder of bioengineering at Harvard, and Texas billionaire David Bonderman, LL.B. '66, founding partner of TPG Capital. Hedden also recruited his College roommate, Wash-

ington, D.C., attorney Ty Cobb '72, who as a young lawyer took on, pro bono, and won a challenge on behalf of GCT and others to the harmful fluctuating water flows of the Glen Canyon Dam. (In July Cobb resigned from the GCT board, which he'd chaired for four years, to join the Trump administration.)

The organization operates within a web of richly vested interests vying for land and resources, Hedden notes, even as the "industrial-strength tourist industry" and climate change are irrevocably altering the landscape.

The Moab area is overridden with car traffic and people, including local residents, he says, who "tear up and down the high desert hills and canyons in off-road vehicles, or mountain bike all over, zoom around on the river in motorboats and jet skis." Surrounding towns don't want to become another Moab, he says, yet when he asks, "Is there one activity you are willing to forbid, so that won't happen?" they look at me blankly. They don't even comprehend what I'm asking them. They're like, 'Hey, this is a free country, people can do what they want.' And I say, 'Yes, that's what's happening in Moab.'"

Even the animals can't find refuge. "Hunters are going into the back country with four-wheelers and shooting" deer, he says. "There's

Hiram S. Hunn Awards for Alumni

In October, seven alumni received Hiram S. Hunn Memorial Schools and Scholarships Awards from the College's Office of Admissions and Financial Aid for their volunteer efforts to recruit and interview prospective undergraduates.

Peter J. Bernbaum '71, of Rye Brook, New York, has been interviewing candidates since 1975, mainly with the Harvard-Radcliffe Club of Westchester's schools and scholarships committee.

Lindsay Brew '66, of Tucson, has been an alumni interviewer for more than three decades, including as president of the Harvard Club of Southern Arizona (from 1993 to 2000), and has chaired the club's schools and scholarships committee since 1994.

John Daley '61, of Needham, Massachusetts, and his wife, Marion, devoted more than 30 years to the Harvard College Host Family Freshman Program, and he has interviewed applicants for more than 20 years.

Joel Z. Eigerman '63, of Cambridge, recently retired after more than

20 years as chair of the Cambridge schools and scholarships committee, and has met with prospective students for more than three decades.

Diane Feldman '80, of Highland Park, New Jersey, has interviewed students from her home state since 1981.

Tom J. Karr '84, of Washington, D.C., co-chaired the District's College admissions interviewing group from 2003 to 2007, and then became co-chair of the Harvard Club of Washington D.C.'s metropolitan-area school and scholarships committee until 2013.

Hannah J. Zackson '76, moved to Los Angeles in 1991 and joined the Harvard Club of Southern California and its schools and scholarships committee; ultimately she became chair of the group that covers the western section of Los Angeles.



Peter J. Bernbaum



Lindsay Brew



John Daley



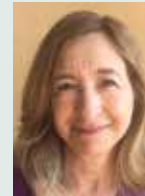
Joel Z. Eigerman



Diane Feldman



Tom J. Karr



Hannah J. Zackson

no 'back of beyond' anymore because we have so many ways of getting there."

Climate-change forecasts tell other grim stories. Bigger, more severe fires across the Southwest will eradicate forests and other habitats, and "if something grows back, it will be from the south, a different eco-region—you burn off the spruce and fir mountain forest and you will get scrub oak or lodge pine, and that changes everything," he says. Species cannot adjust fast enough, and will be "out of luck."

When native grasses are gone amid much hotter weather within the next 20 to 30 years, he says, "ranchers are going to get hammered because no one will want to buy their grazing permits. By pretending they are protecting them, the Congress is instead setting them up for a big fall."

In the past, the GCT and willing ranchers negotiated market-rate prices for their permits and those lands were closed to cattle, but that ended during the first Bush administration, Hedden says, under pressure from the grazing associations.

Along with disappearing habitats—for animals *and* humans—there will be "a monumental dearth of water. Even now, rain is erratic," Hedden warns: the 1922 Colorado River Compact, in which seven basin states agreed to jointly allocate that water supply, overestimated available volumes, and "when the agreement falls apart, it will be the mother lawsuit to end all lawsuits. An interesting mess."

In January, Hedden begins turning over the executive director role to a longtime colleague, in order to return to working on specific GCT projects—and try to finish a book he's writing about fishing, something he finds restorative, especially during the summer weeks spent alone in the Canadian wilderness "to gain some perspective."

At home, in Castle Valley, he and Bliss still live where they settled in 1976. Their children are grown. The fruit trees they planted have become orchards, and the Fremont cottonwoods now stand 10 feet in diameter. The range of 2,000-foot-high Wingate sandstone cliffs still runs across horizon, and to the south and east the craggy La Sal Mountains still loom like a surreal postcard.

Standing outside his house, or hiking in Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, or the back reaches of Arches National Park, Hedden feels "an access to some higher dimension of the spirit," he says, "It's so old and quiet. But you have to slow down and just be

here." Southern Utah holds only a fraction of "our 640-million-acre common inheritance": the public lands spread across a third of the continental United States. Most of it is astoundingly beautiful, and deeply connected to

Awards for Exceptional Service

SIX ALUMNI were recognized with HAA Awards for outstanding service to the University during the HAA board of directors' fall meeting.



Leila T. Fawaz

Lelia T. Fawaz, Ph.D. '79, of Cambridge, was a member of the Board of Overseers from 2006 to 2012, where she served on its executive committee, chaired the social-sciences committee, and was elected president for the 2011-2012 term. Appointed an Overseer member of the HAA board of directors' committee to nominate Overseers and elected directors from 2009 to 2016, she ultimately served as committee chair. In 2014, Fawaz received the Harvard Arab Alumni Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Catherine A. "Kate" Gellert '93, of New York City, has co-chaired the Harvard and Radcliffe College Class of 1993 reunion-campaign committees since her fifth reunion, led the Harvard College Fund as co-chair from 2006 to 2009, and was president of the HAA for the 2013-2014 term. A current member of the Dean's Advisory Council at the Radcliffe Institute, she is also a trustee of the American Repertory Theater and an active member of the Harvard Club of New York City.




Catherine A. Gellert



Timothy P. McCarthy

Timothy P. McCarthy '93, of Cambridge, has held numerous positions on the HAA board of directors, including secretary and vice president for College alumni affairs from 2010 to 2013. As class secretary, he has served on each of his class's reunion-program committees, and as president of the Association of Harvard College Class Secretaries and Treasurers from 2009 to 2011. He has also contributed

America's practical wealth and historic sense of "New World" identity. "These are our gathering grounds," he adds, "where we can come together to experience something much bigger than watching television." 

to other projects associated with the Harvard Gender and Sexuality Caucus and the Phillips Brooks House Association.

Carlos A. Mendoza '88, M.P.P. '90, of Panama City, Panama, established and became founding president of the Harvard Club of Panama in 2006, and served as a director and treasurer until last year. At his urging, the HAA began holding Latin American regional meetings to develop clubs and foster Harvard communities in the region. On the HAA board of directors, he has served as both a director for Latin America and as a committee member; in 2011, he received the HAA clubs and SIGs committee's Outstanding Contribution Award.



Carlos A. Mendoza

Grace C. Scheibner, A.L.B. '90, originally from New York and a former resident of Mexico and India, began at Harvard as an administrator at the program committee for the International Conferences on AIDS and STD World Congress. In 1992, she became Harvard's first Commencement director, in charge of the planning, execution, and management of the Morning Exercises. She retired last year. From 2006 to 2010, she also served as president of the Harvard Extension School Alumni Association.



Grace C. Scheibner

Kenneth G. Standard '58, LL.B. '62, has long been active in the Harvard Club of New York City. As president from 1999 to 2002, he led the planning, financing, and building of an eight-story addition, and as chair of the club's athletics committee in the 1970s, he appointed its first female members. He is also a former director of the club's foundation and a longtime alumni interviewer for the College admissions office, and has served on his College class's reunion-campaign committees.



Kenneth G. Standard