

Transcript for KAFM Community Affairs: CMUnow on August 13, 2019

Katlin Birdsall: Remarkable accomplishments are happening everyday on the Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College campuses. From faculty instruction and research, to student projects and community involvement. CMUnow is a new monthly segment on the KAFM community affairs hour, where we will interview faculty, athletic coaches, and students to keep you up to date on all things CMU and WCCC. I'm your host Katlin Birdsall along with my co-host David Ludlam, and we will have three guests on the show today starting with Mo LaMee who is with our department of Theatre Arts. So welcome Mo, how are you doing today?

Mo LaMee: It's great to be here, thanks!

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah, thank you for taking the time out of your schedule especially right before school is starting, to come down and...

Mo LaMee: It's kind of crazy, they're showing up!

Katlin Birdsall: I know, I cannot believe that summer time is already over.

Mo LaMee: I can't either, I had a great summer but I'm ready to get back at it.

Katlin Birdsall: Great!

Mo LaMee: Yeah.

Katlin Birdsall: So we kind of wanted to start of the show today chatting with you a little bit about your upcoming season for theatre and dance. It is the 50th anniversary of the building that you guys are

housed in, and I know that this year's season is going to be inquiry, discover, and celebration. So can you talk to us a little bit about maybe where the inspiration for this season came from?

Mo LaMee: Well, you know, we have been in this space now for 50 years and I have been thinking about 50 years in terms of human scale, is a long time. Like a 50 year old building is a space that has been occupied by you know, thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands of patrons over the years. And hundreds, maybe thousands of performers, from people that have gone on now to Broadway, to people that are working all over the regional theatre, to the young people that are coming in as freshmen now. So it has this kind of... it's imbued with this really rich history. And so we wanted to, you know, celebrate this time of 5 decades in a building, trying to make magic!

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah, I love that.

David Ludlam: I do too, and you know that kind of leads us into the question that I wanted to ask you. You talked about the inspiration for the season, but walk us through a description of what we have in store this year.

Mo LaMee: Well we are starting out with a musical that probably most people have not heard of, called First Date. And you can imagine that it is about a first date. And, it explodes all of the things that happen in a first date, mostly your one's own sort of neurosis about yourself, what you might say, all the things that you might think about the person you're with, and the misconceptions you might have. And so then other actors come out and recreate the fears and anxieties of the two people that are on the stage. So really... it's just absolutely charming, really fun. It would be a great first date! It would be a great date show to come see, really fun.

David Ludlam: As you talk about that I am reliving some of those experiences myself so that will be fun to go check it out, I can't wait for the show!

Mo LaMee: Everybody will, and it really does get into some of your own neuroses. It's really, really, really charming.

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah, it makes me thankful that I am married now, that I don't have to go through that anymore. Well you are listening to CMU now on KAFM community affairs and our first guest today is Mo LaMee who is the head of the department of Theatre Arts. So you said we are going to kick off the season on First Date?

Mo LaMee: Yeah so I guess I haven't really thought about this before but we really have a somewhat romantic fall season because the next show is Pride and Prejudice, the great Jane Austen novel, which has been adapted into really wonderful movies. And if you like Jane Austen and you like Pride and Prejudice, and Lizzy and you know, Mr. Darcy trying to figure it out, it is utterly charming. And, I am a bit of a romantic myself so I'm particularly fond of that novel and of this adaptation of it which is really smart and really lyric, and a wonderful production that our costume designer Jill Van Brussel is going to direct. She directed 1776 last year and she's so good that we thought we'd give her another chance at doing it.

Katlin Birdsall: That's awesome! And then too, going from First Date which is kind of a show that maybe, many people haven't heard of, and then going to a pretty classic where I feel like a lot of audience-goers will know.

Mo LaMee: They will, yeah, yeah. So, that's how we are starting the season out. And then we are doing, just kind of sticking with the idea of a 50-year theme and sort of sticking into the idea of tradition. We are

going to do Fiddler on the Roof in the spring. I think most people are familiar with that musical. And I actually just met and auditioned... I had met him before but, I decided that Lee Borden is going to play Tevye. And we just had an audition this morning, I think Lee has been on the show many times, and he's done, I think he's performed the part, something like 400 times.

Katlin Birdsall: Oh, jeez.

Mo LaMee: And so, it is deeply embedded into his psyche and we had probably about an hour and a half long conversation just about some of the themes. And it starts out with this idea of tradition, and then as Tevye you know, and his family are forced out through the Russian program... he has a much more complicated relationship with God and with his own traditions. And I think that's why the musical has power and continues to be done year after year.

David Ludlam: So Mo, I've seen him play that role twice myself on two different stages in my life. And, it's overwhelmingly powerful. So what is it about him as a local actor and a character that is so attractive and makes him channel that character so well?

Mo LaMee: Well, you know, I've never seen him act before. And so I was sitting in a little room in the art gallery over here and it was a very, it was an almost like, it was a very hard-surfaced room in like this studio. And so he was, sort of like, exploding out of this room! He really has a lot of power, he's very charismatic. Because he's done the role so many times, he understands it really well, and it's very detailed. But, what was fun is we suggested a few ideas and he was just able to run with different ideas that he tried before which was really great.

Katlin Birdsall: Great, and so, we already talked about, we've got First Date, and then Pride and Prejudice, and then we are doing Fiddler on the Roof, and how are you guys rounding out this year's season?

Mo LaMee: We are doing this play called The Wolves, which is about an all high school soccer team, all girls high school soccer team. And it was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2016. It's a fantastic play. We had the students read it last semester and they were so excited about doing it, that we just decided that we had to do it, because it deals with a lot of issues that young women are dealing with and then broadens out to global issues that young women are dealing with. It's a very, very powerful play.

Katlin Birdsall: Great, well, we're already kind of getting to the end of our time with you. This always goes by super quick!

David Ludlam: Well, I've got one more question for him Katlin.

Katlin Birdsall: Okay, one more question, go ahead David!

David Ludlam: You know, I'm just curious. I'm a sentimentalist, I know which one is my favorite. But what are you looking forward to most this season if you had to pick one maybe?

Mo LaMee: Well, I just want to mention also, we have two dance concerts that I just want to stick in there. And one of the things I'm really excited about is we are bringing back a choreographer and a faculty member named James Wallace who worked for CMU four years ago. And, some of the stuff that he choreographed still is stuck in my mind because it is so visually compelling. So, I'm excited to see what he is going to do this year.

Katlin Birdsall: Great! Alright well we want to thank you again Mo for coming on the show again today and letting the KAFM listeners know what's coming up with the new theatre and dance season. So thanks

for joining us, don't go anywhere, we will be right back with our second guest!

SEGMENT BREAK

Katlin Birdsall: Alright, welcome back to CMUnow, a monthly show where we talk about the remarkable things happening at Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College. We would like to welcome our second guest, instructor of History, Tim Winegard. Thank you so much Tim for coming on the show today.

Tim Winegard: Of course, thank you.

Katlin Birdsall: So we kind of have a big deal to talk about with you today. We've got your new book that was just recently released: *The Mosquito: a Human History of our Deadliest Predator*. So I guess I kind of wanted to start off today with what was the inspiration behind this book and behind this topic? Because it's very relevant to all of human kind but maybe not a topic many people would think about on a regular basis here in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Tim Winegard: Well obviously West Nile is pervasive here in Grand Junction, and I talked to numerous students and faculty members who had contracted West Nile over the years. I look at history essentially as a puzzle, and it was just a matter of taking different puzzle pieces from different academic sources across the wide variety library of different academic fields, and slowly piecing the puzzle pieces together to create a picture and a larger puzzle. Where I could see the connections being made throughout history between the mosquito-borne diseases and varying important turning points, wars or events across our existence.

Katlin Birdsall: Mhmm, great!

David Ludlam: Well, you know, Dr. Winegard, one of the things that people know about your book, it's exciting that you have a global book tour. I think that's something that few people accomplish. What does it feel like to one day be teaching classes and publishing and the next day you are doing a world book tour? What does that feel like?

Tim Winegard: I always thought I was going to be famous for anything it would be playing hockey but, as a Canadian you know, that is kind of the boyhood dream. But I think it's exciting, it's extremely surreal, it's tiring to be honest, and it's certainly very humbling at the same time. Parts of me feels like this is happening to somebody else, not necessarily to me. And for people who know me, students or faculty or people around the community, I'm a small town Canadian boy, and that's kind of how I behave a lot of the time as well so, but it is very exciting and you know, it's nice to see my hard work and many years of research and writing pay off and come to fruition.

David Ludlam: Well truly, congratulations and when you think about, you mentioned researching, when you were doing your research was there anything that surprised you? Was there something that you came across that you were not expecting and it just sticks in your mind as an academic?

Tim Winegard: I think there's a personal connection to my wife's family, she went to CMU, was actually the editor of The Crite, and born in raised in Grand Junction. Dealing with her grandfather, who's also from western Colorado, now he contracted malaria, one of numerous mosquito borne diseases at Anzio and then at Dachau in the Second World War. And he knew he obviously had contracted malaria twice but didn't know why, until I had told him in the spring of 2017 in person and I pulled back the curtains for him and his own family about his war experience. So, long story short, the Pontine Marshes surround Rome

and head south towards Anzio, were historically a malarial hot bed. And Mussolini drained the Pontine Marshes prior to the Second World War, reducing malaria rates across Rome and Italy at large by more than 90% it was actually quite an astonishing feat. So the Nazis purposefully re-flood the Pontine Marshes as a deliberate act of biological warfare to weaponize malarious mosquitos in and around Anzio. And Rex Rany, my wife's grandfather contracted malaria at Anzio because of this biological warfare. And later in the war he contracts malaria when he and his unit are liberating the Dachau concentration camp. Now Dachau was the head of the Nazi tropical medicine research program. So they were carrying out horrific experiments with malaria and yellow fever, and certain drugs on Jewish prisoners, and he was bitten by one of these experimental mosquitos and contracted malaria again. So it was just, tying that all together for him I think. And from a personal aspect, forget the words on the page, that's his life and his family's life, and being able to kind of enlighten him about what happened was gratifying and of course he was 96, a stoic war vet. And after I told him this he looked at me very wryly and said: "Well Tim, that makes sense." And that was it, went back to sipping on his after dinner scotch.

David Ludlam: That's an amazing story.

Katlin Birdsall: That is an amazing story. Well you are listening to CMU now on KAFM community affairs, and our second guest today is instructor of History, Dr. Tim Winegard. So, are there any new treatments for malaria or new weapons against the mosquito? You know, you obviously delve into the history of mosquitos and how it has affected human history but, are there any new kind of treatments or things we should know about that come out of your book?

Tim Winegard: Well, malaria is still, the mosquito is still the biggest killer of humanity on the planet, including humans. Humans are a distant second to mosquito-borne diseases. Malaria has historically been the scourge in human kind and has tracked our evolution. It's been with us throughout our hominid evolution certainly, our relatively brief existence as Homo sapiens so, it's been the disease. It's a parasite, not a virus, so vaccines don't work in the traditional sense that they do for viruses for example, for yellow fever. Which was also a paramount killer. A vaccine was unveiled in the 1930s. So, the life cycle of malaria is so complex it's actually magnificent if you look at it as an animal, a magnificent creature and how it's able to evolve and adapt, which is why it's been able to circumvent our best front-line weapons and drugs against it. It's just a remarkable creature which is why it's still such a paramount killer. Keep in mind that mosquitos by themselves are harmless. It's the pathogens, they transmit or vector that cause the suffering, misery, and death. So, Crispr, gene-editing technology has made you know, a media storm and buzz since it was unveiled in 2012. Essentially what Crispr can do is intrude on natural selection by manipulating genomes and DNA within any animal whether that be humans or mosquitos. It's actually quite fascinating and remarkable. You know, Jurassic Park is no longer fiction. So, in regards to the mosquito, there's two options, keep in mind that of the 3,500 mosquito species the majority do not transmit or vector disease. So nobody's promoting the elimination of mosquitos from the face of the planet. But, targeting these specific vectoring species is to Crispr mosquitos to make their off spring infertile, sterile, or only male thereby potentially

bringing down that specific species. The other avenue would be to Crispr mosquitos to simply make them harmless by making them incapable of actually vectoring the specific pathogen or disease, thereby bringing down that disease without necessarily bringing down the mosquito species itself.

Katlin Birdsall: There we go!

David Ludlam: Also, you know, I was just up on the Grand Mesa with my family, and getting away from biology and maybe into some of more of the folklore around mosquitos, somebody told one of my little girls that she is getting bitten more because she has brown hair. I mean you hear all kinds of things like this. Is there really any truth or behind these myths as to why some people are bit and others aren't?

Tim Winegard: Well, they like females over males... myth. They prefer blondes and red-heads over people with darker hair... myth. They prefer people with lighter skin as compared to darker more leathery skin... myth. However, there are some truths. Unfortunately, 85% of what makes you alluring or less alluring to mosquitos is pre-hardwired in your genetic circuit board.

David Ludlam: Ahhhh

Katlin Birdsall: Ah shoot!

Tim Winegard: Blood type O is her vintage of choice over A or B or their blend. It also depends on the chemicals, the levels of chemicals and bacteria in and on your skin, primarily lactic acid, also how much CO₂ you naturally emit. CO₂ is a mosquito magnetizer. The bacteria on our feet, is a mosquito aphrodisiac. So there are various things in your genetic circuit board that unless you Crispr yourself you can't do much about that attract mosquitos or don't attract mosquitos. Wearing bright colors is not a good idea. She hunts by both smell, meaning carbon

dioxide, and sight, bright colors. I'm sure a lot of listeners don't want to hear this, and we don't know the reason yet, but she has an affinity for beer drinkers.

David Ludlam: Uh oh... uh oh.

Katlin Birdsall: Ohhhh, rude, that's just rude.

David Ludlam: The takeaway is wash your feet. The takeaway is wash your feet.

Katlin Birdsall: Wash your feet and drink wine.

Tim Winegard: Wash your feet but be stinky everywhere else.

Katlin Birdsall: Great, well we are already coming to the end of our time with you today, David do you have any more questions for Dr. Winegard?

David Ludlam: No, and again, congratulations, and thank you for being here with us.

Tim Winegard: Of course, thank you so much.

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah, we really appreciate it, and again, Tim Winegard's book: *The Mosquito: a Human History of our Deadliest Predator* is out now. Don't go anywhere because we are going to take a short break and we will be right back with CMU head football coach, Russ Martin.

SEGMENT BREAK

Katlin Birdsall: Welcome back to CMUnow, a monthly show where we talk about the remarkable things happening at Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College. We'd like to welcome our third guest today, CMU head football coach, Russ Martin. Welcome to the show!

Russ Martin: Hey it's great to be here. I tell you, those other two guys are a tough act to follow. I'm sitting here getting an education with this and all that.

David Ludlam: Wasn't that fun?

Russ Martin: That was!

David Ludlam: Coach, let's just dive right in! So, you know, if you don't know much about football and you just show up to the games on a Saturday, you don't know what kind of preparation goes into a preseason. Just tell us a little bit about that, so the people understand what goes in, all the hard work your staff and your team put into the preseason.

Russ Martin: You know, in a preseason, our guys are basically, they're going from seven in the morning, we get them up and get them to breakfast. They get over to the training room, we are on the field at 8:45 until basically about 11:10 or 11:15. They get a break for lunch and they get the training room as well in-between, and then 1:15 we're back in our special teams meetings. We'll meet and/or be in lifting and conditioning in the afternoon until 5:30, they're back over for dinner, and then basically 6:15 we are back for a team meeting, little bit more installation and walkthrough in the evening. So, they get some very long days right now prior to school starting, and we're in a time crunch because in most cases you get a week and a half to two weeks of preseason. This year we get one week before school starts, and so, once we hit that point, we are on a 20 hour a week schedule for our players. So it is pretty much all day right now for our guys.

Katlin Birdsall: And it's not like it's exactly cool out there either while they're out there practicing in that upper ninety degree weather.

Russ Martin: You know it does, and the heat becomes an issue and stuff, but it's also a stand point that there have been a lot of rules that the NCAA has made that are for the safety of the athletes. So really there's only one practice a day, and then there's a walkthrough, and then you have your lifting or your conditioning, and there has to be a three hour break in between there. Now, you can have meetings, but it's a true physical break. And so our guys are managed very well.

Katlin Birdsall: Great, and I'm sure this is going to be kind of a tricky question because there's a lot that's going to be happening in this upcoming season. And you've been with the team now is it... are you heading into your eighth year as a head coach here?

Russ Martin: Yes, yep, eighth year.

Katlin Birdsall: Okay, so what are you most excited about for this year? What's kind of getting you jazzed up and really excited for this new season?

Russ Martin: You know, I think there will be a lot of new faces in our program, both because of graduation, because of a couple of other issues that are taking place, but what I am really excited about is I think we have a great group of seniors for leadership. And I think we've got great team chemistry already. And I think that that is still a couple of the most important factors that there are if you're going to be successful.

Katlin Birdsall: I would agree with that.

David Ludlam: Coach, you mentioned team chemistry. I wanted to ask you something about that, you know, I've watched you and your team overcome challenges to get where you are today. And I have to believe that part of that is something about you and your philosophy. How do

you establish the culture that you have established and how have you built this program and how have you overcome challenges?

Russ Martin: You know, there have been a lot of different challenges that we have faced, some of them are on the field, some are in the classroom, and some of them are off the field. And a couple of them off the field have been very much a character tester for our football team. If we go back, five years ago, we had a young man in our program, Austin Worthington that drowned in a swimming accident and stuff. Austin was a young man that had great enthusiasm, great desire, and love of the game of football and loved being a CMU Mav. We have used that as an example for our players to understand, you know, to me, I believe they have been given God-given talent. But they've also developed that talent. So they've got to understand that when you have been given a lot of things then there are a lot of things expected. So one of the things we do expect, we expect our players to set a standard in the classroom, we want them to set a standard in the community with their character and with community service. And our players have bought in to that. And so a lot of it is really just players buying in that the things you're hearing are life-long. They're life lessons, it's not just about X's and O's or wins and losses on the football field, but even much greater. Thankfully for us, those same characteristics are going to make us successful on the field.

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah.

David Ludlam: Thank you!

Katlin Birdsall: Well you are listening to CMUnow on KAFM community affairs and our third guest today, CMU head football coach, Russ Martin. That kind of leads perfectly into my next question of, you know, we are at the D2 level, and so, I think for me that obviously there is a big difference between D2, D1, D3, and so what do you think kind of

sets our program at CMU apart from other D2 programs or even just other football programs at other colleges and universities?

Russ Martin: Well, one thing in particular that I love about here is, number one, just the university itself, we actually, we have a phenomenal university. And I think one of the things that's maybe still too much of a secret, is the quality of our academic programs. We've got some great programs at Colorado Mesa. And we've got a great campus. Once young men and women come onto the campus, they want to be here. And that also goes into the surrounding area as far as Grand Junction. And so I think that we have a great opportunity for young men and women to grow to be able to enjoy life, along with getting their college education. I think if you look at the tradition of the CMU athletic programs, they're going to compete on not just conference but even on national levels. And, young men and women, they want to compete, and they want to raise their level. And so, I think there's a lot of natural attraction to that, that's kind of what we emphasize with our players. We want young men that want to compete, that want to challenge themselves. But at the same time, understand you're here to be a person, you're here to be a student. You're going to grow in a lot of different ways, and I'm blessed to have some great coaches, that believe and share the same things.

Katlin Birdsall: That's amazing, the student in student athlete.

David Ludlam: Yeah, yeah. Coach, you know, you've developed a program, where, you've developed a big fan base, and people that have started following individual players. The team is about more than an individual, but are there any, you know, players returning that stand out in your mind that you're expecting a lot from on the field this year?

And what should fans be excited about in terms of the quality of athletes that you are putting out on the field.

Russ Martin: You know, this year I think there's probably going to be more names that they are not familiar with than they are. Because we have had some big names that have graduated and have finished. These guys, we've got a lot of no-name guys so to speak. But I think they really understand what role they play as far as this football team. I think as the season goes on, you're going to have a lot more of them being identified as outstanding players. But I think the biggest thing is that, you know, as they go into each day, they really accept the responsibility and the accountability, but they also reach out to the community. We've had our players involved, one of the things that I really love our players being involved with, is the challenger program here in Grand Junction. And, to me, that's a perfect example of truly giving, because there's no way those young men and women are going to be able to give back to our players, that's a stand point that you know, once our players do that, they look forward to being involved in that, and they truly love that. And it's amazing how many relationships they develop with those kids. And, at the same time, a lot of our players develop relationships with those parents. And, one of the things I really love as a coach, is after the game, seeing some of those young men and women from the challengers, from some of the elementary schools there, with their parents, and they're hanging around our players, and our players are visiting with them. So to me, I want them to develop those relationships, and you know, I'm going to take one more step, cause one of the things that we are pushing more and more, that we might go into a classroom, we want them to be the ones sitting up front. And we want them to be proud of what they are, and what they're doing, who they represent, but also them, set an example in the classroom as well. So, it's going to go into a lot of different things, but I

think we've had a great, great fan base here. And obviously I think Grand Junction is a sports town.

Katlin Birdsall: Mhmm.

David Ludlam: Absolutely

Katlin Birdsall: Great! Well we are already at the end of our time so thank you so much for coming in today, we appreciate it. And so I do believe your guys' season kicks off September 7th and your first home game is the 14th? Is that correct?

Russ Martin: Yes, first two games are the 14th and the 21st, 7 o'clock kick offs. Our opening game is at South Dakota Mines.

David Ludlam: Looking forward to it!

Katlin Birdsall: Alright well thank you so much for coming on today coach!

Russ Martin: Thank you!

Katlin Birdsall: Alright David and we are getting to the end of our time overall so before we get out of here, I just kind of wanted to touch base with you if there's anything else happening at CMU and WCCC that KAFM listeners should be aware of or know that's going on.

David Ludlam: Oh yeah, you know Katlin, there's a lot of things going on but I think one that is really important for the community is taking the time and giving the reverence deserved to honor reverend Martin Luther King, the anniversary of the "I Have a Dream" speech is coming up I think on August 28th a lot of people know. And we have a special guest, he's an international speaker, and he's going to be in the Moss Performing Arts Center, not only doing a rendition of "I Have a Dream", but meeting the students and teaching and talking about what Martin Luther King Jr.'s teachings meant to the country and to our world. So I

think that's really exciting, have you heard about that? Or are you going to come, or?

Katlin Birdsall: Oh yeah! I've already got, so I know that the tickets are free but they are asking people to reserve their space so we know kind of which theatre we need to be in. So yep, I've already got my ticket and I'll be there.

David Ludlam: Great, great. Well do we have time for one more?

Katlin Birdsall: Let's see... yep we've got time for one quick more.

David Ludlam: Great, because I was going to throw it in there anyway if I could. You know, I think it's something exciting in the downtown area. The student art gallery, the CMU art gallery, 437 Co. is really growing leaps and bounds in terms of community awareness and I think it's from support from businesses downtown. And we were just able to announce new partnerships, new underwriters who are going to I think help bring the gallery to the next level. So, I think listeners are going to want to stay tuned for how CMU is helping creative art district downtown and the role that we play just in the arts in general outside of the campus boundaries.

Katlin Birdsall: Yeah, and in conjunction with I believe it was Taco Party, Carlson Vineyards, Kannah Creek Brewing Company so, working with a lot of other downtown businesses to help I think make downtown an even better place to be.

David Ludlam: Yeah, they're going to be underwriting all of the exhibitions for the year and it's something we are really excited about.

Katlin Birdsall: Great. Alright! Well thank you so much for tuning in today, the segment airs on the second Tuesday of each month on KAFM community radio. You can also listen to podcasts of today's show at kafmradio.org. I'm your host Katlin Birdsall, along with my co-host

David Ludlam, and we'll be back next month for another edition of CMUnow on the community affairs hour.

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