In Memory of Jim Kelly, UTMB Senior Science Writer

Jim Kelly was a storyteller. Whether he was explaining the importance of a scientific study or his latest effort to determine the acidity of the dirt in his backyard, Jim always kept it interesting.

Jim was a science writer. His job was to write about research advances at UTMB. But Jim was kind of a complex guy — in a good way. He was a guy who was fully engaged with life and determined to experience as much as he could. He climbed mountains in South America. He delighted in hiking with his friends in New Mexico. His thirst for knowledge went beyond the laboratories at UTMB.

At UTMB, Jim was invaluable with his broad knowledge of science, research and his ability to take a complex topic and write about it in a way that anyone could understand. He could typically be seen at his desk wearing headphones as he transcribed an interview. His computer screen would be displaying some incomprehensible chemical sequence as Jim scribbled notes, all the while oblivious that he was late for a meeting or that his phone had been ringing.

Outside the office, Jim’s circle of friends included artists, neighbors, scientists, doctors, kayaking enthusiasts and just anyone who took the time to know Jim. His reading tastes were eclectic, ranging from politics and history to space exploration. His passion for sharing information and telling stories was contagious, his good friend, Krishna Narayanan, explained.

Jim died unexpectedly on Aug. 27, 2013. We miss him, and we miss his stories. To honor his memory, we’re creating a special summer program for a high school student to write about science and research, as Jim did.