

What Limits?

Our conversation with a creative director who sees resource constraints as entertaining obstacles to overcome

Kat Braz, the senior director of creative communications at the Purdue Alumni Association, has learned – through trial, error, and necessity – to stretch precious resources.

A team of four (herself included) produce *Purdue Alumnus* while also working with her slightly larger team to generate everything for this office (read: the magazine takes up no more than one-quarter of each person's time). For her first five years in the job, the magazine team was a mere two people.

Her philosophy? If you're a magazine publisher lucky enough to have three things in ample supply – money, time, and talent – your

magazine is guaranteed to be all-great, all-the-time. But if you're most publishers, you make do with varying amounts of these key resources. And if you still want your magazine to be awesome? Well then, you have to get really creative.

With a background in art direction, Kat is adept at doing this with the visual side of a magazine. So we asked her to share her strategies for laughing in the face of constraints and making your art amazing despite them.



INSPIRATION IN THE NIGHT SKY

A sophomore aeronautical engineering student captures Purdue from a scientific perspective

By Kelly Hillier | Photos by Trevor Mahlman



#1 Money For Nothing? Get Your Pics For Free

“Any day you can get quality art for free is a good day. I’ve found there are a few ways to do this with photography. Find an alumnus who’s a professional photographer — a documentarian, a travel or nature photographer — and pick a discrete project to profile that says something about that person. Maybe you have a staffer who’s a solid hobby photographer and can shoot a project for you. Probably my favorite resource, though, is students. Look at their study abroad photos; check out their photography class projects and exhibits. They produce some great work and are excited just to get published.



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WHEN TREVOR MAHLMAN WAS A NOT YET THIRDSOME this day, he doesn't wish upon a star — because it's not hopelessness that he's looking up. He knows the star is not a wishing star or an object coming through space. He is standing at the right place at the exact right time to see the International Space Station (ISS) pass by. That day on the air serves as a reminder of Mahlman's dream to become an astronaut. And despite what he knows now, it still makes him want to leave the earth to see a star.

Mahlman was getting a group of people selected to attend a NASA Summer Intern for the Space Crews (ISS) in exchange for social media coverage. He had used a friend's camera to take photos of the ISS and his return coincided with the ISS lunar eclipse. He decided to hold on to the camera and possibly capture the eclipse.

The eclipse was very early in the morning and I was debating whether or not I wanted to get up and shoot it the night before. The light still wasn't dimmed a lot for photography I never knew I had. That experience definitely gave me the bug.

Some days he purchased the ISS camera and began capturing the ISS as it flew by the night sky. The tracks of the station on lenses, screens and screens gave him a sense of the space station as it passed by.

My favorite thing to shoot is the space station as it passes because although it looks like a dot in the sky it is actually the temporary home of three to six astronauts. That's a pretty different part of the sky depending on the orbit.

Mahlman has shot the space station from various spots on campus and really enjoys the challenge of putting out the subject in the foreground of each photo. However, his favorite shot was taken from the seat of an airplane. While traveling back from New York in June 2012, Mahlman tracked the orbit of the station using the in-flight Wi-Fi and determined that the ISS was going to pass by while he was seated in the air.

I used a GoPro and strapped it to the window and then held my hands over the camera to avoid glare from the cabin lights. My fellow passengers thought it was a little strange but then couldn't believe the shot I captured once I showed it to them.

The shot impressed others as well. It was posted by the ISS Facebook and Twitter accounts and mentioned by the astronauts. Just the mention of an astronaut being impressed by the photo makes Mahlman smile.

“My hobby is as clear as my eye to get up for now.”

HEAVENS ABOVE

During the summer before his freshman year, Trevor Mahlman's airplane took him to the ISS camera and began capturing the ISS as it flew by the night sky. The tracks of the station on lenses, screens and screens gave him a sense of the space station as it passed by.

STARRY NIGHT

Mahlman is also a long exposure photography enthusiast and has captured the Milky Way in the night sky. The photo was taken in September in the area around the tower. The photo is a composite of 22 separate exposures taken over a period of an hour to capture the ISS moving in a great arc across the horizon.

FROM 40,000 FT.

The shot that Mahlman took out of his airplane window during a December flight from New York to Chicago is one he never wanted to let go. The final image is a composite of 22 separate exposures taken over a period of an hour to capture the ISS moving in a great arc across the horizon.

MOONRISE

For the first time in his life, Mahlman captured a location where he could see the moon rise over the horizon. The photo was taken from the tower. The photo is a composite of 22 separate exposures taken over a period of an hour to capture the ISS moving in a great arc across the horizon.

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“I troll the Purdue community on Reddit for story ideas and came across a student from our aeronautical engineering program who takes photos of the night sky from around campus. They’re amazing, artistic photographs. I was able to make an entire photo story out of stuff that was already shot. ... The thing about students is you can’t plan ahead for them to provide photos for a specific story; they just kind of come to you like stray cats.”

Photos by Trevor Mahlman



PRESENTING THE COOL COURSE CATALOG

We profiled 14 amazing courses that'll make you wish you were a student again. Best of all? You can experience them without a single test, paper, or problem set.

By Erin Peterson and Marla Holt
Illustration by John S. Dykes



#2 Mix It Up

“It’s OK to break rules — or what we perceive to be the rules. There’s no tenet that requires you to open a story with a photo and then use only photos throughout the rest of the piece — or to open with an illustration and then use only illustrations. This is especially true with illustrations because they’re so expensive. Maybe you invest in one for your opening spread and then use photos — even stock photos — for the rest of the piece.”



A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Mortuary Practices Across Cultures
Thought by Michelle Buson, anthropology

OUR CULTURE HAS LONG HAD AN UNBALANCED relationship with death. We love the umbrellas and sunscreens that fill our television screens, but when it comes to the deaths of people we love, we lean toward speaking in hushed tones and setting others, such as those in the mortuary sciences and medical professions, dead with the afterthought.

This hands-off approach isn't the case in other cultures, many of which treat their dead personally. By comparing and contrasting American mortuary practices — what happens to the body after death, how and where it's buried, and what items accompany it — with those of other cultures, students see how death rituals reveal societal values, religious beliefs, and other cultural standards.

As part of the course, students complete several thought-provoking assignments, including imagining a dead chicken according to ancient Egyptian practices, writing their own death plan, and visiting a funeral home to learn about embalming and cremation.

"I want them to think about what mortuary practices can tell us about a particular culture or society," Michelle Buson says. "What is the meaning behind death rituals, whether they're religious or simply? Why did people choose to bury their dead in such a way? Answering these questions can be eye-opening."

BEYOND THE HORSE RACE

Campaigns and Elections
Thought by Josh Scazon, communication

AS THE CONTROVERSY to November's bi-partisan presidential inauguration at every level will be swirling about their respective parties actually work.

The instructor, says Scazon, if you've ever wondered why the Republican presidential candidates have been facing off as often in prime time, while Democratic candidates have had their debates hosted on Saturday evenings, don't blame the candidates or the networks. "These rules are set by political party committees, and they're choosing those schedules because they want to create advantages for their candidates," explains Scazon.

What these advantages are aren't always made explicit, but students can gain a better understanding of the way that the mechanics of American elections shape the world we live in. "I want them to see how elections influence democracy, and how they contribute to both the promise and pitfalls of democratic government," he says.



WOULD YOU LIKE WINE WITH THAT?

Wine Appreciation
Thought by Christian Butzke, food science

How often have you stood before the vast array of wines at the liquor store, overwhelmed by the choices? Most likely you choose the bottle with an appealing label or an affordable price point. That process is common — but perplexing, says Christian Butzke, a wine scientist and former commercial winemaker. "Imagine if you bought shoes in a box labeled 'shoes' and you saw a photograph of the shoes. That's ridiculous! But that's what we do with wine."

Students learn how wine is made — from picking to harvest, from where to vine, and everything in between — and how its production and consumption differs across time and cultures.

The class teaches on microbiology, engineering, public history, climate change, and chemistry, all while taking students on a virtual tour of the world of wine. Class sessions include wine tastings paired with wine etiquette and responsible consumption.

Butzke encourages students to travel to the states and countries that produce the most wine in the world. "Wine can be an avenue to understand and can foster curiosity about other cultures and ideas," Butzke says.



YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU GET

Introduction to Personal Finance
Thought by Michael Row, consumer science

MICHAEL ROW WANTS HIS STUDENTS TO MAKE THE SMARTEST CHOICES TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR FINANCES, SO THEY CAN MAKE DECISIONS THAT BENEFIT THEM FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.

WHICH STRATEGY ASBESTOS AT PRICES, MONEY CAN SAVE ASY — sometimes too easy — to come by, students learn to check active regularly, and credit card offers are typically plentiful. But if students aren't prudent about managing the new influx of cash and credit, they can find themselves in a deep financial hole.

Michael Row is laser-focused on giving students the tools they need to make smart financial decisions. For example, he says, students may not initially see anything overreaching about racking up thousands of dollars in debt on a credit card, since low monthly payments can make the debt seem painless. "The problem," says Row, "is that the interest rate on a credit card can be as high as 25 percent." In other words, those monthly payments will add up — quickly — to far more than any of the initial charges.

Students also talk about the power of contributing to retirement accounts as early as possible. A type that their parents may not have had to worry about when they started working. "Many age companies had pension plans, and a person would work for 30 years and get a pension for the rest of his or her life," Row says. "That's just not the case now!"

Row wants his students to have the skills they need to take personal responsibility for their finances, so they can make decisions that benefit them for the rest of their lives. "These days, people just don't have the option not to pay attention to their money," he says.



GET WELL SOON

Science, Medicine, and Magic in the Ancient West
Thought by Erin Peterson, history

SUFFERING FROM THE FLU YEL OR A SICK, BUT AS GLAD you live in the 21st century. A few thousand years ago, nobody understood that microscopic viruses were the culprits — influenza, for very good reason at stake. "Trade routes, disease was associated with disease, transmission, or some region contained outbreaks of physical or mental pollution," explains K. Dickson.

These ideas began to change in the 18th century BCE, when argumentative Athenians encouraged vigorous hygiene that started shifting conventional wisdom. "We can see the more scientific approaches we have today in the course," Dickson says. "It's fascinating to see the ways that religion, astrology, magic, and medicine developed in the ancient West, and how they began to separate and change over time."

While we might scoff at some of the more outrageous ancient ideas about the way our bodies work, we may not be as envious as we think, says Dickson. "In the ancient world, if a man sneezed, he got a cold. If a woman sneezed, there something wrong with her uterus," he says. "That seems strange, but the idea of female physiology dominated by reproductive and sexual issues informs modern Western science all the way up through Freud, and it still lurks in the background. You can see how these ideas were constructed and developed over time."

Erin Peterson is a Professor writer.

#3 Dress It Up

“Designers can have a defeatist attitude when you give them art that’s poor or just boring; they’ll say, ‘There’s nothing I can do with this.’ I say, challenge yourself to take it and make something more of it. You can do wonders with just toning. Especially if you’re trying to pull together images from several sources, maybe taken in different time periods or with different technologies, the pieces can have a very different look that would be inconsistent in your story. Take them all, make them black and white, and then tone them all funky colors. It’s an easy way to unify everything.

“This is another one of those rules where you think, ‘Oh, I can’t make somebody’s skin orange, or blue.’ Why can’t you? Who’s standing there telling you you’re not allowed to do that? You’re allowed to make things interesting, and you should push yourself to do just that.”

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W&M

ALUMNI MAGAZINE • FALL 2015

**JILL ELLIS '88 >>
BRINGS THE WORLD CUP
HOME TO THE U.S.A.**

ARE WE ALONE
IN THE UNIVERSE?

EDUCATION REBOOT

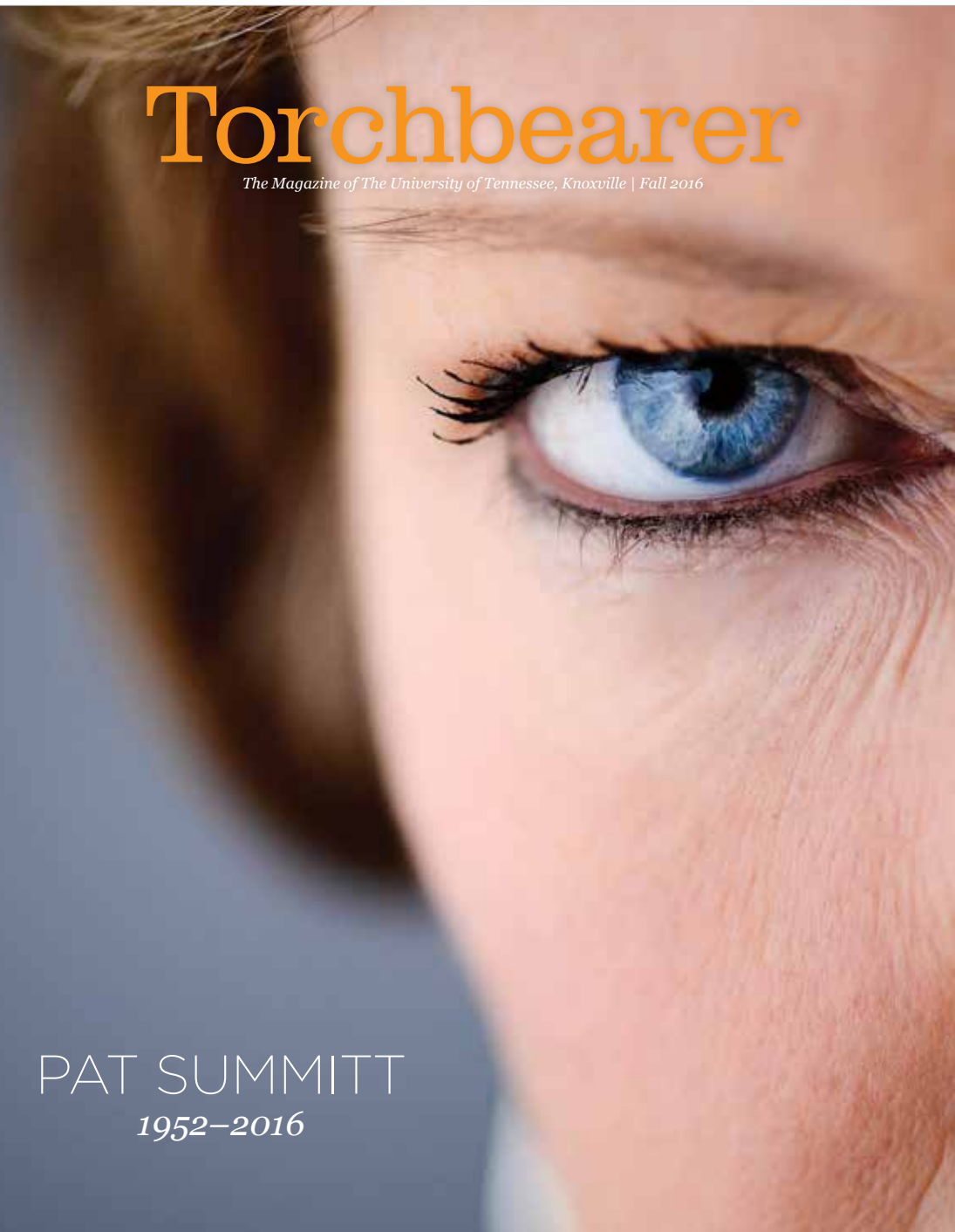
FIVE FINE FACULTY



Illustration by Mario Wagner



Cropping an image across a spread? Cropping someone's head off on a cover? Bam! Mind blown.



Torchbearer

The Magazine of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville | Fall 2016

PAT SUMMITT
1952–2016

#4 Crop It Like It's Hot

“Any photo — literally, any photo — can be way more interesting with cropping. This is what separates strong editorial designers and art directors — how they’re cropping that image. When you go in there really tight, you end up with a whole new image. That’s why I think *Torchbearer’s* cover with the posthumous tribute to legendary coach Pat Summit is so great. Summit was a coach there for decades. Think of the hundreds and hundreds of photos they would have had to choose from, and they could have gone with the usual: her yelling from the sidelines, her standing with an arm around a player, or hanging a championship flag. Instead they boiled it down to her single eye. The cover is so bare, but with that crop, it’s so evocative. You feel like you’re looking into her life. When you’re cropping to this level, you allow the art to sing.”

Photos by Steve Boyle, Charles Jischke, Patrick Murphy-Racey (clockwise from top)



#5 AYKM?! I Did Not Expect That

“One way to elevate your art is to push yourself to be bolder. Do something that doesn’t make sense — that will have your readers saying, ‘What the heck’s going on here?’ The University of Richmond Spring/Summer 2016 cover story is a great example. Immediately, I’m intrigued by the cover — the dancer looks like she’s levitating. And then you open up to the inside spread, and there are dancers in the pouring rain? In the middle of the street? With a traffic light that’s turned green? I’m thinking, aren’t there cars coming? It’s completely unexpected — and totally exciting. And it’s much more riveting than showing the dancers on stage.

“This was Richmond’s cover story, but it’s not a feature article — just a four-page photo story right in the front of the book. Are you allowed to do that? Richmond says so.”

EYE



SERENDIPITY Photographer Jordan Matter, R’91, avoids going into a shoot with a story board or staging notes. His plan is mostly no plan, aside from the goal of capturing tiny, fleeting moments of joy in the everyday things around us.

“I believe strongly in serendipity,” Matter said. He’ll practice a shot for 20 to 30 seconds before shooting finals. His work features athletes, circus folk, and dancers. Matter’s photography has received acclaim from *The New York Times* and BuzzFeed as images that inspire and free the imagination. His next book, *Dancers After Dark*, releases in August.

At the start of finals week, four members of the University Dancers took a study break with Matter to see what moments of joy might be found around the lake. They are Briana Williams, ’18 (cover), Natalie Alessio, ’18 (Page 2, bottom), Cristina Peters, ’18 (Page 3, top left), and Madeline Holm, ’19 (Page 3, bottom right). For a behind-the-scenes look at capturing these photos and an interview with Matter, go to magazine.richmond.edu.

2016 SPRING/SUMMER 1

Photos by Jordan Matter

#6 Get Crafty

“When we have time and talent, but not so much budget, we look for ways to stage and shoot our own covers or feature openers. For our latest cover, we created the scene of a home on Mars. No problem. The cover teases a story about our faculty’s research-based reasons for hope about the future — one of which asserts that colonizing Mars might be possible in our lifetime. So we bought (and later returned, good as new) a model train house, a clear dome, two colors of sand (didn’t return the sand). I poked holes in a black sweep with my husband’s awl to make stars. Our multimedia designer, who usually doesn’t work on magazine photo shoots, painted a matchbox car to look like a space rover. Our graphic designer made the Martian landscape with rows of red construction paper. Our back-of-book designer assembled the model train fence on turf. We shot the whole thing in our reception area.

“Don’t be intimidated by other titles that appear to have an entire prop budget or a videographer they can send to another country. Do what you can with what you have — and don’t be afraid to dig your hands in and create something.”

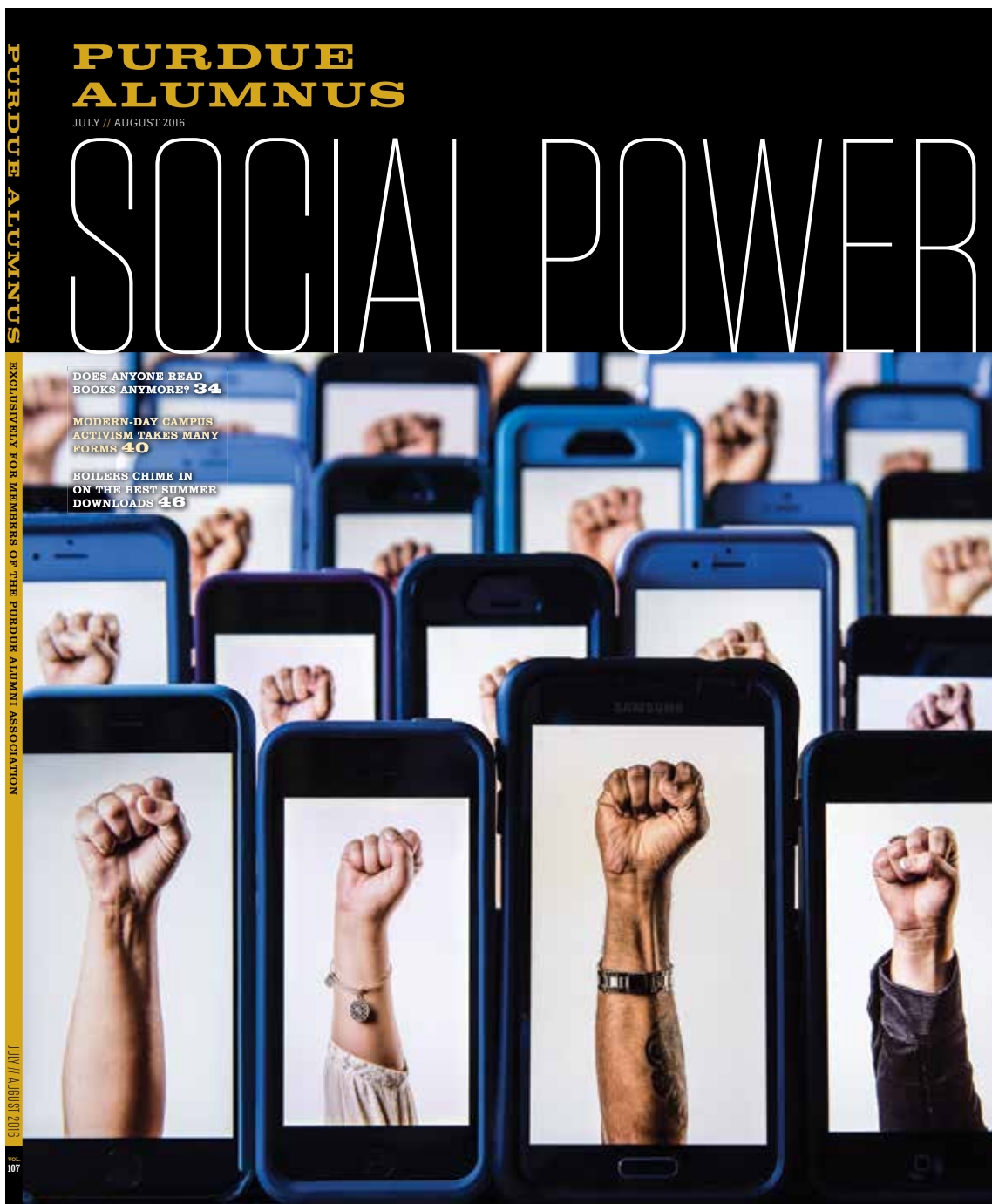


Cover photos by Charles Jischke



Kat Braz, far left. The Purdue Alumni Association communications team gets crafty to produce this cover in-house. On press, it was finished with a reticulated UV coating for a textured look and feel.





#7 Beg, Borrow, Steal

“Some things just can’t be made. So you borrow them.

“My favorite example of this is when we borrowed 40 cell phones for our Social Power cover. Let me tell you, people do *not* want to part with their cell phones!

“This cover story explored what activism on campus looks like today — in particular, that

students organize largely through social media, where ideas take shape and spread very quickly. We decided to use the raised fist because it’s such a universally recognized symbol of protest. We set up shop in a storage closet in our union building and, as people passed by, I asked if they’d sit for quick photos of their fists. Then we sent out an SOS to staff to borrow smart phones, texted an image to each one, and set the

phones up on a spice rack for the shoot. Incidentally, this cover landed me in some hot water. We received some letters and a few calls to the president’s office from people who thought the cover and the use of that sign was abrasive. And that’s OK. ‘Cause here’s the thing: Before we started trying to think about our art differently, we didn’t get a whole lot of letters. Our readers are engaging with our publication. They’re noticing.”