



From Iraq to the classroom

ICP student and Iraq veteran Jeremiah Peterson on adjusting to campus life

Ask Jeremiah Peterson what one of the biggest differences is between student life at the U of M and patrolling Baghdad's most dangerous sectors, and he'll tell you, "more sitting."

Although his response seems facetious, the notion does have some root in truth. For Peterson, an engaging, gregarious 25-year-old who spent 18 months in a combat zone, adjusting to the slower pace of college life has been a bit of a transition.

And it's a transition he is not alone in facing. Hundreds of veterans are currently enrolled at the University of Minnesota, and more are returning from the war and reenrolling every semester.

"It's a unique position to be in,"

Peterson says, "different even from other adults returning to school after time away. The dropout rate for veterans is extremely high."

That's not very surprising, he continues. "Some of these guys haven't been in school for years—they enlisted and got deployed right after high school, and are now having to relearn how to learn. And think about it: for your average college-aged kid, 'life or death' situation means cramming

for a chem final, or forgetting you had a term paper due. For a vet...well, having spent months getting shot at sort of takes the urgency out of studying in the Walter library for nine hours."

Patrolling the "world's most dangerous road"

As grenadier for Delta Company, Peterson was stationed in one of the deadliest places in Baghdad: Airport Road, or Route Irish. The four-lane, six-mile stretch of road running from central Baghdad to

the Iraqi airport functions as a critical supply line for the country. Every day, military convoys as well as businessmen, journalists, and aid workers make the difficult commute.

Called the "world's most dangerous road," Route Irish saw daily attacks—

shootings, suicide bombings, sneak attacks, armed kidnappings, and the like. Peterson's primary job was to patrol the road and the surrounding neighborhoods.

"When we arrived in Baghdad,

"We got to know a lot of the kids in the neighborhood, interact with them, give them toys and candy. And I loved the guys in my unit—we were like a family."



Photo by Tim Rummelhoff

After spending 18 months in a combat zone, Peterson is adjusting to campus life.

something like an average of eight people a day were dying on Route Irish—car bombs, snipings, IEDs [improvised explosive devices]... sure, it was a dangerous job, but in large part, war is reactive. Something happens, and you move, move, move. You can't be afraid; you have to be confident you're doing the right thing."

Peterson and company were responsible for "showing a presence" on the road and drawing fire away from unarmed civilians and aid workers in the area. And although death was a part of life on Airport Road, there were a lot of positives for Peterson.

"We got to know a lot of the kids in the neighborhood, interact with them, give them toys and candy.

And I loved the guys in my unit—we were like a family. We always said, if we could get everyone back together, all of us, and someone asked us to go back over to Iraq, we'd go in a second. It's a close-knit group of people who understand you in a certain way."

What's more, Peterson continues, it was a chance to really make a difference. "Everyone hears about the danger of Route Irish," he says. "But what you don't hear as much, especially from the media, is how much safer it is now. When we left Baghdad, there was fewer than one death a day on the road. Many days there were none at all."

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HEADLINERS

Implications from I-35W bridge collapse subject of first 2007-08 Headliners

Headliners, a popular lecture series that debuted in fall 2006, will return this fall, kicking off with an October 5 event with Professor John Adams of the University of Minnesota Department of Geography and the Humphrey Institute. Professor Adams will speak about, and take questions on, the broader implications of the I-35W bridge collapse for the highway system and public policy in general.

Professor Adams is co-director of the University Metropolitan Consortium, a group that seeks to further studies of urban and suburban issues.

Headliners offers participants a chance to meet once a month with University experts as they share firsthand knowledge of the day's most intriguing stories—the medical breakthroughs, culture clashes, social trends, and foreign affairs that are making headlines. Last year, topics included breakthrough research on a new generation of biofuels; the ongoing conflict in Somalia; and the phenomenal rise of the "Social Web."

The 2007-2008 season is: Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 10, Feb. 7, March 6, and April 3. Because of the timely nature of Headliners, each month's subject and speaker will be announced in the weeks before the event. Tickets to each Headliners are \$10.

All events will be held at the Continuing Education and Conference Center on the U of M's St. Paul campus. For more information, to sign up to receive monthly e-mail updates, or to purchase tickets, visit the Web site www.cce.umn.edu/headliners or call 612-624-4000.

Compleat Scholar gearing up for fall 2007 season

This fall's Compleat Scholar personal enrichment courses range from a historical view of Jesus's world, to what's next for the baby boomer, to the fiction of Jane Austen, to the truths and myths surrounding crime scene investigations.

Taught by University of Minnesota faculty and community experts, Compleat Scholar courses vary in length from three, four, or five weekly evening class sessions. Some include firsthand learning about the natural world through field trips, while others offer behind-the-scenes access to arts events and research sites.

To register for a Compleat Scholar course, or to find out more about the program, visit www.cce.umn.edu/scholars or call 612-624-4000.



SPLIT ROCK
ARTS PROGRAM

Split Rock wraps up 24th season

Split Rock Arts Program has wrapped up another successful summer season.

This year, 39 workshops and retreats played host to hundreds of artists, designers, and writers. Weeklong workshops and three-day shorts were held on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus, and weeklong retreats were conducted at the University's Cloquet Forestry Center in northern Minnesota.

This year's instructors included Craig Blacklock, Irene Chan, Jorie Johnson, Carolyn Forché, Wesley Brown, and Robin Hemley.

Says program director Anastasia Faunce, "Year after year, there are three things that continue to amaze me about Split Rock: one, the myriad personalities, professions, and places that our students represent; two, the enthusiasm that grows as each week progresses; and, three, the intense energy that comes from students as they sustain and build upon the skills, knowledge, and friendships they have gained as part of the experience."

For more information on Split Rock, visit www.cce.umn.edu/splitrockarts or call 612-624-4000.



Looking for a Change?

Career Workshops

Who Am I? Clarifying Your Career and Lifework Goals

Includes the revised *Strong Interest and Skills Confidence Inventory* and the more detailed *Myers-Briggs Type Inventory Step II* career assessments.

Two meetings: Sept. 26 and Oct. 3, 6:30-8:45 p.m.

What's Next for Me? Exploring Career and Educational Options

Two meetings: Oct. 17 and 24, 6:30-8:45 p.m.

How Do I Get There? Setting Goals and Taking Action

Two meetings: Nov. 7 and 14, 6:30-8:45 p.m.

Workshops can be taken individually or as a three-part series.

Series cost is \$335. Individually, the cost for the first (Who Am I?) workshop is \$185; the second (What's Next for Me?) is \$105; and the third (How Do I Get There?) is \$115.

For more information or to register, call 612-624-4000 or visit www.cce.umn.edu/careerservices.

University of Minnesota Alumni Association members and College of Continuing Education learners admitted to College degrees, credit certificates, and those enrolled in professional development certificates receive discounts.

Online Resources

Lifework Indicator

Pursuing changes in lifework can be overwhelming, and the Lifework Indicator can help you identify some initial steps to get you started. Find it on the Web at www.cce.umn.edu/career (click on "Online Tools").

Lifework Lifeline Exercise

The Lifework Lifeline is a simple exercise designed to help you reflect on your career and lifework path and, in so doing, take that first step in self-assessment. Use this free tool at www.cce.umn.edu/career (click on "Online Tools").

What's YOUR CareerPath?

See your career path and strengths in a whole new light. Try CareerPath, a new online personal career management tool, offered free through the College of Continuing Education. The tool is available at www.cce.umn.edu/careerpath.

Career Matters

Advice from a University of Minnesota career consultant with years of experience helping motivated adults explore their options, chart their course, and reach their goals.



Janet Pelto

Over the years, I have found that many people try to hedge their risks in the job market. That is, they try to figure out a foolproof strategy to assure strong job security, so that they will not have to face finding employment in a tight job market.

This approach is futile and misdirected. Futile, because no one can predict the job-market future—even the Bureau of Labor Statistics is usually only correct in its projections about fifty percent of the time. And misdirected because the real question is not "How can I ensure employment," but "How can I make myself most employable."

Striving to be employable improves your position should you want or need to make a change in your work life.

But what makes a person employable? The following are helpful hints for keeping your game in top form.

1. Become a lifelong learner

Every profession changes over time. By taking professional development courses periodically, you'll stay abreast of your field and keep your mind active at the same time.

Visit www.cce.umn.edu/professionaleducation for courses available through the College of Continuing Education.

2. "Know thyself"

We all have unique talents and abilities—be sure you know what types of work best fit your skills. Recognize what you need in a boss, co-workers, and organizational culture. Keep an organized history of what works well for you and what doesn't, as well as accomplishments that highlight your assets. One tool you can use to track all this is CareerPath, available at www.cce.umn.edu/careerpath.

3. Nurture you network

Staying in touch with old friends and making new ones are good habits to get into. Keeping in touch with people from all areas of your life can help you define a career path. Only a small percentage of job opportunities are

posted publicly. You may not be looking for a spot on the payroll just yet, but keeping in contact with people is a good way to bolster your field-specific knowledge and build up your professional network.

4. "Oops" is just another word for "opportunity"

As human beings, we have the capacity to turn almost any experience into a learning situation.

Mishaps in our career situations provide a good opportunity to learn what to do—and what not to do.

Instead of seeing things as limiters—company downsizing, too much responsibility at work, not enough responsibility, aggravating co-workers—try seeing them as positives. Downsizing gives you an opportunity to explore new avenues. Too much work teaches delegation and prioritization tactics. Want more responsibility? Take a course on writing effective proposals, and win that big account. Difficult co-workers help you learn to work effectively with a range of personalities.

When it comes to keeping yourself employable, it's not just a matter of having an updated résumé, it's being diligent in all the little things we do and say—from talking with friends to trying to learn something new every day.

Sincerely,

Janet Pelto
Career and Lifework Consultant
College of Continuing Education
University of Minnesota





Jeremiah Peterson says that although adjusting to student life was hard, he considers himself fortunate.

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Still, when his tour ended in March of 2005, Peterson was happy to come back home—at least for a time.

There's no place like home... or maybe not.

"I came home, and I was restless. It wasn't the place I had left. My friends from school had all graduated and moved away, or gotten jobs...and I wasn't ready to sit still yet, adjust to civilian life." So Peterson packed his bags again, and indulged in one of his passions: traveling.

Peterson spent a month in Asia, visiting Japan and Thailand. He also stayed in hostels across Europe, spent time in Africa, and then went coast to coast in South America—a journey that took almost a solid month.

By fall 2005, Peterson was back in his St. Paul home and ready to resume his studies. He took classes at the U on a pre-med track, and when he realized that wasn't for him, he applied for the Inter-College Program, where he could more closely align his interests with what he was studying.

Although adjusting to student life was hard, he considers himself fortunate.

"It was awkward, and I did struggle a lot that first semester. It takes a lot to transition back to civilian life—and probably doubly so when

"It was awkward, and I did struggle a lot that first semester. It takes a lot to transition back to civilian life—and probably doubly so when you're talking about coming back to a University setting where you have to work with professors and other students."

you're talking about coming back to a university setting where you have to work with professors and other students. It's an entirely different lifestyle, from the way you dress and carry yourself to the way you talk and interact with people."

His decision to come back as a fulltime day student also meant that he was in classes

with more traditionally aged college students. "Like many vets who come back, I was all alone—all my friends had graduated, I was the oldest in most of my classes, and I had no one my age I could talk with or commiserate with about homework and stuff.

"But," he continues, "I was really lucky. I owned my own home [Peterson bought his house at age 21, prior to his deployment]. I knew what benefits were afforded to me as a vet and a soldier. I had

savings and investments. And I was adaptable and motivated to finish my education."

Peterson realizes that not all of his fellow veterans are as fortunate, which is one of the main reasons he volunteers his time as the president of the Veterans Transition Center (VTC), which is supported by a student group for veterans called Comfort for Courage. "It's our goal to give people a place where they can find the peer support they need to reintegrate back into the student population. The VTC lets vets hang out with other people who

have gone through the same thing, faced the same challenges. They can feel free to be themselves, and to ask questions like, 'hey, did you have this same experience?' or 'why is it so hard to relate to people right now?'"

The center also provides information on Veteran's Affairs, the Montgomery GI Bill, psychological assistance and physical injury support, and education about post-traumatic stress disorder and post-traumatic growth. The center is working with the U to obtain funding for tutoring services as well.



Photo by Matt Lovitz

Peterson shakes the hand of an Iraqi child.

Photo by Matt Lovitz



Peterson watches for trouble under Iraq's hot sun.

Photo by Jerold Huntington



Assigned to guard the "world's most dangerous road," Peterson spent months on Airport Road, or Route Irish, in Baghdad.

In addition, Peterson says, the VTC also provides something of a safe haven and a welcoming atmosphere —something that can occasionally be hard to find in a politically liberal environment such as a university campus. People are more open about their political beliefs on a college campus than in a regular workplace, Peterson says, and that can make veterans feel inadequate, or even unwanted. But, he says, for many veterans, fighting in the war does not necessarily have anything to do with their personal politics.

"Like many vets who come back, I was all alone—all my friends had graduated, I was the oldest in most of my classes, and I had no one my age I could talk with or commiserate with about homework and stuff."

"It was my job to go over there," Peterson says. "Sometimes you may not like your boss. You may not always want to do stuff his way. But he's your boss, and sometimes, at work, you do what your job has you do. That's just the way it is." The U is working to help the veterans who are returning from combat zones. VTC is working with OneStop, for example to host a veterans-only orientation session that addresses their unique concerns and questions. VTC has also secured its own room on campus, at 15 Eddy Hall, and some funding for the upcoming year.

Return engagement?

In order to fund his education, Peterson reenlisted with the Guard this past January, and spends his time training units stateside that are getting ready to deploy. He's signed on for another three years, and although it is unlikely he will be sent back to Iraq, the possibility does exist.

Not one to dwell, however, Peterson is diligently working on designing his ICP degree in chemistry, business, and pre-professional studies, and estimates that he has about a year and a half left before graduation. He would like to go on to physical therapy school (he currently volunteers at the V.A. hospital in the therapy ward) with the goal of "opening my own practice somewhere up North; running and expanding it until I can hire a partner to take it over; making some wise investments, and then retiring to travel."

So where does Peterson eventually see himself "retiring to travel"? Right here at home. "I've seen a lot of places, and had some very out there experiences. But it was because of Minnesota that I developed my work ethic and my values. Out of all the places I've been, I love Minnesota the best."

More information about the Veterans Transition Center can be found at www.comfortforcourage.org.

To learn more about individualized degree programs from the College of Continuing Education, visit www.cce.umn.edu/degrees, or call 612-624-4000.

The mission of the College of Continuing Education is to provide adults with quality continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for professional development, personal enrichment, career transitions, and academic growth.

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Editor:
Rachel Wright
wright474@umn.edu

Writer:
Megan Rocker

Graphic Designer:
Linda Peterson

CCE Information Center:
20 Classroom Office Building
Telephone 612-624-4000

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College of Continuing Education scholarships and grants provide funding for more than 200 students each year and are applicable to the College's credit or noncredit courses. Admission to a certificate or degree program is not required.
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It's imagination time: U invites boomers to create a brighter future

At the final Great Conversations event of 2007, Richard Leider and Richard Bolles had a lively discussion about finding meaning in life. The same event saw the launch of LearningLife, a new College program for people in the second half of life.

At the turn of the 20th century, the average life expectancy at birth was only 47 years. Now, a century later, it's nearly 80.

Where once the concept of "retirement" was virtually unheard of, we are now faced with a society in which more than a quarter of the work force will reach traditional retirement age over the next two decades. "And what's more," comments Richard Leider, author, founder of "The Purpose Project," and senior fellow at the U of M's Center for Spirituality and Healing, "even as recently as a few decades ago, when people did get to retire... most of them just up and died within 24 months, anyway."

Now, however, individuals have 20, sometimes 30 or more years of living after they leave the work-force. "It's as if we've been given a 'bonus life,'" says Leider. "And that's great—but many people are at a

loss as to how to spend the second half of their lives."

So, with retirees now living longer than ever before, what does it mean when the biggest, best informed generation in American history reaches retirement age?

Well, for one, it means "there is an unprecedented storehouse of wisdom, passion, energy, and experience that we can all benefit from," says Andrea Gilats, former director of the Split Rock Arts Program and a boomer herself.

"That's the kind of energy we all thrive on," says Gilats, who is spearheading a new College of Continuing Education initiative called LearningLife, which is specifically targeting people in the second half of life. "We thought,

wouldn't a joint venture between boomers and the U make a lot of sense?"

On June 5, at a sold-out Great Conversations event, Leider and Richard Bolles, author of the best-selling book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, discussed the changing face of retirement. During the event, the College asked attendees, "How can the College and the university make a positive impact on the lives of boomers?"

The answers are forming the basis for LearningLife.

The initiative will include learning opportunities for boomers and others, and will invite participants to ask the question, "Is there something more?" Participants can find their own answers as they give input to the College about how LearningLife should be shaped and what the content should be.

Says Gilats, "LearningLife will allow participants to help create—as joint partners—programs to help themselves and society thrive. They will create their own journeys. They'll be able to take courses for both pleasure and purpose, join lively, provocative learning communities, create newly meaningful 'encore' careers, make a difference in their near and far worlds, and more."

Gilats continues, "The College has been offering adults access to distinctive education for decades, and it still will. LearningLife will be a new set of tools in the kit. Imagine

the possibilities: a partnership of powerhouses, as many turning points as there are people. It will truly bring together learning and living."

This December, LearningLife will officially kick off with a daylong Fest. The event, like all of LearningLife, will be co-created by audience members. People who want to make their voices heard can visit the program's Web site at www.cce.umn.edu/learninglife and comment on questions ranging from "How can you share your knowledge?" to "Do you need instant gratification?" The Fest will be crafted, in part, by visitors' responses to these questions.

"The second half of life is prime time for getting it right. It's prime time for having the times of our lives. And if we want our lives to matter, this is the time to get with it," says Gilats. "That's why we hope to make LearningLife a community that is relevant to its audience, which we know is wonderfully diverse. It will bring a universe of University content to us. It will welcome and value us as co-creators of our learning. And it will invite us to connect with each other for inspiration, affirmation, and to exchange accumulated wisdom."

What do you want from your LearningLife? Visit www.cce.umn.edu/learninglife to submit your ideas and join the online discussion.

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Andrea Gilats



Information Center and Advising move to St. Paul campus

This summer, the offices for the College of Continuing Education's Information Center and Degree and Credit Programs moved from Wesbrook Hall on the East Bank to Suite 20 of Classroom Office Building on the St. Paul campus.

Offices and advisers for the following programs moved to Suite 20 of Classroom Office Building:

- Inter-College Program and Multidisciplinary Studies
- Bachelor of Applied Science
- Program for Individualized Learning
- Master of Liberal Studies
- Credit certificates
- Independent and Distance Learning
- Offices for evening classes and summer term

Offices for English as a Second Language and the Program in Translation and Interpreting will remain in Wesbrook. Precollege programs will remain in their current location in the Armory.

The college's new mailing address is:

College of Continuing Education
University of Minnesota
20 Classroom Office Building
1994 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

The campus mail address is Suite 20, ClaOff.

For more information, maps and parking and shuttle information, visit www.cce.umn.edu/St.Paulmove or call 612-624-4000.



Photo by Tony Nelson

CCE staff members (left to right) Janet Pelto, Bob Danforth, and Hannah Sundermeyer in the new home of the Information Center and Advising, Suite 20 of Classroom Office Building.



Andrea Gilats

Draft Strategy

by Andrea Gilats,
*Continuing Education in Professional
and Creative Writing*



Our first attempt at a piece of writing is rarely our finished product. The writing itself needs work, and because we think and write at the same time, our ideas may not be fully formed. Yet we often want or need to share drafts—even early ones—in work settings.

What are the rewards and pitfalls of sharing unfinished pieces of writing with internal and external audiences? How can you get feedback that leads to a great finished product? How can you avoid feeling misunderstood when sharing drafts?

My first rule: A draft should represent your best effort at the time you share it. Labeling something a draft is not an excuse for shoddy writing or lazy thinking.

My second rule: Consider your audience. Always have your readers in mind as you make decisions about what to share and when and how to share it. I have shared drafts in meetings only to have everyone come away no better off because I was asking the wrong things of the wrong people.

My third rule: Give your reader specific background information when you share your draft. If the draft is at an early stage, be sure to say so. If you're looking for comments about certain sections, say which ones and what you're not sure of.

And now for some tips.

How widely will you be sharing your draft? If I'm going to share a draft at a meeting, I try to circulate it in advance so that people aren't reading and reacting at the same time. That said, it can be enlightening and valuable to get people's first reactions. If that's my goal, I don't send the draft in advance.

What is your audience's stake in your draft? Do you need approval to continue? There are many reasons for sharing drafts, such as

reaching consensus on content, incorporating others' ideas into your document, and testing how well, and how quickly, people understand what you wrote. Always consider your audience's stake in your document and their roles as contributors or collaborators.

How open are you to suggestions? Are you primarily seeking validation or even praise? How rough a draft should you share? In my experience, the rougher a draft I share, the more likely it is to be misunderstood, which makes me feel defensive or just plain down. At the same time, sharing a first draft can be a great way to discover glaring problems that may not have crossed your mind, and there is nothing more exhilarating than a breakthrough.

Overall, I have found that my writing projects have benefited immeasurably from sharing drafts with colleagues, other stakeholders, and even customers. The real trick is to listen, even when you're tempted to dismiss something. And take people's advice as often as you can. Everyone is empowered when their voices are heard, and your document will be better for it.

Write On!

Continuing Education for Professional and Creative Writing offers short courses in professional and workplace writing, writing essentials, effective written communication, and personal and creative writing. Visit www.cce.umn.edu/writing now for writing features, including the free Writing Rx self-evaluation; direct links to short courses; and to join the writing e-mail list.



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College of Continuing Education
University of Minnesota
340 Coffey Hall
1420 Eckles Avenue
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Photo by Mike Green

FROM IRAQ TO THE CLASSROOM

Veteran and student Jeremiah Peterson talks about life on the "world's most dangerous road" and his return to Minnesota.

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Driven to DiscoverSM