



PARENTS

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Parents are part of the UC Davis family. Programs and services include the Aggie Parents Association, the Aggie Family Pack newsletter, the UC Davis Parents Fund and Aggie Pride Parents, for the parents of varsity student-athletes.

have biked a total of more than 6,500 miles and raised nearly \$1 million for research grants. One of those grants went to School of Veterinary Medicine molecular biosciences professor Gino Cortopassi. "I could not be more proud, because Gino was the one who first inspired me to make a difference with this disease," says Bryant, who previously worked for a Sacramento engineering firm. In May, Bryant and his team will be biking through Davis. Other Ride Ataxia events will be held this year in Dallas, Philadelphia and Orlando, Fla.

2006 CLAIRE CONLON of Sacramento recently became a legislative and press aide in the Capitol office of California Sen. Kevin de Leon, D-Los Angeles. She spent the previous two years as the executive director of the California Young Democrats.

2008 MELISSA CAMMAROSANO and husband Carmine welcomed their son, Carlo Anthony, in May. He joins his sister Sophia, 5. Melissa is a full-time mother and her husband is an ophthalmologist with Woodland Healthcare.

2009 ELIZABETH LE volunteers as the public relations representative and skills trainer at Youth Advocates of Sitka in Alaska. She has been with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps since

October and will stay for a year.



Alvarez

2010 RAMSES

ALVAREZ is a television news reporter in Medford, Ore., at the CBS affiliate KTVL. **JONATHAN BAY** is volunteering at Hopewell Inn, a nonprofit therapeutic farm and residency in Ohio for adults with severe mental illnesses.

His assignment was arranged by Church of the Brethren's volunteer service program following a three-week orientation in Oregon, which focused on service, nonviolence, peacemaking and simple living. **ELENA SHAPIRO**, M.A., recently wrote *13, rue*



Thérèse (Reagan Author Books), a novel about an American scholar who discovers a box of letters, photos and other artifacts, and his search to learn more about the French woman who once owned them. In February, Shapiro stopped by UC Davis to discuss her new book at an event in the bookstore.



PETER STEKEL

By Elizabeth Sutt

Occupation: Freelance writer, author of *Final Flight: The Mystery of a WWII Plane Crash and the Frozen Airmen in the High Sierra* and *Best Hikes Near Seattle*.

The crash: The 2005 discovery of the mummified body of aviation cadet Leo Mustonen of Minnesota, inspired Peter Stekel '75 to write a book about Mustonen and three other airmen lost with him in the Sierra Nevada during a routine navigation training flight in 1942. Stekel, who has been hiking the Sierra since he was a 12-year-old Boy Scout, trekked to the crash site in the remote stretches of Kings Canon National Park on a sunny afternoon in August 2007. There he made a startling find—the remains of Ernest Glenn Munn, a 23-year-old aviation cadet who perished along with 22-year-old Mustonen, preserved within the Mendel Glacier. "It was and continues to be an incredibly emotional experience for me," he said. "I knew there was a family that had been waiting for over 60 years to find out what has happened to this guy, and now they would finally know."

Closure: After five years of research, interviews and writing, Stekel's book, *Final Flight*, about the young men who disappeared in 1942, was published by Wilderness Press this past fall. "I used to believe that the idea and the concept of closure was psychobabble," he said. He changed his mind after attending Munn's funeral in Ohio and meeting Munn's three younger sisters, who are now grandmothers. "I saw the impact on their lives from the closure of finally knowing what happened to Glenn, [and] I realized how important that closure is." He has now committed himself to finding the last two crew-members—cadet John Mortenson, 25, of Idaho and pilot William Gamber, 23, of Ohio—to bring closure to their families as well.

Storyteller: Before his 19-year career in freelance writing, Stekel, who earned his bachelor's degree in botany, was a Bureau of Land Management ecologist and a high school biology teacher. Now he writes about an assortment of his favorite topics, such as nature, education, Olympic sports and the best hiking spots in Seattle. "I come from a family of storytellers," he said. "I like telling stories. I enjoy the creative process." He particularly enjoys telling stories about the Sierra Nevada, and his expertise on the region has made him a source for world media outlets, including National Geographic and BBC4. He has lived in Seattle for the past 20 years with his wife, Jeanie, but he visits the Sierra many times each summer. "If you like being inspired by awesome grandeur, the Sierra Nevada is your place." Stekel's book tour begins in San Diego on April 1 and ends in Oakland on April 23.

"[Getting a book published] is like seeing your child succeed. I do see my work—particularly my books—as my babies."