OUR NEW BACKYARD

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Features
Closing the gap between dreaming of a home and finally holding a key to the front door.

Forty years ago Mount St. Helens blew. We revisit the memories.

Essay
What we don’t know is immense. Natural history can be a profound catalyst for understanding.

Upfront
Bringing medical knowledge and access to all corners of the state is at the core of WSU’s land-grant mission.

Below purple mountain majesties, farming the fruited, flooded plains.

Hearts in the darkness: If you accept their culture, they’ll really take you in.

Cover: A morning view of Mount St. Helens, June 2017 (Photo Denis & Kim Hang)

Left: “Lights at the foot” of Mount Rainier (Photo Roger Reyes)
Meet Kristian

The planet’s getting warmer—and chemical engineering student Kristian Gubisch researches ways to capture carbon emissions and convert them to liquid fuel.

Marshall Scholar

Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship

Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program award

Coug.
ESTABLISH A LAND LEGACY WITH WSU

Your land represents years of hard work and dedication. It’s more than acreage—it’s your heritage—and you want it to endure. Establishing a land legacy at WSU is a well-planned charitable gift that provides long-term tangible benefits to you and others. When you donate land to WSU, it stays with WSU, and you secure a lasting resource for research, scholarships, and outreach.

Your property is managed by the Land Legacy Council, an organization of farmers, ranchers, timber experts, and agribusiness leaders.

For a fact sheet on ways to support WSU through gifts of real estate, including establishing a land legacy, please visit foundation.wsu.edu/land.
A woman’s place

When I started my career at WSU in the fall of 1969, I knew I wanted to be a biologist. My all-girl high school had an excellent science program. I spent the summer of ’69 working at the WSU Extension Center in Puyallup raising house flies and counting bark beetles in entomology.

My assigned advisor was in the zoology department. Apparently, he was pretty famous. His first question to me was, “Are you going into this professionally, or do you plan to get married?” Although I was a pretty timid 18-year-old, I stared at him and found the presence of mind to say, “I didn’t think they were mutually exclusive.”

He did steer me into good classes on what I look back now as an insanely difficult schedule. Midway through the semester, I found a new advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Hall. She was one of the few female professors in the sciences and, for some reason, microbiology was the only science where almost 50 percent of the students were women. I graduated in 1973 in microbiology, went on to work for Weyerhaeuser in R&D, was recruited to Nalco Chemical R&D (12 patents), and then started my consulting company controlling complex industrial microbial issues in paper mills all over the globe.

Yes, I did get married and have two daughters, two grandsons, and I continue to slay slime (biofilms).

Thank you, Dr. Hall.

LINDA (BLAU) ROBERTSON, ’69
BACTERIO. AND PUBLIC HEALTH

More Neill Hall memories

Reading Cathy Higgins’ letter in the Spring 2020 Talkback brought back a flood of memories from my time living in Neill Hall. Mine was a much earlier period than hers; in fact, we opened up a brand new Neill in February 1957. When I arrived at WSU in the fall of 1955, I was placed in Esquire Hall, one of the “cardboard castles” (actually plywood) built to accommodate the surge of returning WWII vets. These old dorms had a high turnover rate; half the freshmen had flunked out by the end of my first semester. Many of the survivors had our own room, which we could connect with others by knocking out the closet panels.

Esquire even had its own radio station (KRAP, the little brown spot on your dial) using the fire warning wiring as an antenna. Things were pretty loose in Esquire. At the start of the second semester in ’57, Esquire (North) Hall moved into Neill, while Pioneer (West) Hall moved into Kruegel and McAllister.

Neill Hallers had a strong sense of pride in their dorm, and there was even considerable competition between the respective floors. I remember Neill’s choir coming in second campus-wide, as did one of our homecoming floats. Although we were (GD) Independents, for the more active members, it was kind of like being in a fraternity. The only difference was that you didn’t have to participate, and we also had our share of less active types.

BILL BUCHAN, ’60 CHEM. ENG.
You can read Bill’s full letter at magazine.wsu.edu/extra/May-2020-talkback

COVID-19—WSU’s actions

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 disrupted the lives of students, faculty, and staff at Washington State University, just as it did for people all over the world. Classes moved online for the last part of the spring 2020 semester, University operations adapted, and many measures were taken to protect the health of WSU communities.

For more information about WSU’s response and proactive efforts to prevent COVID-19, visit wsu.edu/covid-19

COVID-19 information

WSU encourages all of the Cougar nation to stay safe and help contain the spread of COVID-19.

The websites below can keep you informed about the pandemic and preventing infection.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus
The State of healing

In years past when District Nurse Becky Droter (’94 Nursing) needed to research complex medical issues that affected her Colville School District students, she’d call the Spokane Educational School District to talk with nurses there. They were helpful but finding resources that fit the particular needs of her rural community remained difficult.

Droter’s students face different challenges than students in urban and suburban places. To start, distance poses a formidable barrier to health care access. If a Colville student needs to see a specialist, they must drive ninety minutes ("on dry roads," Droter notes) to Spokane or six hours to Seattle. Then there’s the shortage of doctors and nurses that’s endemic to rural Eastern Washington.

"We don’t have a pediatrician in our community," Droter says. "This creates problems for our kids getting access to care and helping our families understand the importance of seeing a specialist for special needs. And by special needs, I mean something as common as asthma."

Technology like telemedicine would help ease some cases, but it hasn’t yet been widely implemented.

Fortunately, when it comes to research, Droter’s needs are covered by HEALWA, Washington’s digital library for health care practitioners. Through HEALWA.org, Droter can find authoritative clinical research on the conditions and issues that impact her students. She uses that evidence-based information to improve how the district safeguards student health.

For example, thanks to Droter’s efforts, the Colville School District was one of the first districts in the state to make Narcan available at schools. Like many communities nationwide, Colville is no stranger to the opioid crisis. Droter set out to research how other school districts create policies around having this life-saving medicine on hand in case of emergency. Through HEALWA she discovered there wasn’t an example in Washington for her to follow; further searching in HEALWA’s online library yielded resources that helped her make the case to her school board to write a new policy.

The legislature created HEALWA in 2007 to support evidence-based practice in health care. Access to the library of online resources is tied to professional licenses—all nurses, doctors, and 25 other professions licensed in Washington can use HEALWA’s library to find full-text articles, point of care references, in Washington can use HEALWA’s library to find full-text articles, point of care references, and patient resources in multiple languages. Just last week I spent a bunch of time on HEALWA looking up articles on ‘Do Not Resuscitate’ orders because I have a student I have that order for," Droter says. "In a small school we’re all completely invested in the 360-degree well-being of our kids. The idea that a student might not go home at the end of the day doesn’t sit well. I really needed HEALWA for looking at best practices and how things are handled from an ethical and cultural perspective elsewhere."

The small size of her community requires Droter to educate everyone from volunteer emergency responders to the school board. But Colville’s small size also makes that possible: as a rural nurse, Droter can nurture close relationships with all stakeholders. Grounding her efforts in authoritative evidence she found through HEALWA’s website—no more need to call Spokane—helps her educate everyone she works with. In Washington state, equity of access to care may still be a challenge, but thanks to HEALWA, equity of access to evidence-based medical information is already here.

Kate Lebo is the HEALWA outreach coordinator for Eastern Washington, based out of WSU Health Sciences Spokane.

Going to BAT in rural Washington

When the Carpenter Road fire burned 64,000 acres in rural northeast Washington, the crew fighting the fire was without internet. In order to understand how the fire was moving and how to best position their firefighting resources, they had to drive GIS maps on removable media an hour out of the county office to the fire camp.

“When the fire ended, we said, ‘We’ve got to fix this,”’ says Debra Hansen, director of Washington State University Extension in...
OUR NEW BACKYARD
Stevens County. “So we created the Broadband Action Team, the BAT concept, and have been going gangbusters ever since. We need broadband for health care, education, businesses, jobs—we’re way beyond cat videos.”

Development of broadband infrastructure has been slow. As Hansen says, “Big internet providers don’t care about us. There’s no business case to bring broadband to 16 people per square mile.”

“It took 50 years to electrify the nation,” Microsoft president Brad Smith wrote in a 2018 blog post. “The millions of Americans waiting for broadband don’t have the luxury of time.”

“It’s not just a matter of bringing infrastructure to rural America,” Hansen says. Many people also need training in using email, smart devices, and the internet. “Our library district and economic development council are very involved in our BAT. They offer classes in technology use and solve tech problems at the library.”

Hansen describes a scene at the library in Coville where residents had a brief window of opportunity to sign up for heating bill assistance. “There were 100 people at the library,” she estimates, “trying to set up email accounts and log into the assistance site.”

“Farms can be part of fish habitat,” says Jobe. “We all value agriculture,” she adds, “so the BAT is that it brings together constituencies with local knowledge. “Local is important,” Babine says. “Because, one, it helps identify gaps in infrastructure; two, it helps ensure we don’t overbuild; and three, when you look at the folks involved in Debra’s team, it’s health care, schools, libraries, economic development council members, and emergency responders. So having those people at the table ensures that we build the infrastructure where it’s going to be used. And, four, those folks at the table are the ones who are helping provide the digital skills training.”

“And having all those folks at the table,” adds Hansen, “allows them to share resources, so discussions that start with broadband infrastructure branch out to economic development and much more.”

Including, perhaps, a robust telemedicine infrastructure that would, in times of health care crises such as COVID-19, enable doctors and patients to work together without risk of cross-contamination.

At home on the range
B Y L A R R Y  C H A R L E S  C L A R K
Washington State University
Elsion S. Floyd College of Medicine and partners are launching Range Health, a nonprofit academic health network designed to bring health care to Washington’s rural and underserved areas.

FROM THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES, TO THE MISSISSIPI AND THE YANGZI, FLOODPLAINS ARE GREAT PLACES TO FARM. The soil is generally fertile due to silt deposition by rivers, and the land is flat. Floodplains support rich biodiversity, too, and the ones in the Pacific Northwest have long been the hunting and fishing grounds of Native Americans. But as development spreads, floodplains are often paved over and land-based productivity is lost.

For Jordan Jobe, that’s all part of the challenge of advocating for agriculture in the Puyallup watershed. Based at Washington State University’s Puyallup Research and Extension Center, she works with a wide range of local partners to maximize multiple benefits from the rich promise of the Puyallup River and other local floodplains.

Jobe is the manager of Farming in the Floodplain Project that seeks to mitigate flood risk, restore habitat, increase the number of fish returning to streams, and, she says, “to keep agriculture viable, because we value local food and we value that use of the land.”

One of the biggest challenges for Jobe and her partners is drainage and getting water off the land in time to plant crops. Part of the problem in the Puyallup watershed is reed canary grass, “a fast growing, difficult to eradicate invasive species,” Jobe says. “You can plant riparian buffers that shade out reed canary grass, or you can spray it with limited success, but if it’s growing in a ditch and gets mowed without being removed, it creates a big pile of muck that traps water.”

“Farms also sequester carbon and provide other ecosystem services such as healthy soils, as well as carbon sequestration, and public health benefits. The power of the BAT is that it brings together constituencies with local knowledge. “Local is important,” Babine says. “Because, one, it helps identify gaps in infrastructure; two, it helps ensure we don’t overbuild; and three, when you look at the folks involved in Debra’s team, it’s health care, schools, libraries, economic development council members, and emergency responders. So having those people at the table ensures that we build the infrastructure where it’s going to be used. And, four, those folks at the table are the ones who are helping provide the digital skills training.”

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For more than 50 years, she wouldn’t talk about what happened during the war.

As a teenager operating in the Dutch Resistance, Carla Olman Peperzak helped hide approximately 40 Jews. “I tried to forget, but I couldn’t and should not,” says Peperzak, now 96 and the 2020 Washington State Person of the Year. “These experiences showed me how fragile life is, but also the opposite—how people can live through this.”

By the time she met Raymond “Ray” Sun, an associate professor of history at Washington State University in Pullman, she had already dedicated the rest of her life to telling her story. Sun first read about Peperzak’s Underground work five years ago in The Spokesman-Review and arranged for her to speak to his World War II history class. Now he’s working on weaving her wartime narrative into a manuscript that explores the history of Dutch Jews as well as gender roles—particularly, women’s—during World War II.

In the meantime, he has a chapter about Peperzak—tentatively titled “Hiding in Plain Sight: Gender, Faith, and the Conflicted Legacies of a Dutch Resister”—due this spring for a forthcoming book. He’s also working on a compilation organized by the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Studies at Bar Ilan University together with the B’nai B’rith World Center—“Legacies of a Dutch Rescuer.”

He began interviewing Peperzak, a member of the speaker’s bureau for Seattle’s Holocaust Center for Humanity, in 2018. He has since incorporated her experiences into his research, presented scholarly papers on her Resistance work at conferences, and appeared with her on stage for Q&A sessions. “I've looked a lot at the perpetrators, the bad guys,” he says. “Her story really got me into looking at the people who rescued or helped Jews.”

Holland had one of Western Europe’s highest Jewish death rates in World War II, which ended 75 years ago in the European Theater. The Allies accepted Germany’s surrender May 8, 1945. Roughly a quarter, or about 35,000 Jews, survived. In all, some 6 million—about 75 percent of Peperzak’s family, about 18 people in all—were exterminated.

“Never spoke about it,” Peperzak says. “It was too difficult. You try to forget. You try to go on with life.”

She broke her silence after her granddaughter asked her to speak at her school. Since then, she’s shared her story from Seattle and Tacoma to Pullman, and points in between. She’s also finished a memoir, Keys of My Life, available on Amazon. Washington legislative Resolution 8623 honors her as “a selfless and brave hero, who saved the lives of many and is now using her experiences to speak to new generations and educate all about our history and the human capacity to care for others while facing unimaginably difficult challenges.”

But, she says, “I don’t consider myself a hero. I could help, so I helped. I did what I could do.”

**DESIRED TO HELP**

When the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Peperzak was 16 and preparing to graduate from high school. She ice-skated on frozen canals in winter and rowed on the Amstel River in summer. Soon after the occupation started, Nazi raided her mostly Jewish rowing club, rounding up about a dozen male athletes.

Peperzak never saw them again. As the occupation wore on, Nazis stripped their restrictions, requiring Jews to register. There were 159,816 in all, including 15,561 born of mixed marriages, like Peperzak. Her father was Jewish. Her mother was a Catholic orphan raised by a Jewish family.

“You couldn't go on the bus,” Peperzak says. “You couldn't go on the train. You couldn’t go on the street car. You couldn’t go in the park. All Jewish banks accounts were confiscated. All Jewish safety deposit boxes were confiscated.”

Nazis required Jews to wear the yellow six-pointed Star of David and pitted neighbors against neighbors, encouraging the Dutch to identify Jews who were hiding or hadn’t registered. “You were paid,” Peperzak says, “for bringing in a Jewish person.”

Her father managed to procure paper work identifying his wife and two daughters as non-Jewish. “I know it cost him a lot of money,” Peperzak says, “for bringing in a Jewish person.”

Her father was 42, her mother was a Catholic orphan raised by a Jewish family. Her older sister, Anne Frank, was in the same Hebrew class as Anne’s older sister, and their families attended the same Reform temple. In 1939, Peperzak and the Frank sisters performed in the same Purim play. Peperzak’s father owned a clothing and fur factory in a one canal house in south Amsterdam’s Rivierenbuurt neighborhood, about a block from the Frank family apartment on Meerdereplein. The grassy square, which Anne Frank called “The Merry,” was once anchored by a statue of the young diarist, her face turned toward the home she left to go into hiding. Peperzak visited “once or twice.” She wasn’t the same child as Anne’s older sister, and their families attended the same Reform temple. In 1939, Peperzak and the Frank sisters performed in the same Purim play.

Peperzak’s father owned a clothing and fur factory one canal from the Frank’s. When Otto Frank and his family were taken to Westerbork, Peperzak helped to transport them—she used the fake IDs, stolen ration cards, and identity cards that she forged. “I made about 100 false ID cards,” she says. “I was pretty good at it.”

She also checked on her charges—many of whom were friends or extended family members—brining food, medical supplies, stolen ration cards, and identity cards that she forged. “I made about 100 false ID cards,” she says. “I was pretty good at it.”

She married a Dutch Catholic, moved to America, became a U.S. citizen, and pitted neighbors against neighbors, encouraging the Dutch to identify Jews who were hiding or hadn’t registered. “You were paid,” Peperzak says, “for bringing in a Jewish person.”

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BY Allan Felsot on red delicious apples

“Producers were using the growth apples in the 1980s,” Felsot says.

mental Quality Lab involved inves-

tional Society. “I haven’t eaten live insects

He’ll do his best to find an answer.

our campus. It’s a mindset that character-

The lab was started as a

The scare grew into what is
generally considered an overblown

Felsot is married to a drummer with a

For sound to get from the air around

First assignment at the

He also covers the Ex-

Felsot continues to

A friendly campus with teachers

Last November, Felsot’s exu-

but on the Pullman and Tri-Cities

Sensory cells can be dam-

BRIAN CHARLES CLARK

We celebrate 30 years of WSU in

She’s working to develop educational opportunities

And she’s working with Beauty

our campus. It’s a mindset that character-

The lab was started as a

to develop a strategy that

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B Y BRIAN CHARLES CLARK
Sniffing out patterns

By Brian Charles Clark

Dogs and humans have been inseparable for many millennia. Dogs eat, sleep, play, and work with us in relationships so intimate that we call them people, family members, and, as novelist Spencer Quinn puts it, members of “a nation within a nation.”

Or so it would seem to your typical American dog owner.

In fact, says Washington State University anthropology graduate student Jaime Chambers, “the ways we interact with dogs are extremely varied” once you start looking at the relationship across cultures.

To look at the dog-human relationship in a global context, Chambers is delving into the “Human Relations Area Files,” a Yale University-based ethnographic database. Searchable by keywords, Chambers is sniffing for patterns across 186 cultures.

So far, she’s uncovered “over 8,000 paragraphs of dog-related content, including myths, examples of dogs being interacted with, dogs in ceremonies.”

Chambers has been curious about the variety of human-dog relationships for years. For Americans, she says, “dogs are companions, child surrogates.” But as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, she saw something different. There, “dogs” are shown affection, but there’s more distance, and there’s a greater level of risk, because of rabies.

From the Area Files, she’s discovered that “play is uncommon, maybe a couple dozen appearances.” But “it is actually uncommon or is play just rarely noted by the ethnographer?”

That’s the big caveat about studying dogs through the lens of human cultures. Anthropology is the study of people, so in the ethnographies, when dogs are mentioned, it’s almost as an aside. If a dog serves an obvious utilitarian role, if it’s a very visible part of the people’s economy, an anthropologist is more likely to mention it, as in Siberia, for sledding, hunting, and food.

Although her analysis is just beginning, patterns are emerging. Hunting, not surprisingly, pops up a lot in the data.

“I think scavenging is also very common. Either descriptions of dogs rolling about and getting their own food, rather than being provisioned by humans, or humans having to take measures against their dogs taking the humans’ food.”

Another is personhood, “this idea that you don’t have to be a human to be a person.” Among the Konso of Ethiopia, for example, it is taboo to buy or sell dogs because of their personhood, while a Toraja myth determined that indeed, elevated testosterone levels are responsible for the males’ development of elaborate white wing patches. In turn, those patches are tied to testosterone levels, a hormone present in both sexes. This was not an easy task to carry out in a largely undeveloped country.

“Twas a bit guarded my first time in New Guinea—the economy is poor, there are few jobs, and you can’t buy much there,” Boersma says. “It’s a lot of preparation. You need to anticipate your needs for 3–5 months, especially your research equipment.

“The whole thing has to get into the rhythm of life there, it’s great,” he says. “There’s not much cell signal in our research area, so we spend a lot of time having conversations with the local people and becoming part of the community.”

In order to study the birds, Boersma had to make arrangements with the local landowners. He also hired and trained people to assist with his research and gave community presentations on conservation.

“One of our biggest challenges is just getting to the field sites,” he says. “There are only a couple roads and there’s no running water or electricity.”

Along the way, Boersma learned about the local culture, including witchcraft and cannibalism. One day, he happened to jog through a historical battlefield where 100 years ago, rival tribes lined up to throw poisoned spears at each other. Per tradition, any warrior hit by the spear had to submit to being dragged off for dinner. It was considered dishonorable to run away, he says.

Boersma also undertook a challenging field expedition to Ferguson Island.

“It’s a few hours travel by small boat and the sea is really rough in August,” he says. “There, local criminals discovered a cache of American World War II weapons and began patrolling the ocean area we planned to cross. They would trail dinghies and tell the owners to jump in and swim for shore.

‘Luckily, my friend’s extended family was respected by the top pirates, so they helped escort us across the rough seas—we almost flipped from massive waves but we made it.”

Once safely back at WSU, Boersma determined that indeed, elevated testosterone levels are responsible for the female fairywrens developing white wing patches. In turn, those females with flashy wing patches defend their territory more aggressively than do unadorned females. It’s a piece of information that cements his dissertation and adds to Darwin’s theory.

But Boersma’s not done yet. He hopes to someday return to his friends in Papua New Guinea.

“Early on, I wanted to provide some sustainable long-term opportunities for the local people to study biology, so they can benefit from their natural resources without having to sell or lease their land to palm oil or logging companies,” he says. “I really want to build a research station—to stay committed for decades, until they can carry it on themselves.”


dogworld

Iridescent little fairywrens drew doctoral student Jordan Boersma to the grasslands of Papua New Guinea, but it was the unexpected generosity of the people that captured the researcher’s heart.

“I’ve traveled all over Asia and never experienced this level of hospitality. If you accept their culture, they’ll really take you in and look after you,” he says.

Hubert Schwabl, professor in the Washington State University School of Biological Sciences, says Boersma is one of the rare students who is able to do field work under difficult tropical conditions.

“Jordan has worked in Australia and Bosnia and is now part of WSU’s collaborative ornithology project with Cornell and Tulane Universities.”

Boersma, who joined the project in 2015, says white-shouldered fairywrens are good models for mate selection studies. The sparkly birds, found only in Papua New Guinea, are easy to observe as they hop around in the grass looking for insects.

“We’re studying this particular bird as the females within this single species show variation in ornamentation,” he says. “A lot of female birds are colorful but it’s rare to see substantial variation in one species. The males are the same across their range but the females vary.”

Boersma says it was the study of elaborate male color traits that led to Darwin’s theory of sexual selection. The theory, however, does not translate well to females.

“As scientists, we’ve been so male oriented over the years—so chauvinistic,” says Schwabl with a smile. The expert in physiology devotes much of his research to the study of female avian reproduction and behavior.

He and Boersma decided to investigate whether or not female fairywrens variation was tied to testosterone levels, a hormone present in both sexes. This was not an easy task to carry out in a largely undeveloped country.

“Early on, I wanted to provide some sustainable long-term opportunities for the local people to study biology, so they can benefit from their natural resources without having to sell or lease their land to palm oil or logging companies,” he says. “I really want to build a research station—to stay committed for decades, until they can carry it on themselves.”
New coach

BY RJ WOLCOTT

WSU's recent bowl game success — six appearances in the last seven years — is mentioned to him. “Rose Bowl,” he counters. Appearances isn’t enough, winning is the ambition.

He’s been known to challenge opposing coaches, who are former quarterbacks, with what Rolovich calls “The Rusty Arm Challenge.” He challenged Colorado State Coach Mike Bobo a few years back, and his challenge went unanswered by University of Michigan’s Jim Harbaugh.

Rolovich also takes all challenges in Portuguese horseshoes, a lawn game similar to corn hole where players score points by tossing washers into holes of differing sizes on a small, sloped board, like his handcrafted set from Maui.

At first glance, Pullman and Hawaii seem to have little in common. But Rolovich sees the relatively isolated locations as similar. “What I learned living on an island is that everyone is reliant on each other,” he says. “You may not know the guy on the clock who is unloading your milk, but he is doing so that you can buy milk for your family.”

Believe breeds strong community ties, something Rolovich hopes his players can do, along with class or football responsibilities.

Craig Stutzmann, WSU’s co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, remembers Rolovich making sure leftover meals were over.

As the former college quarterback talks, flashes of his competitive spirit strike like lightning. “I probably hate losing more than I like winning,” Rolovich admits.

Tales from Rolovich’s recruits: magazines.wsu.edu/extra/Rolovich

SITlinges
Peppers B Y A D R I A N A J A N O V I C H

Jalapeños were the gateway.

After some bad experiences, peppers had never been a particularly favorite vegetable in Burt Buriangle's household. But at the request of his wife, he began to grow peppers in his garden. Today, he grows more peppers than any other vegetable, and he has become a respected authority on the subject.

Buriangle started with jalapeños, then moved on to habanero peppers, followed by serrano peppers, and finally cayenne peppers. He has also experimented with many other varieties, including an annual pepper called “Crimson Fire” that is particularly spicy.

Buriangle grows his peppers in containers, but he also has a patch of land where he grows peppers for his local market. He has even started a small business selling pepper products such as pepper powder and pepper-infused oils.

Buriangle is passionate about peppers and believes that they are an underutilized food item. He encourages others to try growing peppers and experimenting with their uses in the kitchen.

In conclusion, Buriangle is a true pepper aficionado who has spent years perfecting his craft. He continues to grow new varieties and experiment with new recipes. His passion for peppers is contagious, and he encourages others to join him in his love of this versatile and flavorful vegetable.

Sources:

W H A T S T O D O

If you are interested in growing peppers, Buriangle recommends starting with jalapeños, as they are relatively easy to grow and are a great gateway to other varieties. He also suggests experimenting with different pepper varieties and using them in a variety of dishes to find your favorite.

Remember to choose healthy peppers and to wash them thoroughly before using. He also recommends using a variety of peppers in your dishes to get the most flavor and nutrition.

Buriangle is available for pepper-related consulting and can provide tips and advice for growing peppers. He can be contacted via email at burt@burtaangle.com or by phone at (555) 123-4567.

W A S H I N G T O N S T A T E M A G A Z I N E

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P H O T O S E T I N G S

West Coast Pepper Growers Association

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PEPPERS

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ADRIANA JANOVICH

PHOTO

ILLUSTRATION

PHOTO

By Adriana Janovich

WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE SUMMER 2023
feature

The lament is laced with confusion and angst. “I’ve got a decent job. Why can’t I afford to buy a house? Or even rent a nice apartment?”

It’s not an isolated complaint. From the Seattle-Tacoma area to Spokane, the Palouse, and other cities across Washington state, the demand for affordable housing has risen to the breaking point.

According to a recent report by Up for Growth, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit research firm, the Evergreen state logged a shortfall of 225,600 homes between 2000 and 2018—eighth worst in the nation for housing underproduction.

Indeed, housing for low- and middle-income families is in short supply in many areas of the United States. Add that to rising construction costs, stagnant wages, and a complex set of other factors, and America is now facing its highest population of cost-burdened and homeless citizens since the Great Depression.

Cost-burdened means having to spend more than 30 percent of family income on housing, with subsequent difficulty affording food, clothing, transportation, child care, and medical care. Severely burdened households dish out more than 50 percent of income on rent.

Seattle has some of the highest rates of cost burden in the nation according to The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies’ 2018 State of the Nation’s Housing Report. More than a third of Seattle families with incomes under $75,000 struggle to pay the rent. It’s a number surprisingly similar to sparsely populated Whitman County, where the Palouse Regional Housing Assessment estimates 37 percent of area residents are cost-burdened.

Though cost burden can lead to homelessness, today’s housing crisis is also about low- and middle-income citizens holding down two or three jobs and still not being able to make ends meet. It’s about teachers, firefighters, and full-time staff at Washington State University priced out of finding a safe, comfortable, and secure home—or even apartment—of their own.

The housing crisis is fundamentally a crisis of affordability, which, after many years in the making, has grown to the point that it threatens middle class stability. The solutions, unfortunately, are extremely complex and difficult to implement. The best estimates are it will likely take decades to produce enough homes to meet projected needs.

Ryan Smith, however, doesn’t want to wait that long. As director of the WSU School of Design and Construction in the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture, he is boldly taking steps to tackle the affordable housing problem. Working with a diverse team of faculty researchers, students, and community partners, Smith is reshaping our vision of housing with solutions ranging from exciting modular construction concepts to high-efficiency Habitat for Humanity homes.

“The story begins last November at an all-night hack-a-thon. It was five o’clock and already dark. A few stubborn leaves rattled in the wind outside the entrance to Carpenter Hall on the WSU Pullman campus. Inside the classy old architecture building, the lights were bright, and corridors filled with the excited voices of nearly 100 students who gave up their Friday night to partake in WSU’s first Hack-A-House competition.

Smith organized the event with the help of Matthew Melcher, associate professor of architecture. It was sponsored by Ivory Innovations, a housing affordability incubator at the University of Utah. The center was started by Ivory Homes, Utah’s largest development firm.

“Hack-a-thons are traditionally idea competitions or ‘sprints’ where people get together to hack a problem,” says Smith. “In this case, Ivory Innovations had the idea to do a 24-hour competitive sprint centered on solutions to affordable housing.”

Ivory’s first competition was held at the University of Utah in 2018 and focused on solutions for the Salt Lake City area. Smith, previously a professor at Utah, was asked to take part. The event was so successful, Ivory decided to expand to other universities in 2019, including WSU last November.

For Pullman’s hack-a-thon, Smith invited graduate and undergraduate students from both WSU and the University of Idaho to submit ideas for innovative housing solutions in the Palouse area.

“We put them into teams of 4-5 students,” Smith recalls. “Each team was assigned their own private room to brainstorm and create a slide presentation. We provided food, coffee, and snacks, and also had speakers, including Jennifer Valkas from Palouse Habitat for Humanity, who helped frame the problem.

“The next day, the students made three-minute business pitches which were judged by a panel of local judges,” he says. Ten thousand dollars was awarded in prizes including $5,000 to the overall winner—a team of WSU graduate architecture students who proposed building modular housing on Palouse farmland that is too steep to cultivate.

Coleman Coddington, and teammates Eairal Nelson, Gabe Hernandez, and Jake Monroe designed a “housing unit that could be prefabricated and repurposed to cut down on cost. The units could potentially be stacked and would fit right next to each other,” Coddington explains.

“We inserted these units on steep farmland and extended the adjacent farmland over the top, giving farmers more usable land than they had before. The owners of the units would rent their roof...
The MODO program included a visit to Katerra’s cross-laminated mass timber factory in Spokane Valley. There were also talks by Seattle architects and industry leaders. Smith says that goal is to introduce local builders to offsite modular construction, including ways to manage the industry’s inherent challenges.

“Modular construction is a really good solution for affordable housing because it is fast and cost-controlled,” he says. “If you can buy in bulk, you can potentially get the cost to come down.”

Smith says offsite construction is defined as any project that uses elements built in a factory and then brought to and installed on the job site. There are two types of offsite construction and the first is called panelization. “Instead of framing a home with sticks—2x4s or 2x6s—we’re making panels and then bringing them to the job site,” he says. “These can range from open panels to those enhanced with sheetrock and insulation, pre-stalled windows, or pre-wired.”

The second type is modular. “Here, the factory builds three-dimensional boxes that when stacked like Legos on the job site make up the entirety of the home,” Smith says. “Those boxes usually contain one unit and can be completed up to 60 to 90 percent in the factory.”

Theoretically, offsite construction delivers a higher level of quality control and consistency than can be achieved by building a home at the job site.

Last May, MODX held a Northwest conference in collaboration with Seattle’s Housing Development Consortium, a nonprofit organization led by executive director Marty Kooistra. The MODX program included a visit to Katerra’s cross-laminated mass timber factory in Spokane Valley. There were also talks by Seattle architects and industry leaders. Smith says that goal is to introduce local builders to offsite modular construction, including ways to manage the industry’s inherent challenges.

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Theoretically, offsite construction delivers a higher level of quality control and consistency than can be achieved by building a home at the job site.
lower-income families are forced to move to the outskirts of cities, which, in turn, displaces residents of other small towns—similar to what’s happening in Seattle.

And, while the Palouse has a high number of multi-family student apartment buildings, there is a significant shortage of single-family homes. It’s estimated that roughly 270 will need to be built every year for a decade to catch up.

In the meantime, the 2019 report proposes that Pullman and Moscow partner with outlying communities to set up rural housing transition zones. Other ideas are allowing tiny home neighborhoods and utilizing land trusts such as the Moscow Affordable Housing Trust.

Our typical mortgage is $500-600 per month and you get the entire house plus the benefit of home ownership, which can hopefully break the cycle of poverty by passing some wealth down to future generations,” Wallace says.

“Rick’s whole focus is to have something better for his wife Roberta, who has multiple sclerosis and depends on a wheelchair for mobility,” says Wallace. “Together, they’ve put in over 400 hours of sweat equity with Rick helping build the house while Roberta worked on newsletters.”

Rick, 55, a U.S. Army vet eran and Moscow city employee, explains that their rented house in Troy, Idaho, has long narrow hallways and 150 newspapers in the walk for insulation. “Roberta can’t get around with her wheelchair, so we set up a hospital bed in the living room and she lives there with no personal privacy,” he says.

Their new home was specifically built to be ADA accessible with a 36-inch-wide doors throughout. There is a front-loading washing machine, and the kitchen has been modified with lower cabinets and a stronger floor.

“Roberta’s so excited to be able to do her own laundry again,” Wallace says. “It’s the little things that give you dignity—it’s nice to do that back to her.”

Rick says it truly is a fresh start. “You have no idea—our old place was so cold and expensive to heat. I’m not going to know what to do with myself.”

The Habitat project is just the kind of community involvement and affordable housing that Smith champions.

Now, thanks to Jessica Perone, faculty consultant for the WSU Center for Civic Engagement who negotiated a meeting between Smith and Wallace, WSU and University of Idaho students will get a chance to take part.

Smith says the School of Design and Construction and WSU’s Rural Communities Design Initiative have joined forces with Palouse Habitat for Humanity. Their first project will be helping with Habitat’s 2021 house to be built in Uniao town.

Winning Hack-A-House team members Coddington and Nelson will be on hand to offer design expertise and install energy-efficient building materials. The partnership will also provide long-term opportunities for faculty research and energy use monitoring.

It’s one example of the small steps that, multiplied throughout the state and nation, are helping thousands of people close the gap between wishfully dreaming of a home and finally holding the key to their own front door.
Natural history played a central role in the sciences for centuries. Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, among many others, were natural historians whose ideas not only changed the course of science, but of society as well. Thanks to their work, the concept of evolution drives thinking in biology but is also a metaphor for social change and economic development.

In the past century, though, what most people think of as natural history—museums, expeditions, taxonomy—has experienced a steep decline in research and education support. This decline runs parallel to a decline in the direct experience of nature. Both are signals with troubling implications for science, but of society as well. Thanks to their work, the concept of evolution drives thinking in biology but is also a metaphor for social change and economic development.

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Forty years ago, on a fateful day in May, a volcanic eruption unprecedented in modern times—etched itself on the memories of Washingtonians from Vancouver to Pullman.
Don Swanson agreed to fill in. The volcanologist would meet the forward observation point for a few days, replacing a geologist who was traveling. But Swanson himself needed安排 replacement—for that night. His colleague at the U.S. Geological Survey, David A. Johnston, agreed. But he wasn’t really looking forward to spending the night near the mountain.

“Me, more than the rest of us, probably had a better understanding of how explosively Mount St. Helens could erupt,” says Swanson (’60 Geol.).

Sunday morning, Swanson was at the U.S. Forest Service building in Vancouver—readying to drive to the mountain when monitoring instruments began showing major activity. He ran to the radio, but there was no answer. By then, Swanson later learned, Johnston had already reported the eruption, transmitting the now famous lines from that fateful day: “Vancouver! Vancouver! This is it!”

Fifty-seven people—including Johnston—were killed. So were some 7,000 big game animals, such as deer and elk, as well as countless fish and birds. The resulting avalanche of debris, mudflows, and flooding caused damage in 230 square miles. The lateral blast knocked down trees as though they were matchsticks, wiping out the landscape in an 8-mile radius.

Ash darkened the sky and fell heavily in Yakima, Ritzville, Spokane, Pullman—even Billings, Montana. Prevailing winds carried a fine dusting to the East Coast. Within two weeks, ash from Mount St. Helens circled the globe.

Within an hour, Swanson was documenting the cataclysm from an airplane, flying in figure-eights on the south side of the volcano to film and take photos. On the other side of the state, students at WSU Pullman were studying for finals and doing everyday chores like laundry. Don A. Dillman, now a Regents Professor in sociology, was roller skating with his wife and two young children. Glenn Johnson, in his second semester of teaching broadcast journalism, decided to use the disaster—and time provided by canceled classes—as an opportunity to report the news.

The 8:32 a.m. eruption blew 1,314 feet off the 9,677-foot peak and marked the most devastating volcanic event in U.S. history. Fifty-seven people—including Johnston—were killed. So were some 7,000 big game animals, such as deer and elk, as well as countless fish and birds. The resulting avalanche of debris, mudflows, and flooding caused damage in 230 square miles. The lateral blast knocked down trees as though they were matchsticks, wiping out the landscape in an 8-mile radius.

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Swanson observed the billowing ash cloud from a Forest Service plane. “As soon as we landed on the ground I could see that the top of the volcano was missing,” he says. “I could see the giant plume. When we got up closer, I could see the mud flows on the south side of the volcano, but it was obvious most of the activity was north. We couldn’t get around to see it. It was simply out of the air.”

At top: Mount St. Helen erupts May 18, 1980. At bottom: Ash cloud blowing above Mount St. Helens. Swanson remains one of the most iconic images in state history. Those living in the state of Washington at the time of the May 18, 1980, eruption all have a where were you when it blew moment.

Colfax firefighters help control traffic on US 195 the day after the eruption. Photo Barry Knight/Columbia Morning Tribune

At left: Aerial photo Don Swanson/USGS. At bottom: Ash cloud as seen from Silver Lake, Cowlitz County. Copy of archival print—source unknown—courtesy Steve G. Bisig/Flickr
of a thunderstorm. The drive home let them watch the “eeriness” unfold. “The western horizon was pitch black. Yet the far eastern sky remained an undisturbed blue. It would have been easy to imagine that we were on another planet,” Dillman writes. The family stopped to buy film, then went home and turned on the TV to wait for news. At some point, Dillman writes, “I stick my head out the patio door, take a whiff, and decide I’m not going anywhere for anything tonight. The smell? A little like holding your head inside of a cold fireplace while somebody stirs the ashes.”

Monday morning, Pete Butkus (’70 Crim. Jus., ’85 MA Ed.), the 31-year-old newly elected mayor of Pullman, called a directors’ meeting. That evening, he appeared on a special broadcast on KWSU. “There were obviously health concerns,” he says. “We tried to keep people from breathing the stuff. You saw everything from masks to bandanas. A few students called me, and they had asthma. I remember kind of talking them through it: stay inside, wear a mask if you go outside, call your doctor. Basically, limit your exposure to this stuff.”

The newscast was anchored by Johnson, who became “the Voice of the Cougs,” announcing men’s basketball and football games for 40 years and counting. He’s now serving his fifth four-year term as mayor of Pullman. When classes were canceled midway through the week, he says, “I think about it almost every day,” he says.

Dillman wrote a detailed account, which the Manuscripts, Archives & Special Collections at WSU Libraries keeps for posterity. A faculty member since 1969, he was chairperson of the Department of Rural Sociology when he wrote his 35-page paper, “After Mount St. Helens: Seven Gray Days in May.” His wife, Joye, now a professor emeritus in the Department of Human Development, was an assistant professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies. They were in Lewiston, roller-skating with their two children along the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers, when they noticed—around 12:30 p.m.—what they thought was the onset of a thunderstorm. The drive home let them watch the “eeriness” unfold.

“The western horizon was pitch black. Yet the far eastern sky remained an undisturbed blue ... It would have been easy to imagine that we were on another planet,” Dillman writes. “I stick my head out the patio door, take a whiff, and decide I’m not going anywhere for anything tonight. The smell? A little like holding your head inside of a cold fireplace while somebody stirs the ashes.”

For the next three hours, he watched nothing, cauliflower-like clouds of ash spew from the volcano. “It was a front-row seat,” he says. “It was such a powerful event that was happening right in front of you. We couldn’t hear anything. It was like watching a silent movie. It was certainly the most unusual experience I had in my career.”

Swanson, now 81, went on to become the scientist-in-charge of the Cascades Volcano Observatory and, later, the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory on the rim of the Kilauea Caldera—where he still serves as scientist emeritus. But Mount St. Helens has never left him. He knew three people who perished in the blast zone and dedicated his career to better understanding eruptions in order to prevent similar tragedies. “I think about it almost every day,” he says.
his 8:00 a.m. session, he encouraged his broadcast students to seize the day. “I said, ‘We’ve got an opportunity here,’” Johnson recalls. “‘This is a huge story. You’ve got all day off now, so let’s go do something. Let’s learn from this.’ And they were all for it.”

Johnson and his students started brainstorming angles and sources for interviews: health, agriculture, public safety. They also went outdoors to shoot B-roll of the campus and try to get interviews with people on the street. “That didn’t last long because—despite their precautions—‘the ash got into the camera’s telephoto zoom mechanism,’” Johnson says. “We had to regroup. We couldn’t continue to shoot outside because of the ash. So we decided to bring the interviewees into the studio. Then we went in and, I am bound and, we cut to the different interviewers. Students—such as the late longtime KTVM 4 anchor Kate Giessmann (’80 Comm.) and Dave Wilie (’80 Comm.), the longest-serving TV photojournalist at KHQ—got a heck of an experience out of that.”

Track standout Karen (Blair) Troianello (’80 Comm.) had recently run her last race as a Cougar and was looking forward to graduation when it started raining ash. “Since 1980, there’s always been a jar of ash on my bookshelf,” she reflects. “I watched as the ash along various Eastern Washington highways became another layer of the earth, ready to tell a story to later generations of geologists.”

At top: Ash arrival in Spokane brought venues and services to a grinding halt. Photo: A Richland High School student reflects. At bottom: Mammatas lobes on the volcanic cloud viewed from Ephrata. Photo: Douglas Miller/Courtesy USGS

REMAINS OF THE DAY
J. Lewis Payne pops the lid on one of the vintage barrels—a mix of surplus military metal and heavy-duty cardboard—stacked in a WSU barn that once housed moose, elk, and woolly mammoths. The demands took on other duties and morphed, but they hold an unusual treasure: ash from the May 18, 1980, eruption of Mount St. Helens—and left largely untouched for the past 40 years.

The ash is quadruple-bagged and tagged with handwritten labels noting collection sites. Most came from the rooftops of Eastick and Heald Halls. But there’s some from Pullman’s Lincoln Middle School, too, as well as at least one bin simply described as coming from “Yakima.”

Payne—the caretaker of the ash as well as the 100-acre Hudson Biological Reserve at Smoot Hill, where the cache is stored—reaches down into one of the drums and scoops up a handful. “It’s like there’s no weight in my hand,” he marvels. The ash feels powdery and fine, like pastry flour or powdered sugar, but is very light gray in color. It’s soft, cool, and dry, and smells faintly of wet cement and—oddly—dried mushrooms.

Today, nearly 100 barrels of Mount St. Helens ash are stacked in two kennels of the barn, which—Payne points out—used to be home to Morty, the moose featured in the opening credits of the CBS series Northern Exposure.

Payne’s lived at Smoot Hill since 1994, when he was a research assistant at WSU. He came to Pullman as a doctoral student, studying under Richard “Dick” Mack, now a professor emeritus of ecology in the School of Biological Sciences. Shortly after the eruption, Mack and his graduate students worked quickly to gather ash for future research projects. “There was a prediction of rain,” Mack says. “And I knew we needed unadulterated ash.”

One of his students, Stewart Higgins (’80 MS, ’84 PhD Sci.), a now-retired senior scientific assistant with WSU’s Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, collected samples in Yakima. Mack used some of the ash for research through the mid-1980s, particularly studying its effects on vegetation. The rest has been stored, tightly sealed, for safekeeping through the mid-1980s, particularly studying its effects on vegetation. The rest has been stored, tightly sealed, for safekeeping.

“Oddly,” Payne says, “it’s been stored, tightly sealed, for safekeeping—and largely without much interest. The fact that it’s here and available is ‘not widely known,’ Mack says.

In fact, “To the best of my knowledge, only two people in the last 20 years have come to look at the ash,” Payne says, noting both were from the United States Geological Survey. “It’s a resource that needs the right project.”
Krist Novoselic was a fan. He had read Wintergreen and wanted to meet the author, Robert Michael Pyle, one of America’s leading nature writers, who was nearly a neighbor.

Novoselic enjoyed several of his other titles, too—Sky Time in Gray’s River, Where Bigfoot Walks, Nabokov’s Butterflies—and introduced himself at a book-signing in Skamokawa, near both of their homes in southwest Washington. Not long later, they bumped into each other again.

“By coincidence,” Novoselic says, “I went to a Leo Kottke concert—he was playing in Longview, Washington—and Bob was there.” They ended up at Pyle’s home, sharing stories and beers and bonding over the common values of conservation and community as well as an affinity for rural America.

This was in the early aughts, right around the time Novoselic (’16 Soc. Sci.), bass guitarist of the iconic grunge band Nirvana, was getting involved with the Grange. Pyle was a longtime member, and the Yale-educated lepidopterist and legendary bassist continued to get to know each other through the grassroots, fraternal organization.

Planning a program for a Grange meeting led to the lengthy endeavor that became Butterfly Launches from Spar Pole. The album features poetry by Pyle and music by Novoselic, Ray Prestegard, who is in the band Giants in the Trees with Novoselic, also contributes.

The project is a departure from the down-home Pacific Northwest groove-pop of Giants and the raw, distorted, power chords of guitar-heavy grunge. This folksy, acoustic, spoken-word album celebrates the natural world. Climate change, natural selection, and evolution are all addressed. But the artists don’t aim to preach politics. Rather, Novoselic says, “It’s up to the listener to decide.”

The title comes from the anchor point in early logging setups in the American West. A spar tree, or spar pole—since replaced by portable steel yarders—was chosen for its strength and height. “The spar pole is a kind of symbol of a forest that’s in production for timber,” Pyle says. “It’s also a symbol for the vanishing of the trees. I think it kind of cuts both ways. We’re not going to have forests if we don’t take care of them, but we’re not going to have jobs if we don’t take care of them. We want listeners to think about these things, and we want to present these ideas in a way that’s entertaining.”

The collaboration grew out of a radio show Novoselic used to host. “I’m really into the guitar player John Fahey,” Novoselic says. “I did this reading—basically, there were two turntables going—with some John Fahey on guitar and the other would be like Orson Welles reading the Gettysburg Address or somebody reading Walt Whitman. And it just had a nice feel.”

Pyle, a friend by then, heard the show, and it sparked an idea for the Grange program they were planning. “Bob gave me a call and said, ‘Why don’t you play some guitar and I’ll read some Walt Whitman?’ And I said, ‘No, why don’t you come up with your own poetry and I’ll play some guitar?’ I thought it’d be more interesting,” Novoselic says.
Stepping up her game

BY JOSH BARCOCK

As a young child, Sylvia Omulo, often one of the first picks on the playground, learned to drive. She needed efficient techniques to avoid being caught by her older brothers. Omulo says, “The reason you have a pulse is because your heart valves open at a certain pace—so other subject gives you that. Biology is very real.”

Fast forward 20 years later, Omulo (’17 PD) Immunology & Infectious Diseases) is an assistant professor in the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health, specializing in antimicrobial resistance and infectious diseases in her home country. In partnership with WSU and the University of Nairobi, Omulo is leading a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded antimicrobial resistance study. This research project explores the prevalence of, and relationships between, some of the World Health Organization’s priority antibiotic-resistant pathogens, including methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing Enterobacteriaceae, and Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE).

The study, in its second year, builds on Omulo’s doctoral work and takes place in the community hospitals of Asembo and Kibera as well as the hospitals that serve them. The research aims to provide insight into what drives antibiotic resistance in the African nation, such as sanitation practices, antibiotic use, and exposure to animals or health care facilities. The end goal: to prevent people with bacterial infections have access to antibiotics that work when they need them most.

For Omulo, the research is personal. After high school, she suffered frequent bouts of tonsillitis. She had been accustomed to using a self-prescribed antibiotic for her recurrent infections: amoxicillin. But, on one occasion, the infection was so severe that her usual dose proved ineffective. Her uncle, a clinical officer, gave her an injectable antibiotic. This worked. Looking back, she says, that may be the first time she experienced antimicrobial resistance.

Omulo hopes her research will prevent children from enduring what she did—or worse. To that end, she sometimes struggles to turn science off. Her computer screen often glows open into the early morning hours until she “gulps” herself into going to sleep. She’s working weekday orly the only reason her head hits the pillow: “I really feel my work matters,” Omulo says. “It impacts the life of people. I know even if I can make a small change, I will have done something for humanity.”

The work can be grueling. It involves looking for antimicrobial-resistant pathogens by collecting and analyzing hundreds of stool samples every week from urban and rural settings.

Omulo and her team have seen the devastating impacts of infectious diseases, especially inside the hospitals involved in the study. “It’s hard when you see children who have their whole future ahead of them and know they may not live to see the next day,” Omulo says. “When patients die in a hospital, they just say someone was sick and died. The fact that antibiotics were unsuccessful against an infection doesn’t make it onto death certificates.”

Despite this, the World Health Organization recognizes antibiotic resistance as a threat to global health and estimates 10 million deaths worldwide by 2050 if no effective interventions are made.

Omulo says it was important for her to return to Kenya to improve public health in a global scale. “I want to contribute to science,” she says. “They say, ‘Leave the world better than you found it.’”

She hopes to leave a similar mark on her 23-member research team as well. “I want to impact them, so they become better people and scientists,” Omulo says. “It all goes back to the impact I want to leave.”

From covering the beat to on the beat

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Stephanie Schendel caught the journalism bug in college, spending two years on the staff of The Daily Evergreen and observing Pullman police officers as they responded to calls related to drunkenness, domestic disputes, overdoses—even a stabbing.

“I did maybe a half-dozen ride-alongs,” says Schendel (’12 Comm., Spanish). “They were very patient with me and answered all of my questions. It really impressed me. That was the beginning of it.”

Her real-time reporting experiments, or “tweetalongs,” were popular reads, and they helped launch her career—first as an award-winning crime reporter for the Centralia Chronicle, then as a detective with the Bellevue Police Department.

The Centralia Chronicle opened during the spring she was finishing college, and the paper held the position for her until she graduated. “I really wanted to do cops and courts,” Schendel says. “They say, ‘Leave the world better than you found it.’”

She covered breaking news, criminal jus- tices, and emergencies such as flooding—and loved it. After a couple of months on the job, an arrest was made in one of the most natio- nally unseemly Lewis County murder cases. Schendel produced numerous stories—from arrest to trial. Her coverage helped her win the 2014 new journal of the year award from the Washington chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Being a reporter “helped me grow up a lot,” Schendel says. “It definitely improved and wouldn’t have changed that life experience and pro- fessional experience for anything. Every day was an adventure. And it helped me improve my writing skills and my interviewing skills.”

That first guitar-poem, “Notes from the Edge of the Known World,” a collection of poems and fiction that explores fantasy and reality—became the cornerstone of the album. “It took ten years,” Novoselic says. “We’d come together and have those flashes of activity, then I’d go back to school—I was doing WSU online—and in between I’d perform with Paul McCartney and Dave Grohl and Pat Smear. That was Nirvana. We won a Grammy. We had Nirvana too, at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (with Joan Jett, Kim Gordon, St. Vincent, and Linda),” he added. "I’m not a show with Beck and Dave and Pat.”

When they found time, they “recorded in a garage hall, at an old creamery—with whatever equipment we had around,” Novoselic says. “And, finally, last year we had enough material. We took it to Jack Endino—he produced Mudhoney and Nirvana—and he put it all together.”

Novoselic, already a licensed pilot and published author—his 2004 book, Off Grange and Government—is part memoir, part political critique. It’s geology. It’s the natural world—a way to do: capture the mind’s eye. Come inside.


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That’s what I like: the variety,” she says. "I want to learn about everything. You go into each investigation with an open mind. And they’re very satisfying cases to solve.”

One of the most satisfying was that of a ride-share driver charged with four sexual assaults in four cities. "He preyed upon isolated intoxicated women," says Schendel, who is interested in someday working major crimes.

She finds many parallels to newspaper reporting in police work. "As a police officer, you need to interview people,” she says. "You have to write reports. You interact with people you normally wouldn’t. You have to treat people fairly.”

**A new terroir**

Nicole “Coco” Umiker started young, so young—in fact—that when she and her husband, Karl, began planting their first wine grapes on her family’s century-old Idaho farm she was only 21. She was still in college—Notre Dame, with a degree in molecular biology, and biochemistry—when she convinced her grandfather to let them plant the vines.

"We were nervous trying to be farmers,” she says. "I was barely old enough to drink.”

The couple launched Clearwater Canyon Cellars in 2004 with four barrels. Since then, they have helped put Lewiston on the wine map,working for nearly a decade to establish an American Viticultural Area (AVA) for the Lewis-Clark Valley. The wine grape-growing region, which straddles the Washington-Idaho border, received the federal designation in 2016.

This year, Clearwater Canyon is Wine Press Northwest’s 2020 Pacific Northwest Winery of the Year. The award, which a winery can only win once, honors not only the Umikers’ exceptional wines but their efforts in establishing the AVA. It also marks the first time an Idaho winery has received the regional award. "It’s very exciting,” says Umiker (11 FID Food Sci.), a WSU Alumni Achievement awardee. "We always believed we could produce wines that were every bit as exceptional as the wines we admire.”

It’s validation for all our hard work,” her husband says. "When we first started, there was nobody doing this in Lewiston. We were in no man’s land. The AVA was really instrumental in adding credibility to what we do and gave so much added value to the grapes grown here.”

The Umikers—Karl manages vines, she makes wine—grow about half of the grapes they use at their estate vineyard, Lion’s and a half-acre Umiker’s grandfather, the late Ralph E. Nichols, was just a year old when his parents purchased the wheat and cattle farm in 1936. Today, Nichols Family Farm spans 60 acres, including Umiker Vineyard and a 5,000-square-foot winemaking facility, completed in 2016.

The Umikers and two employees now produce 4,500 cases of wine per year. Seventy-five percent of the grapes they use come from the Lewis-Clark AVA. "That goal is to celebrate the terroir of this area,” says Umiker, who enrolled at WSU in 2003, a year after her first vintage. "Every year, we looked to see how we could make our wines more interesting and creative. We have no aspirations of getting big so that we can really focus on creativity and quality.”

Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition

**BUDDY LEVY**

Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition—Buddy Levy ST. MARTIN’S PRESS: 2019

Lt. Adolphus W. Greely, commander of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, assessed the situation from the edge of the ice floe upon which he and his men were stranded. It was dire.

They were adrift on a raft of ice, and it was 11 degrees Fahrenheit—cold for the time of year but not as low as the sub-zero temperatures they regularly experienced during their two years on the ice cap. They endured the cold for nearly the same amount of time. Though they lived in a poorly insulated tent, boiling leather, scavenging for some kind of sustenance, but ultimately collapsed tent, boiling leather, scavenging lichen for some kind of sustenance, and going mad from starvation, scurvy, exposure—or a combination—all for the sake of science.

—Adriana Janovich

Salmon Eaters to Sagebrushers: Washington’s Lost Writers

**PETER DONAHUE**

WSU PRESS: 2019

In the introduction to his marvelous collection of biographical essays, Peter Donahue writes that he thought he could produce a dozen or so vignettes on “lost” writers of Washington state. Writing a “Retrospective Review” column for Columbia Magazine for 13 years, he ended up writing 55. He “kept finding more”—in autobiographies, letters, obituaries, old newspapers. The book met his basic criteria (a Washington writer, writing in a “basic literary genre,” and of literary merit), but he’d track down a copy and read it—and another essay would join the pile.

Salmon Eaters to Sagebrushers collects these essays, and they are wonderful. Donahue’s memoir is “literary past” broad and generous, and includes ballads (Mary J. Elrod), and historical romance (Zilda Rivas), on the grounds that these four “expression trumps the “sentimental or romantic value” of the particular genre in which the writer worked. He especially credits the representations of Pacific Northwest that go beyond mere description to explore a “narration that is a tale [that] is at the border . . . between geography and history.”

While the place of Washington and the rest of the Pacific Northwest is secure because of “big” figures like Theodore Roosevelt and Ken Kesey, Donahue dives deeper to recover women writers who, when they write, dominated memoir during the mid-twentieth century, as well as genre writing that was rated second class when originally published. But both are great works of art, and going mad from starvation, scurvy, exposure—or a combination—all for the sake of science.

—Brian Charles Clark

**NEW MEDIA**

Twenty-five men, mostly soldiers, started Greely’s expedition. They were dropped off in the summer of 1881 more than 1,000 miles north of the Arctic Circle and some 250 miles from the last known contact with Greely and his crew.

Greely retraced south from the refuge of Fort Conger to seek reinforcements and try to connect with rescuers. Levy balances their traipsals with the stories of ships that attempted to reach their camp as well as the work of Greely’s wife, Henrietta, who tended to the sick and provisions for Greely and the men should he be able to ride the snows. She would find the caches of food left by boats that had come before? Would they perish in the harsh polar climate?

Greely’s expedition was a disaster. But it was also an important moment— and its questions of life or death. Of rising tensions. Of frostbite, hallucinations, and going mad from starvation, scurvy, exposure— or a combination—all for the sake of science.

—Adriana Janovich
Governor Booth Gardner, former state Sen. Light Rail.” Naysayers included former people to “Face Reality; Pull the Plug on editorial in

Accordingly—at the tail end of 2000, just months after becoming Sound Transit’s chief operating officer—that the agency’s cost estimates were several years and close to a billion dollars off base. Several months later, she took the Seattle Post-Intelligencer to task for a story alluding to costs being concealed and helped Sound Transit secure an above-the-fold front-page correction. She also helped secure millions in federal funding for the project.

Wodnik finds her for rebuilding Sound Transit’s credibility and getting the organization back on track. She doesn’t delve deeply into the lawsuits that plagued the agency during this tumultuous period but does list them briefly.

This slim volume also features other prominent WSU alumni, including U.S. Senator Patty Murray (’72 Kinbasi), Edmonds Mayor Dave Earling (’65S), and Ahmad Fazel (’81 Mech. Eng.), executive director of design and construction for Sound Transit during this tumultuous period.

—Adrian Janovitz

Back on Track: Sound Transit’s Fight to Save Light Rail

Bob Wodnik

WSU Press: 2019

In the early years, it was like working at a startup. We had no policy guidelines, no HR (human resources department) to turn to. We were like throwing tracks out in front of a runaway locomotive,” says Paul Matsouka, deputy executive director of Sound Transit, in Bob Wodnik’s latest offering from WSU Press.

Back on Track describes the beginnings of Sound Transit’s battle for light rail in Seattle and the central Puget Sound region. The young agency, laden with controversy, public ridicule, and unfavorable headlines, came close to collapse, as Wodnik explains.

Wodnik was an editor at the Seattle Times with a background in journalism. He served as Sound Transit’s senior communications specialist from 1999 to 2017 after working as a reporter and columnist at the Herald as a reporter and columnist at the

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY AWARDED TWO HONORARY DOCTOREATES IN 2019 AND 2020, ONE TO A DISTINGUISHED CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR AND THE OTHER TO A PHILANTHROPIST WITH A PASSION FOR EDUCATION.

RALPH G. YOUNT

Ralph G. Yount has given hope to millions of people who will never know his name. During his 44-year career as a professor of chemistry and molecular biosciences at WSU, Yount’s study of muscle function advanced medical understanding of diseases such as muscular dystrophy, ALS, and myasthenia gravis.

His work focused on the way muscles contract, specifically the relationship between a muscle protein called myosin and ATP, the molecule involved in energy transfer. His creation of an ATP analog was critical to work that eventually led to two Nobel prizes and has been cited more than 4,000 papers.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded Yount’s work for 44 years without interruption and awarded him a MERIT grant in 1986, the first year the grants were established. This is one of the longest continuously funded projects at the NIH.

The Lord’s and helped restore St. Paul’s Cathedral and the Armada paintings in Parliament’s House of Commons, and helped restore Shakespeare’s Globe in London. Pigott’s professional accomplishments have earned him titles in France, Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and the British Library. In 2012, he was awarded the prestigious honorary knighthood commander of the Order of the British Empire.

LIGHTS UP: A COLLECTION OF 20 RIDICULOUS SCENES FOR YOUNG ACTORS WRITTEN BY JOSHUA EVANS ’03

The Gathering: A Trilogy

This round-up of short scenes for child actors features characters such as Old Man Ranx, Maroon One, and a time-traveling teen, Evan, who began writing for children’s theater programs in 2004. Says young actors prefer lovely characters to heavy, dramatic plots. His mantra: “Write characters, and have fun.”

A Nadie le Importa el Cielo Nocturno

MARIA ADARE ’78 LIB. ARTS, ’79 ED.

When someone decides to end a relationship, it’s often a difficult decision. This slim volume of poems, written in Spanish, explores feelings of loss and pain—and the ambiguity of looking for answers—after the end of a friendship. The title translates to “Nobody Cares About the Night Sky.” Poems are divided by years. Maria Adare is a pen name.

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STEVE GLEASON, the former WSU football standout who started a charity to empower those living with ALS following his own 2013 diagnosis, recently received the highest honor the United States Congress can bestow on a civilian.

Gleason (’98 Bus.) received the CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL on January 15, 2020, in Washington, D.C. His Team Gleason charity works to raise awareness about ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, which causes the death of neurons controlling voluntary muscle movement. There is no known cure. So far, the foundation has provided nearly $10 million in technology, equipment, and other services to more than 15,000 people living with the disease. His own struggle with ALS is documented in the 2016 film simply titled Gleason.

In 2017, Gleason received WSU’s highest alumni honor with the Regents’ Distinguished Alumni Award.

Gleason helped WSU reach the Rose Bowl in 1998 and went on to play seven seasons in the NFL—all with the New Orleans Saints. His electrifying 2006 punt-blocking dive at the start of the Saints’ first game in the newly rebuilt Superdome boosted morale throughout the hurricane-ravaged city. Outside the stadium today, the play is immortalized in a 9-foot bronze statue called “Rebirth.”

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH
(’94 Hotel & Rest. Adm.) is the new executive director at Summit Place Assisted Living in Bellingham. R.ICK CAMPBELL (’94 Ed.) has been named head coach of the U of W Lignal football team. He started his coaching career at the University of Oregon before making the leap to the Canadian Football League. He was head coach of the Ottawa Redblacks and has also worked for the Calgary Stampeders, Edmonton Eskimos, and Winnipeg Blue Bombers. STEVE KING (’95, ’97 M.S. Civ. Eng.) is the new public works director for the city of Port Townsend. HENRY TAYLOR SCHMIDTZ (’91 Bus.) is the new principal at Sun Tan Heights K-8 in Sun Tan Valley, Arizona. CHRIS FIGHGEN (’96 Hum.) is the new principal at Pasco’s Fruitland Elementary School. MIHAI CHANDRANA (’97 Mech. Eng.) is the new president of SamaraTech. TIMOTHY COMPTON (’97 Microb.) is the chief commercial officer at Avid Bioservices. GREG FRICHETTIE (’96, Lib. Arts) and his wife, Sha, of Frichette Winery were inducted into the Mid-Columbia Agricultural Hall of Fame, winning the organizer’s Rising Star Award.

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CHRIS FIGGINS (’96 Crim. Jus.) is the new president of wineright. STEPHEN ZIEGLER (’93 MA, ’95 PhD Poli. Sci.) has joined the American University in Washington. HIRAL CHANDRANA (’97 Microb.) is the new president of SamaraTech. TIMOTHY COMPTON (’97 Microb.) is the chief commercial officer at Avid Bioservices. GREG FRICHETTIE (’96, Lib. Arts) and his wife, Sha, of Frichette Winery were inducted into the Mid-Columbia Agricultural Hall of Fame, winning the organizer’s Rising Star Award.

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LIFE IN MEMORIAM


Boise State University Visit Center

We are pleased to announce the 2020 R. Keith Campbell Lifetime Achievement Award recipient

John Oftebro, class of 1965

During the Crimson Gala on October 2 and Spokane, John will be honored for his outstanding commitment and service to the college and the pharmacy profession.

Learn more: pharmacy.wsu.edu/conference or call 509-384-6475


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In the aftermath of the 1980 explosion of Mount St. Helens, Patricia Grieve Watkinson, then director of the Washington State University Museum of Art, organized a nationwide competition for artists to express their reactions to the eruption.

Titled “Living with the Volcano: The Artists of Mount St. Helens,” the exhibition traveled to about 20 venues in Washington, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, and Montana from 1983 to 1987. One of the artists represented was Linda Okazaki (’71 Fine Arts, ’75 MFA).

Watkinson wrote about the exhibition and Okazaki’s work:

As one would expect, it was the cataclysmic results of Mount St. Helens’ eruption—the uncontrollable power of nature and the unleashing of chaos—that affected many artists. In this chiefly pessimist view, nature is seen as indifferent, negative, destructive, fearful or awesome—yet not without moments of beauty. Humankind is an impotent and hapless sufferer, frequently unaware of its helplessness and lack of control...

Animals and birds also fell victim to the volcano... In Linda Okazaki’s watercolors Birds of a Feather Fall Together and Night Explosion, brightly colored finches, the embodiment of life, tumble dead from a bleak night sky onto the bare rock below. Mount St. Helens, the assumed instrument of death, puffs unheeding in the background.

— “Mount St. Helens: An Artistic Aftermath” (Art Journal, Fall 1984, p.260)

After teaching at the WSU Fine Arts department for seven years, Okazaki moved to Port Townsend in 1980, built a studio and house with her husband, Ray Weber, reared three children, and maintained a studio practice, which continues today. Her son Miles, then six years old, was also represented in the Mount St. Helens exhibition.

James and Marilyn Hyde left an estate gift to Washington State University to help fund student researchers, like Megan Asche, doctoral candidate in entomology and ARCS scholar. Their gift doubled the number of high-quality entomology students and brought in expert researchers in pollinators, pests, and insect science.

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