The clinic must serve both groups. While our students and service to the community. “There’s a delicate dance that has to occur in looking at why the Skokomish River on Washington’s Olympic Peninsula is so prone to flooding to the complex forces at work along the Tsangpo River in Tibet, the highest river in the world. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as Science, Nature, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. A statement from the MacArthur Foundation praised Montgomery’s work, saying, “With a scientist’s rigor, a historian’s curiosity, and an environmentalist’s passion, Montgomery is leading investigations into the ecological consequences of a wide range of Earth surface processes.” A dedicated researcher, Montgomery also is a lifelong musician. He plays guitar in a local folk-rock band named, appropriately, Big Dirt. “It’s an incredible thing for complete strangers to give you a half-million dollars to do what you think is important,” Montgomery says. “I’ll also probably buy a guitar or two.” Montgomery was in Baltimore, preparing to give a keynote address at a convention, when he got the call telling him he’d been selected as a MacArthur Fellow. It was also the official first day of his sabbatical. “It’s absolutely the best way to start a sabbatical,” he says. News of his award brought a deluge of congratulatory and other emails, including “the classic email from someone I haven’t seen since high school,” Montgomery says with a laugh. “Basically, he said he should have copied his homework from me instead of the guy he did it from.” The media frenzy and emails have died down since the announcement in September, but Montgomery is still getting used to the idea of a half-million dollars coming his way over the next five years. “It’s really kind of like winning the lottery,” he says. Adapted from an article in University Week, September 25, 2008.