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PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD CHENEY/UCLA.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESKTOP

This issue of *Boom* is about the future of California in the world—and, in the case of some of our writers and thinkers, California in the universe. It is also about how we think *with* the future. That is: we use the future to think through things in the present. So what does it mean for the present—and what has it meant in the past—to think with the future, to practice futurism, and write science fiction from California?

We've gathered an incredible group of people to think with us about the future of everything from food, wine, music, and the family, to education, transportation, climate change, and even what it is that we are doing here at *Boom*—bringing brilliant thinkers from our great universities together with journalists, writers, artists, photographers, and people from all walks of life for a conversation here in the journal, on our website, in social media, in other media, and in real life at events around California.

Here at UCLA—where *Boom* is based—we're making big plans for the future. UCLA recently announced a grand challenge—a major research initiative throwing the full weight of the university behind an effort to wean LA completely of imported water and become fully reliant on renewable energy by 2050, while preserving biodiversity and improving the quality of life in the city. More than seventy researchers from all over campus—from law, policy, conservation biology, engineering, humanities, climate science, public health, urban planning, and other disciplines—are lined up to contribute to the multidisciplinary research required to develop a plan, the technologies, and the public engagement strategies for “Thriving in a Hotter Los Angeles,” which will be delivered to the city in 2019 and will map out the path ahead for the following decades.

Obviously, this is not something the university can do alone. Getting there will also require partnerships and collaborations with local, state, and federal government; businesses; other universities; and community groups. Those partnerships and collaborations are already starting to come together. Mayor Eric Garcetti pledged the city's full support for this grand challenge. “Let's get it done!” he told a group of city and university leaders, researchers, and donors gathered to kick off the \$150 million fundraising campaign.

Can we get it done? With the pending impacts of a hotter climate and sea level rise, more wildfires, and less water from snowpack, one could simply argue that we have no choice. We have to get it done.

UCLA climate scientist Alex Hall is already working with the city to bring climate change predictions down to the neighborhood level. His research indicates that LA will get hotter between now and 2050—and inland areas will get much hotter—no matter what we do to reduce our carbon emissions. So we have to adapt to make our cities more livable in a hotter climate and protect the biodiversity and natural areas we have in the region. But we also need to do more to reduce emissions between now and 2050, or things will get much, much hotter after that.

LA is on track to meet California's 2020 renewable portfolio standard requirement that 33 percent of our energy comes from renewables, and to phase out coal in the next decade or so, but we need a strategy to kick fossil fuels completely. We need to develop a diverse portfolio of clean, renewable energy—solar, wind, geothermal, waste to energy, renewable gases—and a smarter distribution system with enhanced storage, smart grids, and electrified transportation.

Almost 90 percent of our water comes from hundreds of miles away, and those supplies are threatened by climate change, as well as the increasing need to protect the environment in those places: Owens Valley, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Colorado River. We need to figure out how to capture much more stormwater and store it locally, clean up contaminated groundwater in the San Fernando Valley, recycle and reuse wastewater, develop economical, environmentally sound desalination, and conserve even more.

LA is a global biodiversity hotspot. Our Mediterranean ecosystems support amazingly diverse animal and plant life, both native and nonnative. But too many of our native animals and plant species are threatened, and climate change will endanger even more. We need better strategies to assess and manage species and habitat in metropolitan regions such as Los Angeles, using tools such as remote sensing, conservation genomics, and citizen science.

Right now LA is a living laboratory for the challenges facing large urban areas all over the world. Our goal is to make LA a model. Urban sustainability is one of the grand challenges of our time. More than half of the people on Earth now live in cities, and virtually all of the population growth expected between now and 2050 will be absorbed by cities. That means the urban built environment on the planet will double in that time. How that happens will fundamentally shape how people live with each other and with nature in the future here in LA, in California, and around the world.

*Yours truly,
Jon Christensen, Editor*