Still searching for Amelia

The drink that built a nation
features
Amelia Earhart disappeared over the Pacific in 1937. What became of her remains an international mystery. Or not. 26

Hard cider—a key component of the colonial economy—became practically forgotten in a state known for its apples. Enter the new cider makers. 32

upfront
The Palouse beckons explorers in search of long lost tastes. 6

Ancient grains may prove crucial for survival in places around the world impacted by global climate change. 10

A WSU lab is our front line against animal disease stealthily entering the state. 12

A professor-poet argues America doesn’t suffer under the heavy hand of state censorship, but it faces an equally sinister threat. 16

COVER: PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION FROM WASHINGTON STATE SNOW-COVERED FRUIT BY SHANNON ALBRIGHT. LEFT ORCHARD IN WINTER BY JEREMY HEBERT
Deeper shades of Spokane's history.

Exploring the mysteries of time, space, and gravity in outermost Washington.

Tom Foley and a place for civil discourse.

Nothing may sit in plain sight—forgotten or ignored—until a new use is found.

Some lucky duck at your holiday table?

Dream maker.

The beauty and profundity of Makah culture.

Volunteers drive the Cougar Nation (really).

Three kids from Okanogan—and still fellow Cougs.

September Alumni Achievement Award.

Hives and hexagons.

Vintage roses. The beginning of a sports tradition that lasts to this day.

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Forgotten fruits. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, William Jasper Spillman, one of Washington State’s first faculty members, recognized that eastern Washington farmers were committed to lucrative wheat as their primary crop. Spillman experimented by crossing wheat varieties to find traits desirable for the Inland Northwest. Variations didn’t appear in the first generation, but Spillman soon observed that the second generation of plants had combinations of the parents’ traits. He then applied a mathematical formula to predict inherited traits, to the benefit of the wheat farmers.

Many of us know the basics of this research from high school science: Gregor Mendel’s laws of inheritance, published in 1866. However, the practical significance of Mendel’s work was not recognized until Spillman and other scientists independently found and applied those genetic principles 40 years later.

Spillman did not find something completely novel, but that does not diminish the importance of his research. By applying knowledge that had been ignored or misunderstood, thousands of farmers who used Spillman’s research changed the face of the state. Over half a million acres in Washington were planted with Spillman varieties by 1911, writes historian Laurie Carlson ’04 PhD.

Like Mendel’s genetic studies, knowledge and other discoveries can sit in plain sight, forgotten or ignored, until a new use is found. Apple trees in old backyard orchards—some with varieties of fruit thought to have vanished—could provide new genetic material for WSU tree fruit scientists. Ancient corn and millet found by WSU archaeologists might help subsistence farmers in drought-stricken places in the world. American appetites are bringing back hard cider, the drink on which the country was founded. Spillman was acknowledged for his work, moving on to the U.S. Department of Agriculture after just six years of successful research and service at Washington Agricultural College. The profound importance of Mendel’s studies of pea plants, on the other hand, didn’t receive recognition until Spillman and European scientists verified the findings decades after Mendel documented them. Perhaps other research, medicinal plants in forests, or even practical skills of our ancestors, await rediscovery, when they can be applied to our modern problems.

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WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE WINTER 2015

A BILLION REASONS TO CELEBRATE!

$1,065,091,919
(to be exact)

Thanks to the investment of 206,259 generous alumni, friends, faculty, staff, students, parents and partners, we celebrate the success of WSU’s largest fundraising effort—

the $1 billion Campaign for Washington State University: Because the World Needs Big Ideas.

With a renewed commitment to deliver innovation, discovery, and service to benefit Washington’s citizens, communities, and industries—and the shared vision, ingenuity, and leadership of Cougar Nation—WSU is poised today to redefine what it means to be a land-grant research university tomorrow.

To everyone who contributed to The Campaign for WSU, thank you for empowering big ideas and for inspiring tomorrow’s Washington State University.

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To everyone who contributed to The Campaign for WSU, thank you for empowering big ideas and for inspiring tomorrow’s Washington State University.
Thank you for continuing to publish Washington State Magazine at such a high level. I read the Fall 2015 issue from cover to cover and rate it as outstanding in every respect. The redesign of the magazine with sustainability in mind is commendable. Mostly, however, the content was what gave me the feeling that I am still connected to WSU almost 50 years after I graduated.

As it happens, there were also multiple articles that connected with me personally. I took an ecology course from Rexford Daubenmire and continued to refer to his classic texts on ecology and synecology during my own 40-year teaching career in plant science. Although I did not meet Lunnan Public Martinez, the knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special. John Olerud’s knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special. John Olerud’s knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special.

I look forward to many more fine issues of legendary wheat breeder Orville Vogel. Laboratory and to my own interactions with agronomy to the Western Wheat Quality makes a great chocolate chip cookie took me to the 1970s. Even Dr. Universe’s piece on what Doornink’s contributions to Cougar football in Field where I watched Olerud play and Brayton at the same time is special. John Olerud’s knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special.

I did not meet Lorenzo Pablo Martinez, the year teaching career in plant science. Although autecology and synecology during my own 40- and continued to refer to his classic texts on ecology course from Rexford Daubenmire that connected with me personally. I took an ecology course from Rexford Daubenmire and continued to refer to his classic texts on ecology and synecology during my own 40-year teaching career in plant science. Although I did not meet Lunnan Public Martinez, the knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special. John Olerud’s knowledge that he and I were on campus at the same time is special.

I love the new art direction of the pub. It feels much fresher and younger than it did a couple of years ago.

John Phillips '67
San Luis Obispo, California

Props on moving to recycled paper. Appreciate it.

Roger Crawford ’86
Pullman

I love the new art direction of the pub. It feels much fresher and younger than it did a couple of years ago.

Richard Blakley '76
Lake Union

No tea with Jackie

The article about the tea was very interesting, but let me cut to the chase.

Jackie Kennedy did not come to Pullman with her husband in 1960. I know because my father, Vernie L. Johnson, the Whitman County Democratic Party chairman at the time, was the host for Kennedy’s visit. He met JFK at the Pullman-Moscow airport, and then escorted him to Bryan Hall for a talk to an overflow crowd, which I attended while a Pullman High School freshman.

Politics was a hobby for my dad. His full-time job was associate professor in the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. He died on a Saturday morning in December 1964 in Pullman.

von Johnson '68
Associate professor emeritus, SI, Joaquinian Indiana University

Studying with Daubenmire

I enjoyed the article “Traveling ecologist Rexford F. Daubenmire” by Adam M. Sowards. I was a graduate student, botany major, at WSU from 1953 to 1957. The very best class I took there was what gave me the feeling that I am still connected with WSU almost 50 years after I graduated.

Fortunately, Benscoter had the chops to crack the mystery. Following a career with the FBI and the IRS Criminal Division, those mystery apples whetted his investigative skills.

He started modestly, with a Google search. What first popped up was Arcadia Orchard, the “largest orchard in the world,” located in nearby Dearpark.

Arcadia founders bought thousands of acres of land in the early 1900s and marketed orchard plots nationwide. Promotional materials claimed that by 1916, 7,000 acres were planted to orchard.

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SOme point, he started pruning to encourage new growth lower down. Meanwhile, the old orchard had infected Benscoter with that need to a neighboring orchard above her house.

Every apple was too high for me to pick,” he says of his initial effort.

“One of the trees was 40 to 50 feet high. The trunk was split, and I couldn’t get my arms around either trunk.”

Determined to deliver Elior’s apples at some point, he started pruning to encourage new growth lower down. Meanwhile, the old orchard had infected Benscoter with that most persistent of apple bugs—the need to know the names of apple varieties. And who planted them.

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Arcadia founders bought thousands of acres of land in the early 1900s and marketed orchard plots nationwide. Promotional materials claimed that by 1916, 7,000 acres were planted to orchard.

Arcadia was only part of the area’s orchard industry. In his 1905 Washington Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, “The Wormy Apple,” A.L. Melander introduces his strategy against the codling moth with his observation on the regional industry: “It is asserted that 1,500 carloads of apples, valued at $600,000, were carried last year from the Inland Empire.”

Historian John Fahey writes that by 1914, Whitman County had nearly 240,000 apple trees. Spokane and Stevens counties had nearly a million. Whitman County had three commercial nurseries.

Benscoter was rediscovering what has been repeatedly forgotten—that before it finally coalesced around Wenatchee and Yakima, the apple industry further east was enormous and diverse.
Both orchards and nurseries were charmed by the apple's diversity. The Hanford Nursery in Oakesdale listed 64 varieties on its advertising flyer. The Inland Empire was a true garden of apple diversity and bounty.

But soon, it all started to disappear. Ultimately, the Inland Empire could not compete with the irrigated orchards to the west. Although the large orchards are long gone, remnants, and scores of homestead orchards, are scattered throughout the area.

Early in his investigation, Benscoter made some key discoveries. One was that every year the Colfax Gazette would publish a list of the prizewinning apples at the county fair. From 1900 to 1910, over 110 varieties were entered. Though many of the names are familiar, others had disappeared, and Benscoter was determined to find them.

Benscoter tapped the efforts of other apple detectives across the country. He studied Lee Calhoun’s Old Southern Apples, a large part of which is devoted to forgotten apples.

Benscoter combed Calhoun’s descriptions and noted a number of “extinct” apples that appeared in the Gazette. He narrowed his investigation: Arkansas Beauty, Babbitt, Cornell’s Fancy, Dickinson, Isiah Sweet, Lankford, Nero, Pyles Red Winter, Scarlett Cranberry, Walbridge, and Whitman.

On an August morning, Benscoter and I plod down a long draw on Steptoe Butte through dry grass and wild roses toward a dense grove that someone told him was an orchard.

Fruit is sparse this year, following last year’s bumper crop, frosts, and intense heat early in the summer. Even so, fruit speckles many of the trees, beckoning explorers in search of lost tastes.

Indeed, when we reach the grove, it is filled with apple trees, maybe 200 of several, as yet unidentified, varieties.

But why seek out these forgotten apples?

Some of it is simply wonder at the diversity of apples. Apple detective Dan Bussey estimates 17,000 named varieties in the United States since Europeans first arrived.

Rediscovered apples could also produce benefits such as genes for disease resistance or flavor. Indeed, Amit Dhingra’s WSU genome lab is intrigued by Benscoter’s efforts and is nurturing tissue culture of one of his “extinct” discoveries, the Nero.

One might hope to restore diversity to a market defined first by the Red Delicious and now by the Honeycrisp-type apple, all mouthfeel and initial burst of sweet-tart, delightful indeed, but with none of many older apples’ subtlety and sophisticated complexity.

But none of this seems to be Benscoter’s primary motivation, which has more to do with his professional drive to identify all the elements of an investigation, to find what was lost.

It is the satisfaction of matching unidentified apples to the USDA’s stunning collection of apple watercolors, of interpreting plat maps, connecting family histories, and recovering human drama—of Robert and “Mecie” Burns, for example, who planted exuberantly on Steptoe, but misjudged their apples’ marketability, thus losing their farm in 1899.

“I got to walk in the orchard,” says Benscoter, “and see and taste the fruit of the trees Robert Burns planted.”

Washington State University scientist Susmita Bose and her team are revolutionizing the field of bone replacement materials. And that’s great news for everyone from millennials to senior citizens.

The researchers are combining minerals, biomolecules, and drugs and using 3D printers to create longer lasting and more biocompatible bone-like materials. That means improved joint replacements and stronger bone implants.

Medical device manufacturers are excited about the technology.

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Ancients among us

The arid soil on the mile-high Hopi Mesa trickles through clenched fingers like sand. If you visit this isolated corner of northeastern Arizona, you might find it hard to believe it is home to one of the oldest civilizations in the Americas.

For more than 2,000 years, the Hopi and their ancestors have carved a living out of the rough terrain. They survived drought, famine, war, and a fluctuating climate that drove many of their ancient southwestern neighbors elsewhere in search of more fertile lands.

One key to the Hopi’s longevity is a variety of drought-tolerant corn they have adapted over the centuries to prosper in the poor soil. That corn and other traditional crops like Tibetan millet could be crucial for survival in places around the world impacted by global climate change.

Washington State University postdoctoral anthropologist Kyle Bocinsky thinks these crops could help Ethiopian farmers survive a warmer, drier future. He is working with WSU archaeologist Jade d’Alpoim Guedes to scour the globe for little-used or in some cases completely forgotten crops that were bred to survive warmer weather, drought, and disease. With the help of sophisticated climate and crop-niche modeling, they are able to determine how these crops grew well in the past and where they might be useful today.

“For millennia, the Hopi cultivated their corn to grow in a high-elevation, low-rainfall terrain. It is more adapted to these types of areas than many genetically modified strains,” says Bocinsky. “The thought struck me that if one of those corn variants grows well on the Hopi Mesa, what other places in the world would it prosper?”

In Ethiopia, subsistence farmers have been growing ensete ventricosum, the Ethiopian banana, for centuries. A staple food for over 12 million people in the southern highlands of the country, the crops have recently been affected by emerging pests, disease, and blights of intense heat. Many Ethiopian farmers switched to growing varieties of corn cultivated in the midwestern United States. But Iowa corn is not suited to the drought prone high elevations.

Bocinsky and Guedes decided to see if their modeling could help identify a better alternative.

“Our models showed Hopi corn would grow extremely well in the Ethiopian highlands,” says Bocinsky. “The real benefit is that it is rain-fed and can grow in natural conditions without expensive irrigation, fertilizer, and genetic modifications that the vast majority of these farmers can’t afford.”

In the United States and other wealthy nations, farmers have access to genetically tailored crops, pesticides, and advanced irrigation systems to help ensure their wheat or corn harvest during a bad growing season. Because of this, the variety of crops grown now is a lot smaller than it once was. For most of early history, humans relied on a wide variety of grains to feed themselves. If a millet crop was struck by blight, farmers would still have three or four other options to fall back on. Today, the vast majority of commercial agricultural production is focused on five high-yield crops—wheat, sugarcane, corn, barley, and rice.

In areas where farmers don’t have access to modern technology, growing one or two strains of the “big five crops” can be incredibly risky for subsistence farmers who depend on their harvest for food.

“If you are relying on only a few varieties of crops, you have very little genetic diversity. If you are unlucky and one year the type of fungus to which your crop has no resistance enters your farm, your probability of losing your entire harvest is a lot higher,” says Guedes. “If you are a subsistence farmer in a marginal area, who relies on his harvest to feed the family, it can be catastrophic.”

One such area is the Tibetan Plateau where temperatures have been creeping up to six degrees Celsius higher than they were 200 years ago. Rapid temperature increase is making it difficult for the region’s inhabitants to carry out a key facet of their traditional lifestyle: yak pastoralism.

Two possible alternatives are foxtail and proso millet which farmers stopped cultivating on the Tibetan Plateau around 4,000 years ago as global temperatures grew colder.

“These millets are on the verge of becoming forgotten crops,” says Guedes. “But due to their heat tolerance and high nutritional value, and very low rainfall requirements, they may once again be useful resources for a warmer future.”

Washington State University offers a solid educational foundation for many healthcare professions as well as the advanced degrees needed to get you to your goals. Get the basics on the Pullman campus and go for the finish in Spokane, where you will learn from experienced faculty who welcome the evolutionary changes bright students can offer for improving our healthcare system. You can make a difference at WSU Spokane.

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Emerging disease: A case study

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, CATS, DOGS, POULTRY, BIRDS, AND OTHER ANIMALS ON VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA, WERE CONSIDERED TO HAVE A TROPICAL DISEASE FOUND IN AUSTRALIA.

Upon deeper investigation, B.C. health officials discovered that C. gattii was established itself in the native trees and soil. No areas of permanent colonization were detected. The health department added C. gattii to the states list of reportable diseases for veterinarians and human health care providers.

WASHINGTON, Washington (WSU College of Veterinary Medicine)

WADDL Pullman, Washington

With great surprise, it was Cryptococcus neoformans as the same organism found in the United States. The case is the first occurrence of the disease in the United States.

WADDL Emerging Infections Surveillance Team/Veterinarian

The team mapped each new occurrence in the United States.

Washington State DOH, Olympia

The verdict: C. gattii VGII

The key word is “catch.” C. gattii can be found in pets, birds, reptiles, mammals, and birds. They are all possible modes of transmission. The team was reported “a strange case” in the pathologist advised caution for all those in contact with and sharing the environment with pets.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

DeWeert battled a stubborn mouth infection in a cat, Biskit. When antibiotics didn’t help, DeWeert sent a biopsy to WADDL. The diagnosis came back C. gattii and the pathologist advised caution for all those in contact with and sharing the environment with pets.

WADDL executive director Timothy Baszler says WADDL staff members pay close attention to the details of every sample they receive, to help protect the public.

“The key word is environment as Biskit says it is very unlikely that humans can “catch” C. gattii from pets, birds, reptiles, mammals, or other animals.

WADDL handled a few cases like this last year. There are more cases likely unreported, says Wohrle. Many more cases likely unreported, says Wohrle.

Since 2008, 20 people and 59 animals have been diagnosed with C. gattii in Washington, with many cases likely unreported. WADDL is refining and expanding the capabilities of the molecular diagnostic lab.

WASHINGTON ANIMAL DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY (WSU COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE)

WADDL, Pullman, Washington

The verdict: C. gattii VGII

Washington, Pullman

The verdict: C. gattii VGII

Postscript

All cats, except Boots, recovered completely. Pet names have been changed for owner privacy.
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BLACK
SPOKANE
Dwayne Mack was, to say the least, skeptical when his faculty mentor at Washington State University, Dr. Roy Ashby, suggested he write his doctoral dissertation on Spokane’s black history. “I thought to myself, ‘Wow, every time we pay a visit to Spokane, we rarely even see black people,’” recalls Mack, who was brought up in Brooklyn and received his master’s degree from a historically black college, North Carolina Central University. “There couldn’t be enough black people to do a study.”

Then he started researching Spokane’s African-American history and realized he had “struck gold.” Spokane’s African-American community was small—historically averaging between 1 and 2 percent of Spokane’s population—but it had a rich and compelling story, stuffed with strong personalities “who were very potent in their approach to civil rights and justice.” The result was a dissertation that earned Mack his doctorate in history at WSU in 2002 and which eventually formed the basis for Mack’s 2014 book, Black Spokane: The Civil Rights Struggle in the Inland Northwest (University of Oklahoma Press), which immediately became the definitive work on the African-American history of the region. “Most people say there’s strength in numbers, but the black population was so small that this small band of black folk, they stuck together, and they were committed to a cause, along with their white allies,” says Mack, who is now the Carter G. Woodson Faculty Mentor at Washington State University. “So if something was happening at a base in Walla Walla in 1945 with black soldiers who were being discriminated against, the NAACP in Spokane would come to their rescue. East of the Cascade Mountains, Spokane was the only organization you could trust to come to your assistance.”

Spokane’s black population ticked up in the decades following World War II and a new set of community leaders emerged. These leaders form the compelling core of Spokane’s black history. Here’s a look at a few of them:

Carl Maxey

Brought up in the Spokane orphanage, Maxey became an NCAA boxing champion at Gonzaga University and the first African American to pass the bar exams in eastern Washington in 1951. He launched a controversial career as one of Washington’s most effective civil rights attorneys and civic gadflies. Many confronted restaurants, hotels, social clubs, and real estate organizations with white people, “to throughout the state and pushed them to end blatant discrimination. He spent the violent Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi as a volunteer lawyer. He also made national news in many high-profile cases, including one known as the “Haitrost Uproar,” in which a Gonzaga University student from Liberia was refused service at a barber shop. “The eyes of the world are on Spokane and a small barber shop,” thundered Maxey. “But the issue is not small. He won that case, and many other civil rights cases. Mack calls Maxey “the Inland Northwest’s version of Martin Luther King Jr. —a true advocate for civil rights.”

James and Eleanor Sims

James Sims arrived from New Jersey in 1955 and became pastor of New Hope Baptist Church. He and his wife Lydia soon became two of Spokane’s most influential advocates for civil rights. James Sims was elected the Spokane NAACP president in 1956 and Lydia Sims became the first woman to be elected as the chapter’s president in 1957. She had already served as the city’s first affirmative action officer for the Spokane school district. She wrote, “I felt that [as] a Gonzaga University student from Liberia I was chosen by God to be the first black woman to work in any office of authority in the State of Washington.”

The story stretches back to Spokane’s roots. In the 1880s and 1890s, black people were migrating out of the South and spreading across the United States. Hundreds arrived in eastern Washington to work on the railroads, to work in the mines, to work as stonecutters, and, in some cases, to become entrepreneurs. Peter Barrow Sr. arrived in 1889 from Mississippi, established an irrigated apple orchard north of Spokane, and hired more than 100 African-American workers. He then helped establish Calvary Baptist Church, the city’s first African-American Baptist church, and became its pastor. In 1888, Emmett Holmes brought his family to Spokane from Missouri and found work as a railroad porter, bartender, and butcher—and eventually became Spokane County’s deputy treasurer. In 1890, he established the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. These two churches would become the twin centers of Spokane’s small black community, and their pastors would become the community’s earliest activists. When businesses put up a “No Colored Patronage Solicited” sign, the pastors were the ones who would pay a visit and respectfully request its removal. Sometimes they got results, sometimes they didn’t.

Spokane’s black community’s options were especially limited in labor and housing. “For the most part, blacks found menial labor positions. You had black entrepreneurs, a handful, but for the most part, blacks worked as domestics and chauffeurs and butlers.”

No true “black ghetto” emerged in Spokane as it did in cities such as Los Angeles and Oakland. Black residents were restricted by covenant and custom from the South Hill, the most posh part of Spokane, yet for the most part, black residents were scattered across the city. “Because they were no real threat, blacks were able to survive and coexist with white people,” says Mack. “In 1919, 91 petitioners submitted an application to create one of the community’s enduring institutions, the Spokane chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Nearly a century later, Jon Stewart of The Daily Show earned a big laugh during the 2015 Rachel Dolezal controversy by saying with feigned amusement, ‘Whatassaf! There’s an NAACP chapter—or Spokane?’”

The answer has been “yes” for the last 96 years. In fact, the Spokane NAACP’s influence was unusually large, at least geographically, since it was the only chapter in a vast area. “It not only mediated and protected the rights of blacks in Spokane, but it also protected the rights of black people throughout the Inland Northwest region, which was socially and culturally isolated,” says Mack.

So if something was happening at a base in Walla Walla in 1945 with black soldiers who were being discriminated against, the NAACP in Spokane would come to their rescue. … East of the Cascade Mountains, Spokane was the only organization you could trust to come to your assistance.”

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James and Eleanor Chase

When Spokane elected James Chase as its mayor in 1981, his supporters called it “a night of history.” Indeed it was, says Mack. “Nine years before Norm Rice was elected mayor of Seattle, you had James Chase, just with a high school diploma, elected mayor of this conservative city. It was a remarkable and amazing accomplishment.” Ebony magazine came to Spokane to do a feature story, in which it noted “There is a black man who became mayor of a sizable city with little fanfare, no rancor.” Chase arrived in Spokane on a boxcar in 1954, built up an auto repair business, and became the president of the Spokane NAACP. He and his wife Eleanor Chase became deeply involved in civic affairs. After his landslide mayoral victory, he proved to be an exceptionally popular mayor and would have easily been reelected to a second term if he hadn’t dropped out because of terminal illness. Mack calls Chase’s tenure a “watershed moment in the history of black Spokane.”

Carl Maxey

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Carl Maxey

Brought up in the Spokane orphanage, Maxey became an NCAA boxing champion at Gonzaga University and the first African American to pass the bar exams in eastern Washington in 1951. He launched a controversial career as one of Washington’s most effective civil rights attorneys and civic gadflies. Many confronted restaurants, hotels, social clubs, and real estate organizations with white people. “To throughout the state and pushed them to end blatant discrimination. He spent the violent Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi as a volunteer lawyer. He also made national news in many high-profile cases, including one known as the “Haitrost Uproar,” in which a Gonzaga University student from Liberia was refused service at a barber shop. “The eyes of the world are on Spokane and a small barber shop,” thundered Maxey. “But the issue is not small. He won that case, and many other civil rights cases. Mack calls Maxey “the Inland Northwest’s version of Martin Luther King Jr.—a true advocate for civil rights.”

James and Lydia Sims

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action head, and she brought with her, in Mack’s words, “a sense of tempered mili-
tancy.” Among her accomplishments was an
annual NAACP job fair, in which she tried
to improve black employment opportu-
nities. It was apparent, she said, “that change
will not come from the goodness of people’s
hearts,” but from moral and legal pressure
on employers.

James and Lydia Sims also contributed to
the state’s political future in a more personal
way. Their Spokane-born son, Ron Sims, was
twice elected county executive of the state’s
largest county, King County. In 2009, Presi-
dent Barack Obama appointed Ron Sims
deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development, where he
served until 2011. He currently sits on the
WSU Board of Regents.

Mack’s six years as a WSU graduate stu-
dent prepared him well to tell this story. “Even
though I was the only African-American Ph.D.
student at the time, the campus community
welcomed my family with open arms. I had
great advisors, great role models, who took
me in and treated me with great respect,” says
Mack. “These older men, older white men,
just embraced us… It was a wonderful experi-
ence and I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

Mack is doing his best to pass it on. He has
developed an expertise in academic
mentoring and he recently published two
books, Beginning a Career in Academia: A Guide
for Graduate Students of Color (Routledge)
and Mentoring Faculty of Color
(McFarland).

Throughout his career with WSU’s
English and Comparative Ethnic Studies
departments, Kuo traveled back to China
to teach each year. He retired from WSU
in 2012, but still holds an appointment at
the Beijing Forestry University’s School of
Foreign Languages. Kuo’s novel, which he refers to as “Triple
Shanghai,” is a brief, but complex, book that
follows the life of a newspaper culture writer
named Ge as he confronts many of the excen-
tricities and hypocrisies of Chinese society. Ge
seemingly slips between the 1930s of occupied
China, the 1980s of the Tiananmen Square
protests, and modern China.

Scrambling historical touchstones, often
within the same sentence, creates a dreamlike
fluidity in many of the early chapters. Inspired
by Faulkner, Kuo likens the book’s time struc-
ture to an “anti-chronology” or Möbius loop.

“I’m not sure which is worse,” she says.
Kuo, 78, spent 33 years as a professor and writer at Washington
State University, and has long championed the political influence of
literature. Born in Boston and raised in China during World War II,
Kuo’s writing often explores the entangled roles of citizens, states,
money, and memory. His 2002 Lipstick and Other Stories won the
American Book Award for Fiction.

Triple Shanghai

Alex Kuo’s writing confronts censorship both
explicit and hidden.

IN A PIVOTAL MOMENT

from Alex Kuo’s new novel shanghai shanghai
shanghai, several Chinese card players watch a team of Americans
publicly disagree. George IV. Bush’s administration in front of
an international audience. Shocked by the brazen criticism, a pickpocket
known as Bogota Man questions how such anti-government opinions
could ever be voiced openly. He contends that political dissent in China can mean life in solitary
confinement. A friend quickly responds that in America the defiant
act of protest is more likely to be completely ignored.

“Time is totally irrelevant,” Kuo explains. “We think back and forth,” he adds.

“He sets history against revision, tyranny
against absurdity, and culture against commer-
cialism. Artists paint propaganda. Journalists
write lies. Mao Zedong runs up against Clint
Eastwood, Beethoven, and Quentin Tarantino.
The book often uses layers of multicol-
ored fonts and sidebars to help the reader
navigate historical and cultural context. Several
women amid a controversial bridge tourna-
ment include diagrams of the cards at play.
Kuo admits it can be difficult to make such
dynamic concepts approachable for everyone.
“A novel about an unusual subject that is
accessible to [the average reader] is probably
not a very good novel,” he says. “The unique
ability to provoke and shape critical thought,
the capacity to change minds, incite revolu-
tions. Would you rather have your writ-
ing punished or ignored? While shanghai
shanghai shanghai draws much of its drama
from the heavy hand of state censorship, Kuo
argues America currently faces an equally
sinister threat.

Kuo will launch the book tour for “Triple
Shanghai” with a public reading at 5:30 p.m.
on November 16 in Goertzen Hall on WSU’s
Pullman campus. He also has a new poetry
collection in Chinese and English. Meeting
Words at the Gate, published this fall.

“We have censorship in this country,
but it’s self-imposed,” he says. “The worst
type of censorship is nobody reads. That’s
self-censorship.”

Kuo’s writing confronts censorship both
explicit and hidden.

“Time is totally irrelevant.”
Alex Kuo explains.
Eureka! on the horizon

The silence is unnerving. Not another car in sight as I drive through the desolate Hanford nuclear area. The road unfolds in an eerie lacework of tarred concrete until finally I see it on the horizon — Eureka! The silence is unnerving. Not another car in sight as I drive through the desolate Hanford nuclear area. The road unfolds in an eerie lacework of tarred concrete until finally I see it on the horizon — Eureka!

The road unfolds in an eerie lacework of tarred concrete until finally I see it on the horizon — Eureka!

...
The lasting impact of Tom Foley

BY MARY HAWKINS

Thomas S. Foley was a political gentleman. The Speaker of the House lived and worked from principles that defined his political career: civility, honesty, and integrity. Even though he lost his seat in Congress, Foley's legacy continues to encourage many others to follow his path, through his namesake institute at Washington State University.

No one on the reelection team was emotionally prepared for Foley's defeat in 1994. A sitting Speaker had not been defeated since the Civil War era. John Pierce remembers Foley as "sad, stunned about the election results, but not vindictive." Pierce had been a congressional fellow with Foley before beginning a 24-year career at WSU, eventually as chair of political science and then dean of humanities and social sciences.

Just days after Foley's defeat, Pierce, WSU government relations director Beverly Lingle, and WSU archivist John Guido met with Heather and Tom Foley in the Speaker's office in Washington, D.C. The usually bustling office was almost empty of staff. "The Speaker's office had eight phone lines. Usually it was difficult to carry on a conversation there. On that day, the phone didn't ring once," says Lingle.

It was in this somber atmosphere that the idea of an institute at WSU had evolved from discussions between WSU President Sam Smith, Pierce, and the Foleys. "We wanted Tom's congressional papers and had discussed housing them for quite some time. The institute concept evolved very quickly and came together over the course of weeks," says Smith.

Guido immediately started working with staff on gathering materials. "Remember that when we arrived, staff were throwing things away." Lingle recalls with a laugh. "John Guido quickly put a stop to that and implemented a system to prepare Tom's papers for travel. Staff members were extremely cooperative, and the archives had no restrictions." Within weeks, large moving vans appeared at Johnson Tower and at Holland Library's Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections.

"We quickly set about researching other, similar institutions, seeking funding, and defining the scope of the institute," says Pierce. By mid-November 1994, initial plans were in place, and the institute had a name: The Thomas S. Foley Institute for Public Policy and Public Service.

Twenty years later, Foley's "living, breathing place" resides in Bryan Hall, where it hosts guest lecturers and researchers. It also sends bees and Public Service.

The institute has also hosted dozens of significant and diverse speakers, such as John Ashcroft, Angela Davis, Seymour Hersh, and Christopher Hitchens. It has fostered informed public policy debate by organizing formal and informal political gatherings, multidisciplinary symposia, and citizen forums, including an ambitious conference in 2011 on civility and American democracy.

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"Political engagement by students is critical because it is so immensely empowering," says Cornelius Clayton, director of the Foley Institute and political science professor. "I'm proud to say we've expanded internships significantly. Internships in Olympia and D.C. used to be almost an afterthought. Now they are a key part of our work." Foley interns work in local, county, state, and national government, diplomacy, law enforcement, courts, political action groups, and at research organizations.

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Rachel Ellenwood discovered a world of possibilities at Washington State University.

Here the pre-nursing student was inspired to excel in the classroom, immerse herself in extracurricular activities, and mentor classmates. Last spring, the future nurse practitioner and Nez Perce tribal member became the first WSU student ever selected as a national Udall Scholar because of her commitment to serving the health care needs of her community.

A bold approach? Definitely. But, after all, you’ve counted on us for creative solutions to the state’s needs since 1890. And you always can.

125 YEARS, AND COUNTING.
WSC banged, smashed, bulled, and pounded their way to a 14–0 victory that started a storied football tradition.

WASHINGTON STATE SUPPORTERS WONDERED, SOMETIMES ALOUD, IF PRESIDENT E. A. BRYAN HAD MADE A GRIEVOUS MISTAKE IN ENTRUSTING THE FOOTBALL PROGRAM TO WILLIAM “LONE STAR” DIETZ SHORTLY AFTER THE SHARP-DRESSED MAN ARRIVED ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1915.

Dietz emphasized conditioning over running play, then a radical approach. He inherited eight experienced players and three teams of untested candidates, none of whom were familiar with the single- or double-wing formations Dietz—as Pop Warner’s protégé—brought with him from Carlisle Indian School. Hopes sank when the varsity squeaked by the alumni 3 to 2. Captain Asa “Ace” Clark wasn’t convinced the new approach would succeed but he accepted Dietz’ s request to shift to tackle. Hoping for Washington State College’s first winning season since 1909, Lone Star then moved Clarence Zimmerman to end, “Hack” Applequist to guard, and plugged some holes with new men.

The season opener against the tough Oregon eleven changed some minds. The Evergreen editorial, “Vindication of Dietz,” praised both coach and players in their 28 to 3 victory. Four more convincing wins earned an invitation from the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association to a postseason game on New Year’s Day against Brown University. Quelling “Gloomy” Gil Debie’s assertions that his undefeated Washington team should represent the West, Dietz’s charges pummeled Gonzaga 48-0.

On December 21, after a fancy send-off dinner at Spokane’s Davenport Hotel, the Washington State contingent boarded the Spokane-Portland Flyer train. They arrived in Smokey-Christmas morning to a surprise from Coach Dietz: they were to become movie stars. Dietz had arranged for his players to portray the football team in Tom Brown at Harvard and wrangled a small part for himself. Dick Hanley recalled, “Each player was making around $100 for fourteen days of work, and while that wasn’t hard to take we always figured the movie was strictly a camouflage idea to make us forget Dietz was getting away with twice-a-day drills.”

That wasn’t the only trick Dietz pulled. He took his players aside individually, saying WSC’s only chance was to stop future College and Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Fritz Pollard, “and I’m counting on you to do the job!” He swore each to secrecy ostensibly to keep the others unaware.

On December 30, Mother Nature dumped two to three inches of snow on Southern California. On New Year’s Day the poised rain. To complete the mess, game organizers scheduled a donkey polo game for Tournament Park that morning. Fritz Pollard almost drowned when he was tackled in a mud puddle. People observed Lone Star Dietz’s white suit was splattered with mud in the first quarter.

Dietz’s team normally ran a wide open offense but field conditions rendered tricky ball handling inadvisable. He shifted to cautious line bucks against the heavy Bruin line. Brown had the best of it early but WSC’s defense rose to the occasion. Archie Durham intercepted a pass on his own 10-yard line and they sacked the Brown quarterback on fourth down at the WSC six.

The second half was a different story. Ralph Boone, “Bing” Bangs, and “Red” Dietz (no relation to Coach Dietz) smashed the ball down the field. Boone bulled the ball from four yards out for the first score. In the fourth quarter, Red Dietz pounded the ball in from the two. Quarterback Arthur “Bull” Durham dropkicked both extra points. Two other scores escaped when they fumbled the wet, slippery ball near the goal line. It wasn’t just offense that won the game. WSC’s defense smothered Pollard from making substantial gains, preventing any scores for the Brown Bruins.

WSC’s 14–0 victory established West Coast football as the equal of the Eastern variety and started the New Year’s Day football tradition and the series of games today known as the Rose Bowl.
In a small northeast Washington field, a flock of 34 Ancona ducks—a white breed with distinct, mottled feathers—quack sociably as they waddle around Rebecca Cahill Kemmer’s farm. Sometimes they drop eggs while they follow their guardian goose and gobble up old apples and remnants of summer squash.

Cahill Kemmer and her husband Eric Kemmer started their Pend Oreille County farm, in fertile Valley just north of Spokane County, in 2013, with education and assistance from WSU Extension’s small farms team. When they chose livestock, ducks were a natural choice.

“They’re very hardy,” says Cahill Kemmer. “Last winter, they liked to sit out in the snow instead of their shelter. And it’s harder to find duck eggs and meat in the store.”

Cahill Kemmer’s flock is not an exception. Adaptable and tough, ducks range from the Arctic tundra to tropical rainforests, isolated cold islands off Antarctica to suburban ponds. They’re omnivorous in the broadest sense, eating almost anything and earning the nickname “pigs of the water.” Their bills act as extremely effective sewers with horny palates to filter food and sensitive taste buds to determine if it is edible, even in mud and cloudy water. They also have a field of vision of nearly 340 degrees, can simultaneously see both near and far, and can see in color.

As waterfowl, ducks depend on a second layer of feathers to stay warm. Another distinguishing characteristic is size. Like boxers, ducks can range from heavyweight down to bantamweight. Cahill Kemmer’s flock of Anconas are mediumweight, smaller than common Pekin ducks but they grow faster. Duck expert Dave Holderread writes that Anconas are also prolific egg layers and excellent foragers.

Ducks have worked their way into our idiom—sitting duck, lame duck, ducks in a row—and our pop culture—Donald Duck, Howard the Duck, The Simpsons, even another Pac-12 mascot. They haven’t established themselves on the modern American plate, however.

Jamie Callison, WSU executive chef and author of The Crimson Spoon, encourages people to try cooking duck, maybe for the holidays, and not be intimidated. “You have to cook without fear. Try something unique, think about serving duck with some glazed carrots with a bit of honey, and you’ll get rewarded.”

Cahill Kemmer says cost can be a problem, increased by processing. “A USDA processor is required and it’s an hour and a half to the nearest,” she says. They sell on the farm and at farmers markets.

Unlike the United States, people in other countries regularly consume duck meat and eggs. They used to be more common in this country as well; WSC Extension bulletins from the early twentieth century offer instruction on raising the birds, recipes to smoke or cook duck, and tips on hunting.

Cahill Kemmer points out that wild ducks do tend to taste better, since they eat more worms and slugs. A well-rounded diet for a pastured duck improves the flavor, and the meat is still richer than other poultry. Cahill Kemmer even feeds fermented grains to her ducks for probiotic benefits.

Her family, including her five-year-old daughter Julianna, loves the large, rich eggs from the ducks. Higher in protein, iron, and Omega-3 fat than chicken eggs, duck eggs are also a preferred ingredient for pastries and desserts.

Callison says duck cooked low and slow, with something acidic like a balsamic or orange juice sauce on the fat meat, is a favorite food. He serves duck, basted and grilled, with a handy grain, such as bario or forbidden rice, to balance the rich meat.

Pan Roasted Duck Breast*

The secret to this recipe is scoring the skin so the fat melts out during cooking, creating crispy skin—the perfect complement to the tender meat. Scoring also helps prevent the duck breast from curling up in the cooking process.

4 skin-on duck breasts, 5 ounces each
1 cup orange juice
1 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon kosher salt
fresh ground black pepper

Serve with Hazelnut Forbidden Rice, Julianne Minted Carrots, and Orange Balsamic Glaze (recipes online at mag.doc.wsu.edu/extra/duck-recipes).

Score each duck breast by running the tip of a knife into the skin, but not into the meat, in four lines about 1/4 inch apart.

Mix together orange juice, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt, and pepper. Pour over duck and marinate—refrigerated—a minimum of two hours and up to overnight.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Remove duck from marinade, pat dry with paper towels. Cook duck breasts skin side down in a small pan lightly coated with vegetable spray until skin is golden brown and crisp, about 5 minutes. Turn and repeat process.

Transfer duck skin side up, to a baking pan and baste until cooked through (this may not be necessary if duck cooked through while browning). Remove from oven and allow to rest in a warm place about 5 minutes, just prior to serving. Shred slices.

To serve, spoon Hazelnut Forbidden Rice on a plate, top with sliced duck and Julianne Minted Carrots, and drizzle with Orange Balsamic Glaze.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

*From The Crimson Spoon: Plating Regional Cuisine on the Palouse
by Jamie Callison | WSU Carson College of Business, 2013
A Mount Vernon high school teacher gets pulled into one of the greatest mysteries of the twentieth century

**STILL searching for AMELIA**

Dick Spink ‘85 never intended to hunt for Amelia Earhart’s airplane. He specializes in boats.

He put himself through Washington State University designing and fabricating aluminum boats. He now holds on to a day job teaching at Mount Vernon High School, but he’s also a naval architect and licensed master. He sells boat kits all over the world, from Singapore to Africa, and often builds clients’ boats on-site. Which is how he found himself in the north Pacific, in the Marshall Islands, and deep into a quest to solve the most enduring of aviation mysteries.

“Right now, to think I’m a leading researcher on Amelia Earhart? A farmer’s kid and school teacher from Mount Vernon? Unbelievable,” says Spink, a broad smile across his boyish face. He wears a brown fedora, a la Indiana Jones, and a brown leather aviator jacket with a Boeing logo embroidered on the front. Spink says he received the coat when he told his Earhart story to a fascinated group of Boeing Company executives in February.

The story begins at a celebration with his Marshallese hosts. At the feast, an older man—a king of one of the islands—told the guests about Amelia Earhart and her navigator crashing on a nearby atoll in 1937. He said his uncle had watched over Earhart for two days. Spink imprudently laughed, and his close friend Ramsay Reimers chided him for disrespecting the elder man. “You don’t laugh at a king,” says Spink. After several apologies from Spink, Reimers and others explained that the Earhart crash was well-known throughout the islands, and that Spink could meet many locals who had heard the recollection of their parents and grandparents.

Amelia Earhart started flying airplanes in 1921, drawn to the daring world of early pilots. In just seven years she became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, first with a crew, then solo. Her fame grew, and ticker tape parades welcomed her home from her exploits.

Earhart chalked up one aviation accomplishment after another: first person to fly the Atlantic twice; first woman to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross; first woman to fly nonstop across the United States; and a number of speed records.

Her flying exploits weren’t the only way Earhart increased her visibility and fame. The charismatic pilot wrote two books, a regular aviation column for Cosmopolitan magazine, articles, and essays. She even promoted a line of clothes based on her distinctive attire.

Earhart’s husband, publisher George P. Putnam, helped market the aviatrix, and she became “Lady Lindy,” an internationally-recognized celebrity who drew crowds of hundreds.

In late 1936, at age 39, Earhart set out to be the first woman to fly around the world. She chose a heavily customized Lockheed Electra 10E, the first twin-engine, all-metal passenger airliner built by Lockheed. Earhart’s ground crew ripped out the passenger seats, added more fuel tanks, and covered most of the portholes. Her first attempt failed with a crash in Honolulu after flying over from Oakland, California.

The second attempt worked much better, at first. Heading east, Earhart flew the Electra with top navigator Fred Noonan on board. They departed Miami on June 1, 1937, and traveled through South America, Africa, India, and southeast Asia before arriving at Lae, New Guinea, on June 29. They were set to begin the final stage of the circumnavigation. They took off on July 2, destined for remote Howland Island, one of the Pacific islands under U.S. control by League of Nations mandate. A rugged airstrip was built there specifically for Earhart’s flight.

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Itasca was dispatched to communicate with and guide Earhart’s plane. Through a series of radio miscommunications, it became clear to the Itasca crew that the Electra was not finding its way to Howland. Earhart reported overcast skies and indicated she was barely receiving the signals from the Itasca.

We must be on you, but we cannot see you. Fuel is running low. Been unable to reach you by radio. ...
The Itasca heard one last ambiguous message—that the aviators were traveling north-south—before the plane disappeared.

THE U.S. NAVY AND COAST GUARD SPENT $4 MILLION and sent an aircraft carrier and other ships to search for some trace of the plane or crew, to no avail. They eventually declared Earhart and Noonan lost at sea. Putnam also sent ships on a futile search.

Theories contradicting the official explanation of her disappearance soon began to pop up and increased with the end of World War II, when Pacific Islanders began to tell of a woman and man captured by the Japanese after their plane crashed on an island in 1937.

It was one of these eyewitness reports that led CBS radio journalist Fred Goerner to pursue the Earhart disappearance. His 1966 book, *The Search for Amelia Earhart*, chronicles a six-year quest he and others undertook to determine the facts about Earhart. He gathered a number of reports of U.S. soldiers and island natives who saw evidence or heard testimony of Earhart and Noonan in captivity on Saipan. Goerner even exhume remains and had them analyzed to determine if they were the aviators. They weren’t.

One discredited theory said Earhart returned to the United States under a false name: Irene Bolam. An unproven rumor claimed Earhart was Tokyo Rose. Another prevailing theory is the Mili Atoll crash. Mili Atoll is a group of islands and reefs in the Marshall Islands, ringed a lagoon formed by the caldera of a collapsed volcano. Near a three-acre island there in 1937, Marshallese natives Lajuan and Jororo said they saw the Lockheed Electra crash. The two were fishing in the lagoon of the atoll when they heard the engine and saw the silver plane glide onto the rocks of the reef, tearing off the landing gear and a wing.

The two men subsequently said that a Caucasian woman and man emerged from the plane, the man injured and the woman with short hair and long pants. The fishermen tried to help but couldn’t understand the pair’s language.

The islands were part of the mandated Japanese territory, and a number of Marshallese witnesses later said the Japanese eventually came and took both the fliers and the airplane. Postage stamps from the Marshall Islands even show the airplane being transported away on the Japanese trawler Kosho Maru.

"Generations of Marshallese people have known since 1937 that the famous fliers didn’t just disappear in the ocean," Marshall Islands President Christopher Loeak told news agency Agence France-Presse this January. "The aircraft landed on a small atoll in the Marshall Islands and (Earhart and Noonan) survived."

The theory contends that the pilot and navigator were treated at a hospital in the Marshall Islands and then taken to Saipan, where they remained in captivity until they died. The airplane was taken to Saipan as well, the theory claims, and was destroyed after World War II.

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In 1961, the Marshall Islands people were pretty confident about the location of the crash site. "I talked more and more with Ramsay and my friend Tony deBrum about organizing the first expedition, which we did just two years ago."
There are problems with ‘crash and sink’ theory, though. Despite some disagreements on details, those Earhart experts all agree that the Electra landed to the southeast, on Nikumaroro Island. Spink says there’s no real evidence the plane landed there, the parts Gilgohee found were from a completely different aircraft, and the weather was clear at Nikumaroro at the time of the crash, not overcast.

To keep pushing the Mili Atoll idea, Spink needs to find something that supports the story. ‘I need to tell this story because of the frauds out there. This muddies the water for people who are serious about this, like people me,” he says.

Some of the hardest questions come about the alleged suppression of information by the government about Earhart and Noonan. The government has failed to keep pushing the story, make a good push for a couple of years, and if I get nowhere I’ll hang it up. “It’s one of those mysteries that will remain a mystery.”

Meanwhile, he and other Earhart re- searchers wait for metallurgical laboratory results on the parts he found. Spink knows it won’t necessarily confirm the MilI Atoll theory, though. “If the results come back as pre-World War II, it still won’t be a pot of gold. People can say it was another plane,” he says, shaking his head. “But there just weren’t any other planes there.

‘The more people look at this, the more they research Amelia Earhart. One trip to the Marshall Islands and you’re convinced. It’s part of their history.’
It’s canning day at Tieton Cider Works in Yakima. Tall, red cans of Rambling Route cider pass through a pasteurizing unit as they come off the conveyor belt of the mobile canning truck. Sold in four packs, the company’s first canned product is intended to reach the masses, perhaps even enticing craft beer drinkers with a moderately-priced, portable cider.

The label on a can of Rambling Route cider describes the journey apples made across the country to Washington: “When it reached the land that would be called Washington, the apple knew.” It knew it had found a home in the soils and climate of the Pacific Northwest. Today, cider has found a welcoming home here as well.

From new cideries and orchards around the state to cider science at Washington State University, the fermented beverage has come back in a big way.

CIDER IS ARGUABLY THE DRINK THAT BUILT THIS NATION. Not beer, not wine. Once upon a time, nearly every family in colonial America had a small cider press for making their own because cider was considered safer to drink than water. Wherever John Chapman, aka Johnny Appleseed, went he left a trail of trees that would serve as homestead orchards for making cider. Cider prevailed as the beverage of choice in early America until the early temperance movement and then prohibition drove the final nails in its coffin.

The current cider boom began only nine years ago, says British beer writer Pete Brown. “It’s as if a cidery shock wave went around the world,” he writes, “a psychic pulse hitting the minds of discerning drinkers everywhere, and making them think, ‘Hmm. I want some cider.’”

Cider has soared to the top as the fastest growing alcoholic beverage in the nation. Although cider accounts for less than 1 percent of the entire beer category, even the popular craft beer movement has not grown as fast. Compare craft beer’s growth of roughly 20 percent annually with cider’s steeper curve of 65 percent annually. But as with craft beer, Washington state is at the leading edge of the cider revolution that is sweeping the nation—both in production and consumption. With upwards of 30 cideries, Washington boasts the most in the United States.
BUT THERE’S A HITCH IN THE CIDER REVOLUTION. Washington leads the nation in apple production. It’s chock full of apple orchards, but few contain cider apple varieties.

Cider apples, often referred to as “spitters” for the sour or bitter tannins they contain, are categorized as sweets, sharps, bittersharp, and bittersweets. New Jersey-based cider writer Chris Lehault says this about the experience of eating one: “In essence, eating a bitter-sharp apple is a bit like sucking on a black tea bag soaked in lemon juice.”

Once pressed into juice, fermented, and blended just so, cider apples impart flavors unparalleled by everyday eating apples, or dessert apples—the predominant source of most ciders today in the United States. Cider makers who want to produce an authentic, artisanal cider that appeals to an increasingly sophisticated palette can’t get enough locally grown cider apples.

PLANTING A NEW BUSINESS

In 2008, Craig Campbell ’73 and his wife Sharon felt the “cidery shock wave” surface in their eastern Washington orchards. They began experimenting with making cider from dessert apples grown in their 400-acre commercial fruit orchards. Despite naysayers who warned that cider apples required a maritime climate, Craig also planted a two-acre test orchard with 25 varieties of cider apples.

“Everyone told me you can’t grow cider apples in eastern Washington, in the Yakima Valley,” he says. “I just thought, this is crazy, I can grow every other kind of fruit.”

Now the Campbells grow cider apples to supply their own commercial cideryard, Tieton Cider Works. They’re leading the way in modern cider apple orchard management, and partnering with WSU researchers to help the industry meet the demand for a nation thirsty for local craft cider.

Their two-acre experiment expanded into Cider View, a 30-acre “high-density” cider orchard. With additional blocks of both apple and pear trees for cider, Cider View has become the largest cider orchard in the state. In fact, with 55 acres of cider apples and pears altogether, it’s one of the largest in the country. This year, Tieton Cider Works is producing the equivalent of 100,000 cases (160,000 gallons) in kegs, bottles, and cans, but the Yakima facility has room to grow to 500,000 cases annually.

“We were in early on this wave, but we had no notion about this thing taking off,” Sharon says. “We just wanted to try it. We thought if we could make 1,000 cases and sell it that would be our business model. We blew past that in year three.”

RAISING STICKS AT CIDER VIEW

Craig Campbell, a third-generation farmer and a third-generation WSU alumnus, grew up on his grandfather’s farm, the land he now farms near Tieton, Washington. After graduating with a degree in horticulture, his father encouraged him to leave the farm.

“He urged me to go out and learn more about the whole fruit business,” he says. “He’s the one that really pushed me. Thank God he did that.”

Craig headed to California where his father’s wisdom paid off in two life-changing ways. The first was the start of his still successful fruit distribution business, a handy background for understanding cider distribution. The second was a blind date with the woman who would become his wife.

“When I brought Sharon to see one of our family’s orchards near Pasco, she says, ‘Oh my God, we’re raising sticks.’” What looked to Sharon like simply sticks in the ground was Craig’s passion—newly planted trees. The phrase stuck and became Craig’s license plate RAZNSTX.

The Campbells’ cider orchard is the latest manifestation of Craig’s passion. The 30-acre block of cider apple trees sits on a plateau above the Naches River, a tributary to the Yakima River. Tightly planted rows of trees with names like Golden Russet, Harry Master Jersey, and Yarlington Mill enjoy sweeping views of the river valley and mountains.

In the spring of their third year, the trees are nearly in full bloom—more than mere sticks in the ground. In this modern, high-tech orchard the young trees are planted three feet apart and trellised to support a 12-foot high central leader. The arrangement maximizes yield per acre. The uniform rows are wide enough for a tractor to roll through, carrying workers on a platform to prune or harvest without having to climb up and down ladders. Come fall 2016, Cider View will bear its first load of fruit, which must be harvested by hand. But the orchard is designed to accommodate mechanical harvesting, once the technology is available.
CIDER SCIENCE

Mechanical harvesting of cider apples is one of many cider research projects at the WSU Northwest Research and Extension Center (NWREC) in Mount Vernon. The orchard-to-glass research program led by horticulturist Carol Miles is one of only five university-based programs in the United States. Though small compared to beer and wine science, Miles says WSU’s cider research program is the largest in the country.

With most of Washington’s apples growing in places like Yakima and Wenatchee, western Washington may seem like an unlikely place for apple research. But Miles is quick to point out, “the San Juan Islands were the first place apples were grown in the state in the 1800s—long before irrigation water came to central Washington.”

Cider research at WSU began in the maritime climate of Mount Vernon in 1979 when Bob Norton planted six cider apple varieties at NWREC. Today, under the direction of Miles, a newly-planted research orchard includes 64 English, French, and old American varieties of cider apples. The research spans all aspects of orchard management as well as cider-making, including sensory evaluation, marketing, and economic analysis in collaboration with specialists at the Pullman campus.

Besides research, NWREC also offers cider education. Many Washington cider makers, including Sharon Campbell, have taken a cider-making course taught by British expert Peter Mitchell, offered by NWREC in partnership with the Northwest Agriculture Business Center and the Northwest Cider Association. Sharon Campbell, incidentally, helped start the association in 2010, and was president until last year.

The NWREC program also produced the first in-kind manual for cider production and orchard management in the Pacific Northwest, written by Gary Moulton, former WSU tree fruit specialist and cider program leader.

In the Tri-Cities, Thomas Henick-Kling, the director of the WSU viticulture and enology program, is evaluating how that program too might support the cider industry in Washington. He says that fermentation science and sensory evaluation for cider are nearly the same as for grape wine. Currently, students in the program can take electives in tree fruit production and most courses like plant pathology, entomology, soils, and plant physiology would be appropriate for cider and wine science students alike.

At Tieton Cider Works, head cider maker Marcus Robert, a fourth-generation orchardist who hails from the winemaking industry, prefers to hire people with a wine science background. He worries that people who are eager to jump in to the cider industry won’t take the time to learn the art and science of it and risk producing bad ciders that could turn off uninitiated drinkers for good.

“It’s really important that people know what they’re doing and are not just crossing their fingers,” Robert says. “It’s a scientific field and it’s a scientific process that you have to repeat.”

As part of a national research team including Virginia Tech, Cornell, Michigan State University, and the University of Vermont, Miles is hopeful that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will fund a robust proposal to boost orchard-to-glass cider research across the country. She also sees cider production as economic opportunity for agriculture in the state.

“Many cider makers are currently importing cider apples from Europe and New Zealand. This is a lost opportunity for the United States,” she says. “I see no reason why Washington shouldn’t be a leading cider apple grower in the country.”

Miles anticipates a day when cider apple varieties are grown in every part of the state. And in Tieton, the Campbells are proving that cider apples don’t require a maritime climate.

Wherever cider apples are cultivated, they are ushering in the return of hard cider to the United States. And this time, cider could be here to stay.
She’s eager to instill that same hope to the kids attending her schools. Chief Leschi Schools, operated by the Puyallup Tribe, is one of the largest Bureau of Indian Education schools in the nation. That she even became superintendent took support of her own teachers.

As a child, her hopes were slim. Her dreams, muted. Her father died when she was three. Her mother was an X-ray technician but spent most of her time in preschools, mentoring children. This was in the Hilltop neighborhood of Tacoma. This wasn’t a neighborhood for a child. There was gang violence, crack dealing, gunfire, and sirens at all hours.

“As a teenager,” she recalls, “I didn’t think I’d live to be 20, so ‘growing up to be something’ never entered my thoughts.”

She was surviving. She dropped out of school. She bounced around foster homes. She was lost. “The only thing I knew for sure was that if— and that was a big if—I made it, I would listen and be the voice of the voiceless because I never felt as though I had one.”

But educators saw something in her and heard the voiceless tribal girl from Hilltop. Like Mr. Johnson, a teacher and gymnastics coach who believed in her. Like former Leschi superintendent Linda Rudolph who suggested Eveskcige go to college. Like former Vashon superintendent Monte Bridges who appreciated, as she did, social justice programs and integrated curriculum.

When the superintendent position opened at Chief Leschi and she got the job, Eveskcige couldn’t imagine being anywhere else. “My journey took many twists and turns, but it led me back home. It is my home, the future of my child and her children. My actions today will impact seven generations into the future.” As for making history, being the first tribal member to hold the title of school superintendent, she doesn’t think much of it. “I’m not making history, I am just a part of the historical line that started with all my ancestors that came before me.”

Her work isn’t easy. Textbooks come from publishers that don’t represent the cultural values or experiences of the children using them. There are also standards required nationally to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. She hopes to turn the learning inside out—start with the core cultural values of the students and then place the educational in entities around it.

“I want to provide a place of cultural relevance and identity, where it is okay to be a Native youth while striving to be the best in whatever field they choose,” says Eveskcige.

Perhaps a generation from now, or two, or seven, a child will go into education because of her. “My greatest reward each day is to see the smile that is accompanied with the knowledge that it was a direct result of their awareness of their own accomplishments.”

“My earliest memories of school were full of hope,” says Amy Eveskcige ’13 EDD, the new superintendent of Chief Leschi Schools and the first Puyallup Tribe member to hold the position.
Take to the sea

Four years ago, at a wedding in Spokane, Cathy Simon ’71 was seated across from a woman named Kay LeClair. Like Simon, LeClair was in her 60s. Unlike Simon, she had recently climbed to the 29,035-foot summit of Mount Everest.

It made Simon think, “I’m not done. I need to do something more.”

A sailor, she started exploring her options and lit upon the World Cruising Club’s World Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, a 26,000-mile circumnavigation of the earth. Speaking to her husband, Charles Simon ’89 MS, she said, “We’re going to need a new boat.”

This May, the couple sailed their 58-foot sailboat into Rodney Bay, St. Lucia, crossing their outgoing path of 15 months earlier and completing one of the most singular accomplishments on the planet.

“What were we going to do otherwise?” says Cathy, 67. “We needed to do something that was an equivalent to climbing Mount Everest. You realize you can do these things.”

The Simons first met in 1978 on a flight to Hawaii and first sailed on their return when Charles, the great-grandson of a ship owner, took them out on San Francisco Bay. She was a banker; he was busily running a software startup. To get him out of the office at least one day a week, she bought him a 33-foot Ranger 33. That led to a 46-foot Beneteau, which they twice cruised to Alaska.

For the circumnavigation, they bought a Taswell 58. After a trip to Nova Scotia, they filled 14 pages with things they wanted to change: adding solar panels that could run a fridge and autopilot, replacing sails, getting bigger anchors, replacing electronics.

“The hard part of the trip was getting the boat ready to go for a year and a half,” says Cathy. “Actually doing the trip seemed a lot easier.”

The history of circumnavigation would suggest the Simons were still in for an ordeal. Ferdinand Magellan, while often credited as the first to circle the world, actually died halfway around. Only 18 of the expedition’s 270 or so original crewmen made it. Joshua Slocum, the first to sail alone around the world from 1895 to 1898, contended with pirates and a four-day gale west of Cape Horn. In 1969, Robin Knox-Johnston became the first to sail non-stop around the world, competing in the Sunday Times Golden Globe race.

Seven other competitors said uncle before finishing; one of them committed suicide. The Simons had to tough it out through several stretches in which they took turns at six-hour watches. But their route through the Panama Canal and following the trade winds made for mostly smooth sailing, as did timing the journey to avoid stormy seasons. They hit squalls but never a storm, and some big but largely tolerable seas.

“Cathy and I have sailed a bunch and after a while you learn that it becomes really uncomfortable long before it gets dangerous,” says Charles. “It gets uncomfortable and then it gets really unpleasant and I don’t think we hit seriously unpleasant.”

“We could always have soup,” he adds.

Want You to Join Them (and Us).

Last spring, the WSU Alumni Association exceeded 30,000 members for the first time, ever! Members joined because of the amazing events, exclusive programs, special services, and fantastic discounts. When Cougs get together, the more the better. Become a member and help us reach 40,000—because it’s Cougs like you who make the difference. Find us online at alumni.wsu.edu/join or call 1-800-ALUM-WSU.
NEWmedia

The Adderall Empire: A Life with ADHD and the Millennials' Drug of Choice

Andrew K. Smith

BOOKTOPE 15

Smith’s memoir, _The Adderall Empire_, gives you a look into his life and struggle with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Diagnosed in late high school, Smith was prescribed Adderall and was catapulted (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Throughout his experiences with Cogmed (an alternate method of treating ADHD). Throughout the book, Smith provides complete transparency to his readers, even to the extent of including his own medical records, to give an even deeper look into his struggle. The brutally honest way in which Smith depicts his own struggles makes this book a page-turner, and it will leave you questioning the “Adderall Empire” as a way to treat ADHD.

—Audrie Kalliat

BRIEFLY NOTED

A Formative Decade: Ireland in the 1920s

Edited by JASON KINNEC '96 MA, '00 PHD, MEL PARKELL, and CIARA MEHAN

IRISH ACADEMIC PRESS: 2015

Kirk, a history professor at Central Washington University, and his fellow editors

The interplay is especially poignant as father and daughter struggle with forgiveness and reconciliation.

"Do you remember me?" Wilson's daughter asks when she first enters his room. "I remember thin eyes well enough," he replies, borrowing Lunatic Lam's reply to eyeless Gloucester as a play to buy more time with your daughter, Miranda," she says.

"Miranda, his mind echoes, Adonis à Miranda, and, worth What's dearest to the world, and, my daughter, who Art ignorant of what thou art."

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Volunteers drive the Cougar Nation (really)

Organizing a trip to a Major League Soccer game for 100 people could intimidate anyone. Not to mention a community garden, a networking meeting for young alumni, or even a WSU football viewing party. Fortunately, there’s an engine that drives the Cougar nation and its events: volunteers.

Ashley MacMillan ’01, president of the Oregon Chapter of the WSU Alumni Association, has seen that engine work. “We have so many people here who are passionate about being involved with other Cougs, we’ve been able to diversify our events,” he says.

That includes the hottest sport ticket in Portland: MLS soccer team the Timbers, which is one of the chapter’s family-friendly events. Her chapter also partners with the southwest Portland Timbers fan club, Tim’s Pizza and Sports Pub, to regional wine tours.

One volunteer, Jenna Newcomb ’03, has taken on annual wine tours as her project. “She’s learned the logistics, so every year she has the contacts and know-how. She’s also mentoring other volunteers,” says MacMillan.

Kim Mueller ’91, director of alumni engagement at the WSUA, says the sheer volume of alumni events is only possible with dedicated people like MacMillan and Newcomb.

“The Alumni Association runs on our volunteers,” she says. “We plan about 500 events a year. There’s no way our team of four could do that, so we rely on people who want to connect with Cougs.”

More volunteers are always needed at chapters all over the country, says Mueller.

“A volunteer leadership conference offered twice a year keeps people connected to campus,” she says. “They see what’s new and hear about research—such as WSU Spokane Chancellor Lisa Brown on the medical school, and a visit to concussion researcher Kasee Hildebrand’s lab.”

“We pay for travel for our chapter leaders to come to Pullman,” says Mueller. “They can go back to their communities and say, ‘You won’t believe what’s happening on campus!’”

The conference also imparts ideas for how to plan and promote events, and how to bring in more volunteers.

“The training has been wonderful in expanding our chapter,” says MacMillan. “We’re really learning how to seek out new volunteers and how to plan for the coming years.”

Mueller loves how the events: “I get chills from seeing pictures of community service projects, from Habitat for Humanity to a garden for a food bank.”

MacMillan says everybody can help, no matter how much time you get. “It doesn’t have to be a time commitment. With a one-year-old daughter, I understand it’s as much or as little as you can.”

If you’d like to volunteer with the Alumni Association, or would just like to learn more about the opportunities, you can email alumni.wsu.edu or visit alumni.wsu.edu.
ANDO DAY ('91 History) was appointed to the Washington Tourism Authority board of directors. Day is currently an executive director of the Long Beach Peninsula Visitors Bureau. Capstone Nutrition appointed PARTHA KUNDU ('93 MS Food Sci.), as chief executive officer. Partha has over 25 years of experience in the nutrition industry, including barbeques and sports nutrition producer Dymatize. Ellis Mac, a mortgage software company, appointed executive vice president of technology at Visa, RAJAT TANZEA ('92 MBA), to its board of directors. Including his years at Visa, Tanzea has over 20 years of experience in global technology. Washington State University College of Pharmacy named KAY ALZOLA ('99 Pharm.) the 2014 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year. Also helped establish WSU’s alumni and student mentor program for future pharmacists. RYAN HART ('99 Comm.) has been named the new chef of external affairs for the Port of Vancouver USA. He previously worked as district executive director for U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler. JOYCE STARK ('94 MS Bus.) was named Educational Service District 105 Regional Teacher of the Year for 2015-2016. She is currently teaching science at Sunnyside High School. Joyce began her career at Sunnyside School District in 1977. Marketing and personalization company MarketMuse named MICHAEL WASYLUKA ('94 Acc.) vice president of sales and marketing. He will be in charge of creating MarketMuse’s go-to-market strategy, using his more than 20 years of experience in sales and marketing. Voice of the Idaho Steelheads, WILL HOENIKE ('99 Comm.) is the recipient of the 2015-2016 ECHL hockey league’s ‘Broadcaster of the Year’ award. Hoenike had been the hockey team’s broadcaster since January 2011.

RICK LIBRA ('97 MS Eng. Mgmt.) was named vice president of Eosion Generation’s Limerick Generating Station site. Libra will come into the job with over 30 years of experience in the U.S. nuclear industry. As vice president, Libra will manage all plant operations, as well as lead a team of 800 employees. STACY PRITT ('99 DVM) was awarded the Ron Ostrander Memorial Award from the Laboratory Animal Welfare Training Exchange. At the American Veterinary Medical Association meeting in July, she announced her candidacy for the AVMA vice presidency. Pritt is currently the president-elect of the Women’s Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative and will take over as president in January 2016.

JAMEI (HO) HSU ('98 Arch.) is an active member of the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties as well as the Remodelers Council. She is also president of Lakeside Homes. MARK FAZER ('99 Fin.) was appointed head of Atlantic Trust’s Austin office and promoted to managing director. Frazier has more than 15 years of experience in the industry. Northwestern Companion Ads added CHAD HAMILTON ('96 Com.) to their staff. Hamilton will specialize in investment and development services. MICHAEL PICKERING ('99 MS Int.) was hired by Maul Foster & Almgren Inc. Pickering is a senior geologist who has project management experience in the Northwest.

ELS Architecture and Urban Design promoted RYAN CALL ('01 Arch.) to associate principal and director of urban design. Call has been with ELS since 2003. He was also recently awarded the Urban Land Institute’s Apgar Award for co-authoring "New Suburbanism: Reinventing Three-Ring Suburbs." FRANKLIN Public Utility District hired HOLLY DOHRMAN ('01 Soc. Sci.) as power manager for the utility. Dohrman’s responsibilities will center on managing power resource acquisitions. After 15 years of working in the EDC’s energy services industry, JOHN MUNRO ('93 MME) has joined the company’s senior leadership team. Munro will be vice president of managed services operations. ADAM DROKER ('94 MBA/Fin.) has been promoted to chief investment officer of Waterflock Global Asset Management. Droker will assume day-to-day oversight of the firm. Gold Mortgage named JORDAN FLOWERS ('08 Mktg.) manager of their Kirkland branch. Flowers heads into this new position with ten years of experience in the mortgage industry. ERIC STONES ('97 EDD) was recently appointed director of the Moses Lake School Board. Stones and his family have lived in the Moses Lake School District since 1996. ANDREW SOMERS ('02 Soc.) was appointed as the new court administrator for Island County. Juvenile and Superior Court in March. Former WSU men’s basketball standout ARON BAYNES ('19 Kines.) signed with the Detroit Pistons. He never played a full season and had seasons with the San Antonio Spurs. In 2014, while in Spain, Baynes became the second Cougar to set an NBA Championship.

Former WSU women’s basketball player KATIE GRAD ('12 Kines.) recently joined the Cougar Athletic Fund for the Puget Sound region. The CAF is focused on covering the annual costs for student athlete scholarships. RANDY ROUBLOCK ('14 Pol. Sci.) will return to Cougar country as he was recently named new director of communications and public relations at Washington State University North Puget Sound at Everett. Most recently Roublock worked with the Mercer Island School District as communications and public relations director, where he received state-wide recognition for his work.

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Phalanxíthropists, business leaders, and WSU supporters MICHAEL AND VIRGINIA JESSELY MCGARRY received the WSU Alumni Association Alumni Achievement Award in September. Virginia graduated in 1974 with a broadcasting degree, and Michael earned his degree in recreation in 1975. He recently retired as chief executive officer of the Association of Washington Cities. She is the owner of McCarty & Associates marketing firm, which she founded in 1986.

Michael has been manager of the Thurston Conservation District, administrator for the City of Shelton, past president of Virginia graduated in 1974 with a Achievement Award in September. She is also a member of the professional advisory board for the Murrow College.
CREATE A LEGACY, SUPPORT EXCELLENCE

Something very special is happening at the College of Pharmacy, and this is your chance to be part of it. The opening of our new building on the WSU Health Sciences Spokane campus has created a rare opportunity for you to have a permanent legacy in the College of Pharmacy by naming a teaching area, conference room, student gathering area, or laboratory in the Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences Building. For more information contact 509-368-6675 or gocougs@pharmacy.wsu.edu.

PHARMACY.WSU.EDU

College of Pharmacy Partner Highlight: John Oftebro '65

“I have chosen to give back to a program that provided me with a foundation for creating a wonderfully rewarding professional practice. I am extremely grateful for the financial aid I received during my undergraduate years, and am glad to now assist our students. Go Cougs!”

John Oftebro contributed to name the pharmacy dean's conference room.


ARIC MATTHEW KLEPPIN (’13 Spanish), 26, May 10, 2015, Pullman.

FACULTY AND STAFF


CORRECTION

Dorothee Tallmadge, '93, was incorrectly listed in the August 2015 “In Memoriam.”
**MILESTONES**

**A billion reasons to celebrate**

WSU’s fundraising efforts reach a lofty goal

**BY LARRY CLARK**

**WSU STUDENT SELENA ALVARADO** is heading to Costa Rica, but it isn't for a vacation. As part of the Backpack Journalism program in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, she will investigate issues that face Costa Rica, then send back videos and print stories for Pacific Northwest media outlets. The hands-on program wouldn’t exist without scholarships and support from a number of donors.

At the WSU Tree Fruit Research Station in Wenatchee, apple breeder Kate Evans and her research team identify traits that can improve Washington’s signature fruit. Using genetic markers and research orchards, they seek an apple that tastes great and keeps well. Evans’s research will move forward with help from a historic $27 million gift from the Washington tree fruit industry.

Alvarado’s on-the-ground training as a journalist and Evans’s apple research represent just two of many efforts made possible by the recently concluded Campaign for Washington State University: Because the World Needs Big Ideas. The campaign brought in over $1.06 billion, which will make a significant difference in student success, research, and WSU’s ability to serve the state. Just as impressive is the number of donors: 206,259 donors made over 800,000 contributions.

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Alvarado’s on-the-ground training as a journalist and Evans’s apple research represent just two of many efforts made possible by the recently concluded Campaign for Washington State University: Because the World Needs Big Ideas. The campaign brought in over $1.06 billion, which will make a significant difference in student success, research, and WSU’s ability to serve the state. Just as impressive is the number of donors: 206,259 donors made over 800,000 contributions.

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Since it began in 2006, The Campaign for Washington State University: Because the World Needs Big Ideas created opportunities for thousands of WSU students and advanced the teaching, research, and outreach mission of Washington State University. To everyone who contributed to The Campaign for WSU, thank you for empowering big ideas and for inspiring tomorrow’s Washington State University.

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WHY DO BEES MAKE HEXAGONS IN THEIR HIVES? WHY NOT ANY OTHER SHAPE?

—Aditya, 10, New Delhi, India

Dear Aditya,

When bees make hexagons in their hives, the six-sided shapes fit together perfectly. In fact, we’ve actually never seen bees make any other shape. That’s what I found out when I visited my friend Sue Cobey, a bee researcher at Washington State University.

Cobey showed me some honeycombs where the female bees live and work. Hexagons are useful shapes. They can hold the queen bee’s eggs and store the pollen and honey the worker bees bring to the hive.

When you think about it, making circles wouldn’t work too well. It would leave gaps in the honeycomb. The worker bees could use triangles or squares for storage. Those wouldn’t leave gaps. But the hexagon is the strongest, most useful shape.

Don’t just ask the bees. Cobey explained that humans have recently used math to find out why hexagons make the most sense.

“The geometry of this shape uses the least amount of material to hold the most weight,” she said.

It takes the bees quite a bit of work to make the honeycomb. The wax comes from glands on the bees’ bellies, or abdomens. Honeybees have to make and eat about two tablespoons of honey to make one ounce of wax. Then they can add this wax to the comb as they build.

The hexagon might just save bees some time and energy. They can use the energy to do another really important job: carry pollen from flower to flower that allows new plants to grow. It’s my cat instinct to swat at a bee, but I try not to because bees are really important. They make it possible for us to eat food.

“The honey bee is an amazing animal, really fun to work with,” Cobey said. “And she is responsible for pollinating your fruits, vegetables, and nuts.”

Having a sturdy and useful hive can help bees get the job done. Not too long ago, some scientists wondered how exactly the bees build these hexagons. They found certain bees would start out making circles in the wax using their body as a tool. Scientists don’t really know why it happens, but the bees seem to be using their body heat to melt the wax from a circle shape into a hexagon shape.

Hexagons and honeycomb shapes are also useful for building things humans use, too, like bridges, airplanes, and cars. It gives materials extra strength.

After all, materials made with hexagon shapes can also handle a lot of force, even if they are made out of a lighter material. That’s what I learned from my friend Pizhong Qiao, an engineer and professor at WSU. “We learned it from the bees,” he said. “Hexagons apply to everything you can build.”

For having never done a day of math homework in their lives, bees sure seem to use some creative geometry and engineering to build their headquarters.

Sincerely,

DR. UNIVERSE