

# The Cavendish Chronicle

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Lauren Clark, Behm '20, et al at Delphi. More sights, page 3.

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The Rwandan countryside during the month of May.

## Seeing the World Differently in the Peace Corps

**Niesha Ford, Behm '17** always had an interest in serving under-represented communities. The Hayward, CA native came to CSB/SJU with the intention of getting a science degree and then continuing to medical school. To be sure, that interest persisted through college. She became a biochemistry major. She completed a summer internship at Kaiser Permanente, a healthcare organization in California. She took part in an Alternative Break Experiences in the Dominican Republic, where students engage in a range of service activities from tutoring children to repairing community buildings and equipment. These things look good on a medical school application, but to

Ford, they were valuable experiences in their own right, and they left her wanting more.

Within months of graduation, Ford was serving with the US Peace Corps. She currently works as a Maternal and Child Health Volunteer in Rwanda, a highland country about the size of Massachusetts in the African Great Lakes region. She works at a local health center as well as in individual households promoting nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. In addition, she provides aid to the health center staff and local health promoters in the community. Sometimes, that includes less glamorous work, such as helping local authorities build community toilets.

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*Ford celebrates with a local co-worker*

## *Ford Goes to Peace Corps*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Has traveling halfway around the world to work in a rural village lived up to expectations? Ford thinks so, and it's not just because this part of Africa is renowned for its rolling green hills, plentiful lakes and temperate climate.

"My Peace Corps service has changed my life in a way I didn't know it would," she explained. "The impact people have had on me, and the impact I hope to have on people in my community, has been immense." Now halfway through her two-year term, Ford has been blessed to be included in community events such as traditional weddings and children's naming ceremonies.

Volunteer work after graduation is not unusual for CSB/SJU alumni. Two other classmates from Ford's year, Joe Koll and Tom Nilles-Melchert, Chem '17, served in the Benedictine Volunteer Corps in Africa. Koll was sent to Zambia and Nilles-Melchert

to Tanzania, each for a one-year assignment. Nilles-Melchert was similarly motivated by an interest in the health care professions; he will attend graduate school at Georgetown when he returns.

When Ford first started thinking about the Peace Corps, she talked with Career Services, reached out to the recruiter responsible for the Minnesota area, and attended an online web chat. "All these resources were very helpful in not only giving me information on what I needed to apply, but also what qualities Peace Corps looks for in an applicant," said Ford. In addition, representatives from the Peace Corps set up an information table about once a year in Gorecki and Sexton.

The Peace Corps was established by the US government over fifty years ago. Its purpose is to promote peace and stability by sending talented young Americans into the developing world, where they can use their skills to help others, serve as role models, and build bridges between nations.

After completing her two-year term of service, Ford intends to eventually apply to medical school. However, her short-term plan is for a Master's of Public Health program, with a focus on international and global public health.

"Peace Corps is hard," declared Ford. "I don't think any former volunteer will say it is not hard. I do not live a lavish life, but my very basic needs are met. But, people will also say that Peace Corps is the hardest job that you will ever love, and that is also true. My Peace Corps experience has solidified my decision to become a doctor, and this experience has given me a new passion in development and global health."



## *On Sabbatical*

**Kate Graham** and **Chris Schaller** are both on sabbatical during the spring, 2019 semester. Graham will be working on pedagogical supports for introductory chemistry courses. Schaller will be working on new materials with novel magnetic and electronic properties in the lab of Jaclyn Brusso at the University of Ottawa.



# Postcards from Abroad



"Here is a picture from the roof of the dorm at Salzburg University in traditional Bavarian wear." - **Marissa Behounek, Chem '20, Austria**



"Our students at the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, Greece. This is the first place sailors saw on the way back to Athens from Persia. Aegeus, who had waited at Sounion to look out for the return of his son Theseus from Crete, saw the black sails on the ship and mistakenly thought Theseus had been killed by the Minotaur. Aegeus threw himself into the sea in despair. Theseus was victorious but had forgotten to replace the black sails on his ship with white ones upon returning. In commemoration, Aegeus' name was given to the Aegean Sea." - **Prof. Henry Jakubowski, Greco-Roman.**



"This picture was taken on a Greek island called Paros. Greece is known for its many islands, so I chose to use one of my free weekends to explore this one! (Don't be fooled by the beautiful scenery, it was too chilly to swim!)" - **Autumn Fuchs, Chem '20, Greco-Roman.**



"Inch Beach was on the way to the Dingle Peninsula. I believe it's the most famous beach in Ireland, especially for surfing. We got there right after it stopped raining which is why the ground is so reflective in the picture. That picture is also from my first solo trip while I was abroad, so it was very cool in that aspect because I got to travel on my own which has been a goal of mine since I was little." - **Caitlin Loeffler, Chem/Educ '19, Cork.**



Peterson (left) et al

## Peterson Promoted

**Alicia Peterson** has been granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. Peterson is a 2003 graduate of CSB/SJU chemistry. She finished a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota under the direction of Kris McNeil. She returned to her alma mater to teach introductory, quantitative, and environmental chemistry. Her research focuses on the dehalogenation of chlorinated aromatic pollutants. Graduates of her lab have gone to graduate school (U MN, USC), industry, or high school teaching.

## Faculty Contribute to DOE Grant

Three members of the CSB/SJU Chemistry Department will contribute work on a \$5 million grant awarded to the University of California, Davis. The grant, from the Department of Education, will support work on the LibreTexts online resource project.

The project includes contributions from workers at a dozen colleges across the country. At CSB/SJU, **Henry Jakubowski**, who was a collaborator on a previous NSF grant supporting the project, will work on biochemistry resources. Also on the team is **Kate Graham**, who played a central role in developing materials for the CSB/SJU chemistry curriculum. **Chris Schaller**, a prior LibreTexts contributor, will help to develop text and animations for inorganic chemistry.



### The Cavendish Chronicle

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## Grad Launch

Chemists of the class of 2018 have once again fanned out across the nation in pursuit of their dreams. **Talitha Burtis** is in the graduate program in forensic science at Sam Houston State University. **Jordan Danielson** is an Analyst at Aspen Research Corporation. **Davis Deanovic** is working in the cytogenetics lab at Mayo Clinic. **Bridget Ebert** is in medical school at U MN. **Guangyao Gao** is the new stockroom fellow in Ardolf Science Center. **Hannah Holst** is in chemistry graduate school at U MN. **Grace Lindquist** is in graduate school in chemistry at University of Oregon. **Clayton Merritt** works in the Chemistry and Analytical Science group in the R&D division at Upsher-Smith. **Clare Nelmark** is in chemistry graduate school at Notre Dame. **Brandon Thauwald** is employed as a scientist at Boston Scientific. **Sam Tinucci** is working as an R&D Chemist at Ecolab, working on cleaning solutions and floor finishes. **Zoua Pa Vang** is in graduate school in chemistry at Marquette University. **Chris Vidmar** and James Votel are studying chemical engineering at University of Minnesota

## Alum Notes

**Nicole (Gagnon) Bosou, Chem '10** finished a Ph.D. with William Tolman at University of Minnesota. She has accepted a position as a Senior Scientists at H.B. Fuller.

**Joseph Gair, Chem '12** has finished a Ph.D. with Jared Lewis at the University of Chicago. He is completing an internship at Vertex Pharmaceuticals before moving to a post-doctoral position with the Erik Jacobsen group at Harvard.

**Chris Seiler, Chem '12** finished a Ph.D. in medicinal chemistry with Natalia Tretyakova at U MN and is doing post-doctoral work with Stephen Hecht at the U MN Cancer Center.

**Jay Zachman, Chem '14** is in the Master of Healthcare Administration program at U MN. He recently accepted a position starting in May as the Administrative Fellow at HealthPartners - Park Nicollet.

**Erin Wissler, Chem '14** and **Harry Gerdes, Chem '14** got married.

### What the Class of 2018 is Doing Now

Duluth and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, respectively.

Biochemists, like their peers in chemistry, have found a host of opportunities awaiting them. **Omar Cano** is in pharmacy school at U. Illinois Chicago. **Lauren Hennen** is a laboratory technician at Amino Acids.com. **Annette Klomp** is in the Ph.D. program in neuroscience at University of Iowa. **Kailey Meyer** is in pharmacy school at U MN. **Lincoln Mullings** is serving with the Benedictine Volunteer Corps in Newark, NJ. **Renae Otto** is working as a podiatry medical assistant. **Casey Palmer** is working as a medical assistant. **Shelly Peterson** is an engineering technician for Resolution Medical. **Allie Pybas** is working as a research professional at U MN. **Griffin Schroeder** is in the biochemistry / biophysics graduate program at University of Rochester. **Riley Swenson** is working in the lab of Dr. Sunil David in Medicinal Chemistry at U MN. **Allyson Welle** is a medical scribe. **Audrey Wong** is in pharmacy school at the UNC-Chapel Hill.



**Jasmine Tutol, Chem '16** is developing protein-based tools to study anions in living systems at UT Dallas. She has just submitted a manuscript for publication, and was thrilled when her PI's post-doctoral advisor, Frances Arnold, was awarded the Nobel Prize this month.

**Raymond Twumasi, Chem '17** is studying C-H functionalization in the lab of David Nagib at Ohio State. In September, he presented to the National Organization for the Professional Development of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers in Orlando, FL.

**Tom Nilles-Melchert, Chem '17** has enlisted for a second year with the Benedictine Volunteer Corps. He just completed a first year in Hanga, Tanzania. His new assignment takes him to India and Sri Lanka to teach.



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