After a devastating wildfire, student landscape architects are re-envisioning a town's future.

Leading the way on the aviation fuels of the future.

Resonant tales not forgotten.

Ensuring manufacturers' designs really bear up.

Coming together to unearth local Tribal histories.

Feature

Food for a changing climate

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A helping hand. Most communities face a crisis, such as a natural disaster, and can use some assistance to bounce back. Washington State University has been there to help through Extension, outreach, and caring alumni with, for example, the response to the Oso landslide in 2014.

WSU students often lend their creativity to support communities, too. The small Eastern Washington town of Malden was ravaged by a wildfire in 2020. As the people of Malden rebuild, landscape architecture students led by WSU professor Julie Kaytes talked with community members and contributed ideas and designs that connect the past and future of Malden.

Coug alumni are known to give a generous helping hand in times of need, even when they have faced hardship. Valerie Huff Zimmerman (’60 Comm.) and her husband escaped on foot from the August wildfire that struck Lahaina, Maui. Their condo was destroyed, but they were soon back delivering meals in West Maui. Other Cougs, including retired judge Joe Cardoza (’72 Poli. Sci.) and Hawaii state senator Tim Richards (’84 DVM), have stepped up to assist in the Maui recovery.

Both Malden and Maui were slammed by increasingly erratic weather, heat, and fire. As we face a world that’s warming, WSU researchers continue to find ways to ensure we have a food supply in hotter climates. They have developed techniques and knowledge to adapt livestock, potatoes, wheat, apples, and other food sources facing fluctuating weather patterns even as the population grows.

 Communities have always been entwined with food and cooking. Ancient ovens discovered by the Kalispel Tribe north of Spokane show an example of that long history, and the Tribe partnered with WSU to excavate and research the site. It’s the first archaeological project the Kalispel Tribe has made public, and the trust and connection with WSU made the partnership possible.

Sometimes people can share their own communities and help others understand and develop empathy. Gillis Williams (’22 Comm.) uses social media to entertain and enlighten followers about people with autism spectrum disorder. A project with the WSU archives unlocks previously untold histories of LGBTQ+ people, with honest stories that open eyes and minds.

Sometimes even the seemingly small acts of individuals enhance community. Former WSU football player John Scukanec (‘66 Civ. Engr.) plays simple games of catch and builds relationships. As he says, “Everyone has a story, and you don’t know what it is until you throw the ball.”

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WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE WINTER 2023

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
TALK
back

And speaking of reunions...
The Stephenson South 10th Floor Poker Party is
the longest continuous alumni reunion in WSU
history. Group members gathered for their
41st straight event in Sequim in July.

MARC ANDERSON ’76

Correction
In the sidebar of the Fall 2023 story, “A better
deal,” Thabiti Lewis’s title was incorrect. He is
associate vice chancellor for academic affairs
at WSU Vancouver.

FROM THE
president

Many people feel like their
heads are spinning with all the
t changes in college sports. For
me, more has happened in the
last two years than the previous
20 years of my career around
intercollegiate athletics.
Not only have all Pac-12
schools left the conference except WSU and Oregon State
University, there’s conference
realignment nationally; recent Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)
changes to support our student-athletes, and new college sports
transfer rules.

During this whirlwind, there are a few things I’d like to share with
Coug Nation.
First, it’s really important for WSU to chart its own path forward.
While the current state of the Pac-12 conference was not a situation of
our making, we refuse to let it define us.
We’ve moved forward with legal action and plans to secure our
athletics future, with the assistance of an advisory committee I appointed.
We already know a few things. We are not going to spend the
same amount of money on athletics that we have for the last decade.

But I want to remind Coug fans that we’ll still have Division I
athletics. We’ll still compete for championships and have football
Saturdays. We’ll still show up every day on the court and in the
classroom. The opponents will be different, and even if we don’t know
the future of the Apple Cup, the resolute Cougar spirit hopefully will
only grow stronger.
We will need people to continue to be supportive. And I don’t
mean just financially; keep attending events and watch parties. I
appreciate everybody who cheers on our excellent volleyball, soccer,
football, baseball, and all teams. We shouldn’t stop just because we
may be playing new schools.
Many of our alumni take pride in seeing our teams compete,
succeed, and have a national presence. You may not be a huge sports
fan but when you wear a Cougar shirt, you’ll get a “Go Cougs!” from
somebody. That Coug connection, and athletics, are part of our special
college experience.

I think most would agree that intercollegiate athletics chasing
dollars has become excessive. The problem is that it never stops. I’m not
sure people really want college sports to become more professional.
It should be about the student-athletes representing Washington
State University as they compete at an elite level both athletically and
academically. They deserve our support. Top-flight collegiate athletics
are central to the student experience at WSU. We will not let that
change, even if our opponents change. Most importantly, we remain
firmly committed to helping all our students graduate on time and
ensuring that they have a great Cougar experience.

KIRK SCHULZ
President, Washington State University

what’s happening with WSU’s athletic conferences:
president.wsu.edu/athletic-conference-realignment

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FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF JORDAN D. SCHNITZER AND HIS FAMILY FOUNDATION

A Question of Hu: The Narrative Art of Hung Liu
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at PSU – Portland, OR • 8/24/23 – 12/2/23
Strange Weather
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at UO – Eugene, OR • 10/21/23 – 04/7/24
We Are the Revolution
The Schnitzer Collection – Portland, OR • 8/26/23 – 12/1/23
Kara Walker: Cut to the Quick
USC Fisher Museum of Art – Los Angeles, CA • 9/8/23 – 12/9/23
David Hockney: Perspectives Should Be Reversed
Honolulu Art Museum – Honolulu, HI • 11/16/23 – 3/10/24
Hank Willis Thomas: LOVERS
Henry Art Gallery – Seattle, WA • 2/14/24 – 7/21/24

A Question of Hu: The Narrative Art of Hung Liu
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art
Washington State University
August 22, 2023 – March 9, 2024

THREE YEARS AGO, a wildfire nearly destroyed Malden, Washington. As wind-driven flames raced across the parched late-summer landscape, residents got a 30-minute warning to evacuate.
Washington community was a novel experience for them,” says Jolie Kaytes, professor in the School of Design and Construction, who taught the class with Associate Professor Steve Austin.

"People were pretty vivid about describing their experiences during the fire," says Jarin Manuel ('23 Land. Arch.). "I appreciated that they were willing to talk about such a sensitive topic."

In the capstone class, landscape architecture students focus on projects with real-world applications. During their careers, students may very well be working with communities recovering from wildfires, Kaytes says. Although fire is a naturally occurring part of the Pacific Northwest landscape, and light burning helps rejuvenate fire-adapted ecosystems, climate change is increasing wildfires’ intensity.

"As part of WSU’s mission, the landscape architecture program is grounded in serving society and creating places that help people and the environment," Kaytes says. "We're in an increasingly hotter time, and our graduates will be working with clients affected by extreme weather events."

Students presented their projects at a forum in Malden in late April. Many of the projects focused on developing public spaces for residents and tourists.

Drawing it up from the ashes

In Malden, public buildings are being rebuilt with state and federal dollars. Volunteer labor and private donations are helping residents rebuild their homes.

City officials have banked the students’ designs for future consideration, says Harwood, the mayor. As funding becomes available, the city hopes to invest in its public spaces and amenities. Many of Malden’s residents are retired, but they see opportunities to attract younger families interested in a rural lifestyle, particularly if parents can work from home or are willing to commute.

"The students brought in so many fresh ideas," says Chandelle Frick, a Malden resident. She shared her experiences of living in Malden with a student from China and was intrigued by another student’s proposal to encourage local food production by creating a farmers market.

"I enjoyed the process immensely," Frick says, and I would love to see some of these ideas take root."

The Babb Road Fire destroyed homes and public buildings in Malden. Top photo: Conceptual design for a fire monument by a WSU landscape architecture student. From top inset, opposite: Professor Jolie Kaytes and Associate Professor Steve Austin, Courtesy WSU School of Design and Construction and photo Dean Hare, respectively.
The past is not that long ago

BY RYAN BOOTH

Father Pierre-Jean De Smet traveled as the first Jesuit priest and missionary to the Pacific Northwest in 1839. Starting with that first Jesuit priest and missionary to the region, his complicated ties to the region and Indigenous tribes reverberate to the present day among Indigenous people.

That sums up the topsy-turvy nature of nineteenth-century America. As everything was changing rapidly, it became harder and harder to keep up with the world. De Smet was part of this sudden change for Indigenous people. The move from traditional spirituality to Christianity was not easy and has become more contested in the present day among Indigenous people.

For historians and others, this tremendous transition was documented in De Smet’s letters and journals, which are housed in Washington State University’s Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections. These papers make the experience come alive. As they pored over the letters and diaries, they found references to places and people that they recognized from their family tree. In one of the letters, the mention of De Smet sending a crucifix as a wedding gift for a young nephew, whose heir read the letter, elicited a surprise cry.

De Smet and two fellow priests set up a church in what is now Stevensville, Montana. On September 24, 1841, St. Mary’s Mission was founded. Thus began a relationship between the Native peoples of the Northwest and the Jesuits that lasts to the present. A prodigious writer and traveler, De Smet penned hundreds of letters, kept a journal, and spent much of his time raising money for the missions. The Jesuit missions eventually included ones with the Skokomish and Suquamish (Coharie Confederated Tribes) at Kettle Falls, Washington, and with the Schitsu’umsh (Coeur d’Alene Tribe) at Cataldo, Idaho. De Smet also crossed the Atlantic Ocean over a dozen times on fund-raising and missionary recruitment campaigns.

De Smet harbored romantic notions of creating a protected Indigenous island—free from evil outside influences such as alcohol and settler violence. He was forty years too late.

The push of westward settlement by Americans meant continual and violent displacement for Native people. To aid this movement, the US Army built military roads across the West. One of them, the Mullan Road, ran right in front of the Old Mission at Cataldo at the heart of the Schitsu’umsh (Coeur d’Alene Tribe) community.

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This year marks the 150th anniversary of De Smet’s death. He was born in 1801 in Belgium but immigrated to the United States to work with Native Americans. A delegation of Kootenai-Salish men formed in 1839 to invite “Blackrobes” to teach them about Catholicism. While they had been introduced to that faith by Metis fur trappers, they wanted priests to administer communion and other sacraments, tasks reserved to clergy.

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STUDENTS DESIGNED PUBLIC SPACES AND UPDATES TO MALDEN’S PARK

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It’s in the crimson blood

BY LOREN WARD

McQuaid honed his competitive edge while serving as the WSU men’s rowing freshman coach in 1987–88. Paul Huttuball-Wilcox (’91 History) rowed under McQuaid’s leadership and remembers him as an im- pactful, results-driven coach who pushed student-athletes to “release the lions”—to get out there without fearing a challenge or the possibility of a defeat.

“It’s part of who we are, and so I remember Mike is that competitive spirit,” Huttuball-Wilcox says. McQuaid had “that willingness to do more and not just strive for less, but there’s always something that can be done and how do I get better.”

Even off the playing field, McQuaid’s competitive drive helped him excel in his career. He worked for international compa- nies like Business Wire and Amazon.com and eventually started his own firm, McQuaidUSA. On top of that, McQuaid’s heavily involved as a civic leader in Seattle.

“Life takes over,” McQuaid says, but it didn’t stop him from plunging back into the competitive arena. Thanks to the nudge of his friend and now running coach Carol Coram, he started competing in triathlons. Now, a decade later, McQuaid was selected to join Team USA at the world championship level.

Coram, a Team USA triathlete herself, has been coaching McQuaid since last year. She says McQuaid’s focused mindset and ability to fine-tune his techniques make him extremely coachable.

“He’s one that always wants to do better, and it’s ingrained in him. That’s really part of his personality,” Coram says. “Whatever it is he does, whether it’s on the playing field or not, he wants to give it his all.”

McQuaid invests at least 25 hours per week training, not including his time working with his sports medicine team. With 15 triathlons scheduled this season, McQuaid is eagerly anticipating the world championship in October 2024.

“My mantra is eye on the prize,” he says. “You really have to stay focused on why you’re there and really do the little things correctly.”

Above: McQuaid after qualifying for Team USA at the 2023 USA Triathlon Multisport National Championships festival in Irving, Texas.

Right: Celebrating an age-group win at the 2023 Lake Wilderness Triathlon near Maple Valley. Photos courtesy Mike McQuaid.
Triathlon ties
BY JASON KRUMP

Ironman brought them together. Specifically, the rigorous Ironman Triathlon competition and extensive medical data from its competitors connected researchers Chris Connolly and W. Douglas Hiller.

Connolly, associate professor of kinesiology in the Washington State University College of Education, and Hiller became not just colleagues but good friends.

“We text a lot. He is in my favorites with my wife and my daughter,” Connolly says. “I’m a huge baseball fan, and I feel very much like the closer brought in to get the last out.”

“He is the closer, but so much more than that,” Hiller, an orthopedic surgeon, says of Connolly. “He is smart, focused, and interested, and has the resources we need to take advantage of this treasure trove of information.”

The treasure trove is three decades’ worth of medical data from approximately 15,000 athletes who competed in the Ironman Triathlon.

Run annually on the Hawaiian island of Oahu since 1978, the Ironman Triathlon consists of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run.

Hiller, who calls the triathlon the “Mt. Everest of sport,” participated in three Ironmans in the early ‘80s. He remained involved in the event after his competition days, working for the Ironman as director of research, and has been connected with the sport for decades.

In 2019, he was inducted into the International Triathlon Union Hall of Fame.

He moved to Coxfall in 2017 to practice at the Whitman Orthopedic Clinic and serves as a teaching associate professor at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. He brought with him the Ironman data.

“I have all the medical records from the Ironman, and no one has ever looked at it as a whole,” Hiller says. “I really wanted to meet an exercise physiologist.”

Hiller was referred to Connolly and sent him an email.

“As one does when you get an email from someone you never met, you do a Google search and couldn’t believe the stuff I saw,” Connolly says. “I sat down with Doug, and it just blossomed into this beautiful partnership.”

That partnership then partnered with World Triathlon, the sport’s governing body, to manage all medical data with a focus on safety.

“World Triathlon is making a huge effort,” Hiller adds. “It is the first organization in the world to fully support objective research of the sport, with nearly 8,000 competitions worldwide. Its new Global Triathlon Safety Task Force demonstrates the commitment.”

“The Global Triathlon Safety Task Force [includes] representatives of all the big organizations and many of the national federations with the explicit purpose of making the sport safer,” Hiller explains.

Hiller and Connolly also developed a website at WSU to collect data from the organizations.

“We want to be an asset to these organizations,” Connolly says. “To our knowledge, they don’t have the resources to look at the data and disseminate it.”

“We’re looking at hypothermia, we’re looking at trauma injuries, we’re looking at athletes who come to the medical tent early in the race but then have to come back later on,” Connolly adds. “All of this is shown in the data.”

With plenty of data still to be examined, the collaboration is just beginning.

If this were a triathlon, Connolly says they are in the middle of the swim portion of the race in their research.

“What we’re talking about is just the start,” says Connolly. “We anticipate this growing, our work, our collaborations, and those who are using our database.”

THE NOVELS OF GABRIEL FIELDING, rich with psychological and spiritual insight, received acclaim in the 1960s, but have since faded from public consciousness.

Fielding was the nom de plume of Alan Gabriel Barnsley, an English physician, turned author. He came to Washington State University in 1956 as an artist-in-residence and ended up teaching creative writing at WSU until his retirement in 1981.

A new biography and literary analysis of Fielding’s novels, Searching Brightness by English author and poet Paul Binding, seeks to bring the memorable characters and stories to readers who may have never read Fielding.

“The book is more a debt of decades reading Fielding,” Binding says. “He strongly influenced me as a person and a writer.”

Binding says he was captivated as a young man by Fielding’s emotionally resonant tales of the Blaydon family, particularly John Blaydon, in Brothers Love, In the Name of Goodness, and others. He also notes the influence of Fielding’s award-winning 1963 novel, The Birthday King, which follows a wealthy industrial Jewish-Catholic family in Nazi Germany.

Binding’s 2016 article about Fielding in the Times Literary Supplement led to a connection with Fielding’s daughter Mary Gabriel Vorenkamp, and then to Binding’s 2021 book published by Shoestring Press.

Fielding, his wife and fellow writer Edshina Barnsley, and their family made their home in Pullman until his death in 1986.

Binding says Fielding’s ability to articulate his character’s complex emotions and spiritual questing stands among the top tier of modern English writers. “Think he’s a writer who has not been recognized as he should.”

Read the full story about Fielding and Searching Brightness, magazine.wsu.edu/extra/GabrielFielding

Sustainability is taking off
BY ADRI HATCH

Air travel is back, bigger than ever.

And that’s a problem for the environment.

Air travel is a growing source of the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. That’s why the aviation industry has committed to reach “net zero” greenhouse gases by 2050.

Washington State University researchers across multiple programs, colleges, and campuses are helping airlines get there.

Sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF, is currently the only alternative suitable for the long-haul routes that produce the most carbon.

Made from plants, waste streams, or captured carbon, it’s blended with conventional fuel and is already used by more than 50 airlines.

But 2022 production in the United States was about 13.8 million gallons, that will need to increase to 3 billion gallons by 2030 and 5 billion gallons by 2050 to meet the industry’s climate goals. Hurdles include identifying new source materials, ensuring biofuel crops don’t replace food production or threaten water supplies or forests, refining the materials, and transporting fuel to airports without canceling out its carbon reduction.

WSU researchers are working on all these issues, as well as identifying supply-chain and infrastructure costs and logistics, and testing potential fuels to ensure they meet the extraordinarily tight characteristics for aviation.

“This full vertical integration of capabilities at WSU is unique,” says Joshua Hayne, associate professor and director of the Bioproducts, Sciences, and Engineering Laboratory at WSU Tri-Cities. “We have people who are leading in every one of these bottlenecks for SAF.”

The university and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology co-lead ASCENT, a consortium of research universities, government agencies, national laboratories, and private entities covered by the Federal Aviation Administration nearly a decade ago. WSU Regents Professor and Director of ASCENT Michael Vickrott helped author the nation’s SAF roadmap.

Most recently, WSU is partnering with Snohomish County on a research and development center for sustainable aviation fuels at Paine Field in Everett to build a first-of-its-kind repository for SAF samples to be distributed globally. The project received $6.5 million in seed funding from the Washington legislature.

“WSU researchers are already looking beyond SAF to other potential power sources, such as liquid hydrogens and e-fuels.”

“WSU is in a really amazing position right now,” says Jacob Learman, associate professor in the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering and hydrogen fuel researcher. “We’re not only leading the FAA’s center for sustainable aviation fuels, we’re leading the emerging aviation fuels for the next several decades.”

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The archival poems, letters, and papers on display brought about many different emotions: happiness, surprise, anger, and sadness. For people getting their first glimpse of these artifacts at Washington State University Pullman, seeing what the LGBTQ+ community experienced in the past was eye-opening.

The display last fall from the WSU Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections was part of the Queering the Archives Initiative, a collaborative research project searching for untold stories of queer life on the Palouse.

Josie Cohen-Rodriguez, student life and community coordinator in WSU Pullman’s LGBTQ+ Student Center, and Chelsea Norton-Wisla, community outreach archivist in the WSU Libraries, lead the Queering the Archives Initiative, which seeks to amplify LGBTQ+-voices and perspectives in the region and create spaces for learning, conversation, and collaboration between students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Among the items on display were WSU policy papers from the early 2000s advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion, a short documentary on those involved in the Queering the Archives Initiative. The timing of the letters’ discovery, when many states across the nation are adopting legislation to restrict LGBTQ+ civil rights, is not lost on those involved in the Queering the Archives Initiative.

Cohen-Rodriguez says while the WSU community has shown a lot of interest in and support for the project, one of the challenges moving forward is determining how to keep momentum in an increasingly hostile environment in which the experiences and stories of LGBTQ+ people are being erased from the broader cultural and historical narrative.

The Queering the Archives Initiative is instrumental in preventing that erasure. By resurfacing and exploring these documents, and the people that advocated for discrimination against queer people, the initiative makes the past relevant again.

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The archival poems, letters, and papers on display brought about many different emotions: happiness, surprise, anger, and sadness. For people getting their first glimpse of these artifacts at Washington State University Pullman, seeing what the LGBTQ+ community experienced in the past was eye-opening.

Josie Cohen-Rodriguez, student life and community coordinator in WSU Pullman’s LGBTQ+ Student Center, and Chelsea Norton-Wisla, community outreach archivist in the WSU Libraries, lead the Queering the Archives Initiative, which seeks to amplify LGBTQ+-voices and perspectives in the region and create spaces for learning, conversation, and collaboration between students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Among the items on display were WSU policy papers from the early 2000s advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion, a short documentary on those involved in the Queering the Archives Initiative. The timing of the letters’ discovery, when many states across the nation are adopting legislation to restrict LGBTQ+ civil rights, is not lost on those involved in the Queering the Archives Initiative.

Cohen-Rodriguez says while the WSU community has shown a lot of interest in and support for the project, one of the challenges moving forward is determining how to keep momentum in an increasingly hostile environment in which the experiences and stories of LGBTQ+ people are being erased from the broader cultural and historical narrative.

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“The Queering the Archives Initiative is instrumental in preventing that erasure by resurfacing and exploring these documents, and the people that advocated for discrimination against queer people,” Norton-Wisla says.
Ancient Tribal earth ovens built long before the Egyptian pyramids were excavated as part of the first archaeological project made public by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians.

Conducted in collaboration with Washington State University archaeologists, the excavation could reveal new insights into the foods the Kalispel people have been preparing and eating in the Inland Northwest for the last 5,000 years.

“As a Tribe, we’ve never shared this kind of historical excavation experience with the public,” says Kalispel Tribal elder Shirley Blackbear. “But I think it is important for non-Natives to learn and understand more about our Tribe. Our history and traditions are very rich and important to us. Cooking techniques have been passed down from generation to generation.”

The earth ovens, one of which radio-carbon dating suggests is 5,000 years old, were discovered after the Kalispel Tribe purchased land near Newport to accommodate the need for additional Tribal housing near the reservation.

Professional archaeologists and fourth-year students in a WSU archaeological field school worked this summer to delineate oven features. Soil samples were also collected and analyzed in the lab in hopes of identifying charred seeds, nuts, and even bits of protein that could paint a clearer picture of the diet and food processing techniques used by ancient Tribal people living on the banks of the Pend Oreille River.

The oven remains and other discovered artifacts were carefully removed from the ground to make way for essential Tribal housing.

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The broader-level question we are asking is: to whom were the people of this region picking this particular place to cook their food at again and again over a period of thousands of years?” says Shannon Tushingham, a WSU professor of archaeology who led the archaeological field school in collaboration with the Kalispel Tribe. “Earth ovens have been excavated in this area before, but now in 2023 we have all these wonderful new technologies that give us the ability to better determine what types of food were being eaten and how they were prepared.”

One of the main goals the archaeologists hope to learn more about from the excavation is camas, a small flowering plant with roots that can be cooked fresh or ground into flour for baking over several days. While the Tribe has preserved the tradition of baking camas bread by passing it down from generation to generation, not much is known about the oven technology they used before 3,000 years ago.

“When we combine what we find from archaeological investigations like this with environmental reconstructions and ethnographic data, we can begin to start getting a much clearer picture,” says Kevin Lyons, Kalispel Tribal archaeologist.

Traditionally, Tribes have not always been consulted when it comes to archaeological digs, especially when the property is owned by private non-Tribal landowners. However, since the early 1990s, the Kalispel Tribe has grown its own capacity to answer questions about its past as it works to employ archaeologists of its own to preserve Tribal history.

Lyons said Tribal leadership decided to partner with WSU experts on the project given its scale and scientific complexity.

“This is one of those rare occasions where the Tribe, with its own expertise, could do this on its own, but we would wind up doing it to the exclusion of everything else, and we already have other standing obligations,” he says. “We are partnering with WSU archaeologists on this project because we have a long tradition of working with them and know that they will do justice to the Tribe's history and its tangible footprint.”

For WSU, “It is really about teaching students the archaeological skills they will need to get jobs in the growing field of cultural resource management,” Tushingham says. “We are training the next generation of professional archaeologists how to work with Tribal communities and interact with them in a meaningful and professional way. We are honored to be hosted by the Kalispel Tribe.”

Read the full story of the partnership between the Kalispel Tribe and WSU:
magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Kalispel-dig
Turkey

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

It’s the centerpiece of the season.

Americans gobble an estimated 40 million turkeys on Thanksgiving, or about half of all US whole turkey sales for the entire year. Seven out of eight American families—nearly 90 percent—place a whole turkey in the middle of their Thanksgiving table. Christmas comes in second, with about half as many birds, followed closely by Easter.

It’s probably no surprise that the United States is the largest turkey producer and exporter of turkey products. What many might not know is Washington state once had a big part in production, raising more than 1.5 million birds a year. Since commercial turkey production peaked here in 1945, Washington state’s turkey farming has nearly disappeared. By the early 1970s, it had dwindled to fewer than half a million birds. These days, numbers are even smaller, hovering around 6,000 turkeys.

In 2017, the year for which the most recent United States Department of Agriculture census data is available, Washington state had 604 farms raising turkeys. Less than half owned turkey sales. Almost all were small, family-owned operations. That’s not surprising; out of a total of some 35,000 farms in Washington, 95 percent are family owned. While there was a small uptick from 2012 to 2017 in the number of turkeys—5,902 compared to 5,386—the total still averages about half as many birds, followed closely by Easter.

Today, explains Kellie Henwood, the Regional Small Farms Program coordinator at Washington State University Jefferson County Extension, “there are mega-poultry farms in the US, and they’re owned by a very small number of corporations. Before the corporatization and conglomeration of our food system, Washington had quite a thriving poultry industry with chickens and turkeys being raised in large pockets across the state on small family farms.”

Henwood worked in Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap Counties. “From what I’ve learned historically, local agriculture in each county featured thriving poultry farms,” she says. “That includes not only turkeys but chickens, too. Consider The Egg and I, Betty MacDonald’s humorous 1945 account of chicken farming near Chimacum in the 1920s. In chapter 7, MacDonald, then a young bride, compares her 40-acre farm to the Maddock ranch, “one of the most prosperous” in the area. The Maddocks had five sons who graduated from the Washington State Agricultural College, which would become Washington State University. “The barns were like Carnation Milk advertisements—stuccoed and with the latest equipment for lighting, milking, cleaning, and feeding; the barnhouses were clean, comfortable, and airy; the pig pens were cement and immaculate; the chicken houses were electric-lighted, many-windowed, white and clean; the duck pens, beeves, bull pens, calf houses, turkey runs, rabbit batches, and the milk house were new, clean, and modern.”

These days, it’s especially difficult for small-scale farmers to raise heritage turkey breeds, Henwood says. First, “it’s a challenge to be profitable. Heritage breeds can take longer to grow and mature to the point they’re ready to harvest compared to the commercial breeds that are raised on large-scale poultry farms where birds are turned around quickly because of ‘broad selection.’”

Organically raised birds add another layer of expense due to the higher cost of organic feed and the time it takes to grow a large bird. Not only that, but turkeys “have a high mortality rate. Pothis require particular conditions, and some breeds can be susceptible to certain diseases,” Henwood says, noting last year’s massive avian flu outbreak, which caused an estimated 20 percent drop in the number of turkeys available for Thanksgiving. When carcasses are destroyed, entire flocks have to be culled. Some 7 million birds were destroyed last year due to avian flu. Influenza crippled with the effects of the outbreak led to price increases of nearly 20 percent.

Other challenges include regulatory barriers, such as different levels of licensing, and lack of USDA-certified processing infrastructure. “It’s not the number of inspectors,” Henwood says. “It’s the dwindling number of available facilities. There’s a huge bottleneck for all meat processors in Washington.”

All these factors affect the resilience of small turkey and other family-run farms that raise poultry and other meats—so much so, Henwood says, “We who work in the local food systems feel it’s a state of emergency.”

At the same time, she says, “farmers have an opportunity to gain a huge customer base. There are high holiday sales for turkeys. There’s a lot of demand for local meats.”

Roast turkey

14-pound turkey
2 ounces butter (¼ stick), melted
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper or seasoned salt
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2 cups turkey fat or canola oil or a combination
3 tablespoons flour
¼ cup turkey fat or canola oil or a combination
3 cups chopped onions
3 cups chopped celery
2 cups chopped carrots
1 tablespoon black peppercorns
1 tablespoon black peppercorns
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried thyme
Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Remove giblets and neck from inside of turkey cavity, reserving the neck. Rinse the inside of turkey with water until it is clear. Do not wash the exterior of the turkey. Dry inside and outside with paper towels.

Brush turkey with melted butter; season inside and outside with salt and pepper. Brush neck with butter and season with salt and pepper. Lightly pack stuffing in turkey. Transfer turkey and neck to a roasting pan. Roast 25 minutes, then begin basting turkey with stock. Roast turkey until meat is fully cooked, about 4½ hours, basting with stock every 35 minutes and removing neck when its golden brown and fully cooked.

Allow neck to cool, then remove meat from the bone and roughly chop; set aside for the gravy. Remove turkey from the oven. Remove stuffing from the turkey and transfer it to a balking dish.

Transfer turkey to a platter and rest for 20 minutes; slice meat and keep warm. Bake stuffing until cooked through, about 20 minutes.

Make the gravy

Pour the stock from the roasting pan into a high-sided bowl. Allow for rapid cooling. Refrigerate immediately.

Yield: about 6 cups.
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCHERS ADAPT LIVESTOCK AND CROPS TO FEED A MORE CROWDED, WARMING PLANET

BY BECKY KRAMER

Each bite of pork at a Washington State University barbecue was history-making.

The grilled sausage entrée was made with pigs from researcher Jon Oatley’s lab, and it represented the first time a university received US Food and Drug Administration authorization for gene-edited meat to be consumed by people.

“We’ve set an example of how to get an animal created with biotechnology evaluated for safety, processed, and put into the food chain,” says Oatley, professor in the School of Molecular Biosciences.

Unlike gene modification, gene-editing produces changes that could occur naturally in organisms or through selective breeding. Unlike gene modification, gene-editing produces changes that could occur naturally in organisms or through selective breeding.

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“With surrogate sires, you can produce a lot of animals with the desired DNA and use them in natural reproduction,” Oatley says. “That creates widespread access to desirable traits, lifting geographic restrictions for producers, including small farmers in rural areas.”

Oatley’s interest in food and livestock production dates to his childhood. He spent part of his growing up years in Thailand, where he watched his mother breed pigs. Returning to the United States, Oatley worked on a cattle ranch in Nevada as a teenager and even spent six months as a range boss after finishing his undergraduate degree.

“Having lived and traveled around Southeast Asia, I saw poverty and the lack of access to safe, nutritious food,” Oatley says. “I wanted to do something with animal agriculture, working on food production security issues. That drove me into applied science in livestock production.”

Feeding 10 billion people by 2050 will require a 60 percent increase in food production, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

“Without doing something, there will simply not be enough food going forward,” Oatley says. “That’s where biotechnology comes in, as does the one inherent thing in the animals we can influence is their genome.”

Samantha Noll, an associate professor of bioethics who consulted on the project, neither was a concern here, she says.

“Meat from surrogate sires is equivalent to any other pork product on the market in terms of human health impacts,” she says. And “the targeted gene-edited done in Jon’s lab doesn’t pose animal welfare concerns.”

WSU strives for transparency with the public. “Jon has invited various stakeholders into his lab to meet the pigs,” Noll says. “We’ve had meetings with officials, shared information with the public, and met with high school biology students to discuss gene-editing and CRISPR applications.”

“I think universities play a special role in this type of research,” Oatley says. “We’re trusted by the public to do this work for the good of the human race and the animals’ welfare.”

FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS, the surrogate sires technology could be a game changer for improving herds.

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A SCIENTIST IN COWBOY BOOTS, Oatley is notable for his down-to-earth nature as well as his achievements, says Bruce Whitelaw, the Roslin Institute’s director.

He and Oatley shared an industry booklet for genetic research in pigs at one time, and Whitelaw and his colleagues traveled to Pullman to discuss possible areas of collaboration.

“Jon has this characteristic of being relaxed, laid-back, someone who takes pleasure in driving trucks to move animals,” he says. “At the same time, he’s an incredibly focused, knowledgeable academic.”

Whitelaw had several target genes in mind for potential research cooperation. “It quickly became clear that for Jon, there was only one target, NANNOS2 (the male fertility gene).”

After Oatley’s initial work with gene-editing in mice, the surrogate sires technology successfully transferred to other species. According to Whitelaw, that’s the research world’s equivalent of hitting a home run early in the game.

“While Jon can tell you about the challenges involved, it’s been successful from the start,” he says. “So far, the technology has worked in all of the large animal species it has been directed at.”

THE TECHNOLOGY’S POTENTIAL is generating “quite a bit of interest” at the International Livestock Research Institute, says Appolinaire Djikeng, director general of the institute in Kenya.

“The institute supports small-scale producers in more than a dozen African and Asian countries by spreading scientific research and innovation with partnerships with local universities and other stakeholders. “We see it as a medium- to long-term innovation,” he says of the surrogate sires technology.

“Raising animals is a path out of poverty and malnutrition for families. But in many African countries, cattle are susceptible to trypanosomiasis, a parasitic disease transmitted by tsetse flies.”

“While it’s often fatal to cattle, some breeds have better survival rates,” Djikeng says. “There’s natural variation that can tolerate that particular pathogen.”

In the future, the surrogate sires technology could help farmers access animals with genetic resistance to trypanosomiasis or other diseases, he says. Breeding livestock to withstand hotter temperatures is another area of interest.

“One thing that can’t simply put more plants in the ground and more animals in the pasture because we don’t have enough arable land to do that,” Oatley says. “We have to make each individual animal more efficient at converting feed and water into outputs for human consumption.”

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Climate change generally represents a mixed bag for Washington’s potato growers. Higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere can actually boost growth if plants continue to get enough water and nutrients, says Mark Pavek, a professor and potato specialist in the Department of Horticulture.

About 150 potato varieties are under cultivation at the Othello research farm. Many are part of the US Department of Agriculture’s Tri-State Breeding Program, which focuses on new varieties for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Pavek will use heat boxes in the field next year to test tuber development under different temperature scenarios. Some potatoes become knobby and malformed, but others resist the heat better.

“If there is one thing we can do to help potato growers into the future,” Pavek says, “it’s probably developing the right potato.”

Washington produces about 10 billion pounds of potatoes annually. About 90 percent of the spuds are processed, and most end up as frozen french fries or other frozen potato products destined for US and Asian markets.

“Climate change could leave its mark on one of America’s favorite side dishes, influencing both the fries’ color and taste, according to Washington State University researchers.”

“We have a lot of varietal differences,” says Jacob Blauer, assistant professor and potato physiologist in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. “The flavor changes as well. Fries with higher sugar content caramelize during cooking and absorb more fat.”

“Some markers prefer the darker fries,” Blauer says. “But burger chains and quick-serve restaurants have typically preferred lighter cooking and absorb more fat.”

“The next step,” he says, “is getting this technology out of the lab and into the public domain.”

WASHINGTON STATE MAGAZINE WINTER 2023

WSU is among five US public research universities advocating for a change in the federal agency regulating biotechnologies that enhance traits in food animals. The US Department of Agriculture is better fit than the FDA, they wrote in a letter to the federal government.

The FDA’s lengthy approval process was designed for drug development. To understand how new animal-based facts might work, people need more information to help them make informed decisions, WSU says.

Gene-edited meat has wider acceptance in other parts of the world. Both the United Kingdom and the European Union are discussing the use of biotechnologies in farm animals, Whitehalow says, and some countries already authorize it.

Outley, meanwhile, has received a USDA grant to refine the surrogate-sire technology in cattle. He’s hoping to host a gene-edited beef barbecue in the future, subject to regulatory approval.

How do you like your french fries? The pale golden brown of fast-food fries, or the darker rustic fries more common at brewpubs? …

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Washington produces about 10 billion pounds of potatoes annually. About 90 percent of the spuds are processed, and most end up as frozen french fries or other frozen potato products destined for US and Asian markets.
Most of Washington’s wheat is grown without irrigation, so climate has always been a consideration. Carter notes. “Breeding wheat for drought tolerance is a big part of what we do,” he says. “What’s changing is the climate variability we’re dealing with on a year-to-year basis.”

To illustrate the challenges, the breeders point to Lind, a town in Adams County. Farmers there grow wheat with a scant 8 inches of annual precipitation—a moisture pattern that’s been consistent since the 1950s. But in future years, Lind’s annual precipitation could fluctuate from 6 to 15 inches.

“There are all these conflicting traits you might need in a wheat variety to protect it against weather extremes,” Carter says. Seeds bred for drought resistance might also need the adaptability to respond to rainstorms in June and July, which have occurred in recent years. Temperature is a variable, too. Some wheat varieties survive cold winters by remaining dormant. But those seeds also may need the ability to respond to May temperatures in the 80s.

The success of Washington’s wheat crop has global implications. Most of the crop is soft white wheat used in cakes, cookies, cereals, pastries, and pancakes. About 80 percent of it is exported.

Wheat is a staple food for about one-third of the world’s population. The crop’s high-stakes role in food security drives the need for high-yield varieties, despite future weather variability, Carter says.

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

WHEAT BREEDER

ARRON CARTER TALKS ABOUT USING DRONES FOR CROP MONITORING.

(PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER)

WHEAT BREEDER

ARRON CARTER TALKS ABOUT USING DRONES FOR CROP MONITORING.

(PHOTO ROBERT HUBNER)

Positive influences

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH

Gillis Williams started posting on TikTok six months after landing in Pullman as a third-year transfer student at Washington State University. Nearly three years later, he’s an influencer with more than 463,000 followers and nearly 13 million likes on the popular social media platform.

His handle: @ AutismChoseMe. Williams, aka “The Autism Guy,” uses TikTok and other social media platforms to raise awareness about and advocate for people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). He aims to be educational, inspirational, and entertaining, particularly for members of his generation.

“Really my niche audience is ages 15 to 25. That’s my demographic,” says Williams (’22 Comm.). Some of the videos are, admittedly, “pretty cheesy. But they are supposed to be, to show people how much fun I have educating people about autism. You can tell I’m having fun doing this. This brings me joy.”

AutismChoseMe is not only the name of his social media handle but also the business he founded early in his college career. Williams books speaking engagements, sharing his experiences as an autistic individual with young people—he gave a talk at WSU’s recent Disability Awareness Symposium—as well as combating common stereotypes or misconceptions about people with ASD.

“The biggest one is that all autistics are nonverbal,” Williams says. “There are some, but not all. Most are able to have a regular conversation.”

The second: “All autistics are math geeks. I can tell you, as an autistic, I’m not very good at math. It was not even my favorite subject in school.”

Another is boys are more likely than girls to have autism. The truth is we don’t know. Boys are four times more likely than girls to be diagnosed; girls are not as likely to be tested. I know a lot of girls who got a very late diagnosis. That’s a huge problem. If you don’t get diagnosed, you miss out on resources and accommodations to help you function in your workplace and at your school.”

Williams was diagnosed with autism in 2005 at age five. As a child, he exhibited self-stimulatory behavior, or stimming, such as repetitive body movements like hand-flapping or walking in circles.

“I would lose focus more often than my peers,” says Williams, who was born and raised in Arizona. “Some of them thought I was weird or obnoxious or just being annoying. They had a tendency to bully me or cancel me out. I dealt with quite a bit of that. It was painful at the time.”

His stimulating started to become less common during high school. But, Williams says, “I still do it. I still flap my hands or jump...
Heroes around every corner

BY WENDA REED

ERIC JOHNSON (’84 Comm.,) and his longtime video editor Darrin Tegnan (’91 Comm.,) are huddled over a computer screen at KOMO-TV, putting the final touches on the latest installment of “Eric’s Little Heroes,” a popular weekly feature. This particular entry concerns a skier who miraculously found and rescued a snowboarder buried in snow on Mount Bachelor. The men’s growing friendship is as important to the story as the rescue.

Eric Johnson. Photos courtesy KOMO-TV

Johnson has been at KOMO in Seattle since 1993, first as weekend sports anchor, then sports director, and now news anchor. His “Heroes” broadcasts, more than 280 since 2016, are a highlight, he says, featuring “sweetness, decency, and kindness” in contrast to the often-disturbing nightly news.

Johnson was “Eric’s Little Heroes,” which Johnson began at KGW TV in Portland in the early 1990s. “I said to the cameraman on a slow day, ‘Go to a Trailhead game and see if anything funny happens.’ Lots of funny things did happen, including a little boy whose coach told him to ‘go to second’ after he caught a ball in the outfield. The boy dropped the ball and ran to second.

“We made it our trademark,” Johnson says of the continuation of “Eric’s Little Heroes” at KOMO. “It was creative, fun, and wholesome.” He and his cameraman went to swim meets and soccer games, hockey contests and basketball competitions. He reported all the humor and mayhem in his measured, melodious voice like an announcer for professional sports.

After the Maui fires

BY BEECK KRAMER

The day after VALERIE HUFF ZIMMERMAN’s condo was destroyed in the Maui fires, the Washington State University alumna was helping feed evacuees and emergency responders.

Merriam’s Kapalua, the resort restaurant where Zimmerman and her husband, Eric, worked, had experienced a power outage. The chefs came in to cook the food before it spoiled.

The chefs cooked the food before it spoiled.

“Word went out that Merriman’s would hold food at noon,” says Zimmerman (’00 Comm.), manager of special projects. “I started work at 8 a.m.”

By the end of August, the restaurant north of Lahaina was providing meals to about 1,000 people per day.

“We’re really found our niche in delivering meals to emergency responders and the community,” says Zimmerman. “There’s a huge influx of volunteers, disaster relief people, and the National Guard. Many of them aren’t taking time off to eat, so we’re getting hot meals to them.”

The restaurant also delivers meals to families. With five evacuees, some homes are sheltering up to 20 people. Donations help support the meal deliveries.

Each morning, Zimmerman texts her contacts at different drop-off sites to determine how much food is needed that day. She works with the chefs and restaurant staff to organize meal planning and delivery routes. Eric Zimmerman drives a delivery van.

“I have a really awesome community here on the west side of Maui, and in our workplace,” she says. “Staying busy helps take our minds off what happened.”

The couple fled their condo near Lahaina’s historic Front Street on foot when embers started falling in their yard. “I had watched a documentary on the Paradise Fire in California where people died in their cars...” Zimmerman says. “I didn’t want to get stuck.”

After a brief stop at a friend’s house, Eric rode back to the condo to retrieve his wallet and check on their neighbors. Zimmerman pushed forward with the couple’s border collie. At 4:30 a.m., the skies were dark from smoke.
The wind was so intense, it sounded like a freight train,” she says. “I could hear things exploding—propane tanks, cars, transformers. When I took off my mask, my teeth would be covered with ash.”

During the chaotic evacuation, she met a coworker. They walked together for about half an hour later, sooty and shirtless but safe. Nothing remained of their condos.

To support Maui’s economy, Zimmerman encourages tourists to continue to visit parts of the island that remain open for business. “I feel like we’re seeing a lot of people who are used to traveling so far they don’t know we’ve had a volcano in the middle of it,” she says. “We’re gathering steam.”

Zimmerman is helping coordinate relief efforts to “build things better than ever,” Zimmerman says, “so that we can be covered with ash.”

When I took off my mask, my teeth would be covered with ash.”

Find ways to help with the recovery in Maui and read more stories of Cougs lending a hand, including former WSU football player Hercules Mata’afa’s life story: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Maui-frey.

Different strokes
BY ARIADNA JANOVICH
ROBERT “BOB” APPELYARD arrived in Pullman from suburban Illinois knowing “next to nothing” about rowing.

The former high school swimmer was looking to try a new sport as a college freshman. In September 1973, he spotted an announcement in the Daily Evergreen for a meeting of the newly formed rowing club. “They hadn’t yet even been on the water,” he says. “I thought maybe I would take a look.”

Appelyard (’75 Zool., ’79 MS Env. Sci., ’86 PhD Vet. Sci) ended up rowing for Washington State University’s fledgling crew team all four years of college and went on to become a celebrated race official with the United States Rowing Association (USRowing) and International Federations of Rowing Associations.

After more than four decades of officiating, he’s lost track of how many races he’s judged—from high school, college, and masters to Olympic levels. He’s served as USRowing’s national Referee Committee, won national awards, and acted as chief referee for high-profile races, including the US national and Olympic team trials, Intercollegiate Rowing Association Championships, Eastern Spirit Invitational, and Head of the Charles Regatta.

His dedication has been recognized with USRowing’s 1993 Julian Wolf Award, the Eastern College Athletic Conference’s 2013 Shiebler Award, and USRowing’s 2014 Jack Franklin Award.

He still referees two or three races per year and holds tremendous respect for the sport. “One of the biggest challenges of crew is you have to work entirely as a unit,” he says. “You spend years learning how to do it. It’s very hard physical work.”

Hawai’i state senator Tim Richards (’84 DVM) is helping coordinate relief efforts, including deliveries of insulin and diapers to the burned areas. Read his story: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Maui-Richards.

Joseph E. Cardosa (’72 Pol. Sci.), a retired judge, is helping connect survivors to legal information as chairman of Hawai’i’s Access to Justice Commission. Read his story: magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Maui-Cardosa.

New media
Seek: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World
SCOTT SHIGEOKA ’11 COMM. MACHEETTE BOOK GROUP: 2023

It was his first Trump rally, and Scott Shigeoka was there alone. “Although he ‘intensely opposed’ many of Donald Trump’s policies, he writes, ‘I felt electrified by the energy of the rally. It was a collective high.’”

But, after writing ‘In-depth to nearly a dozen people’ and listening to an hour of Trump’s rhetoric, ‘I felt my insides shutting down. My body was visceraally reacting to what I perceived were hateful attacks.’

Three months earlier, Shigeoka had left his job in California to embark on a cross-country quest for understanding. Now he was sitting in his car in a Minnesota parking lot “on the verge of tears. I thought: Is this really who we are? ‘No,” he says. ‘We can do better. Let’s look for ways to practice curiosity, but would it actually change anything?’

It’s just one of the moments Shigeoka explores in Seek, his optimistic and inspiring ode to curiosity. Well-researched and approachable, the three-part guide offers relatable anecdotes and snippets of personal narrative along with a framework for cultivating curiosity. Practicing curiosity in our daily lives—something Shigeoka argues is necessary for humanity to survive and thrive.

“We’re living, we write, in an era of ‘incuriosity,’ and it’s ‘literally killing us.’”

In the Minneapolis parking lot, he writes, “I realized that I had come to the rally with the goal of learning more about Trump voters, but what I gained was much more unexpected: the experience changed me.”

Curiosity can change you, too. “We are a brighter future for a world that embraces curiosity,” Shigeoka says. “I see people who are able to alleviate their suffering in tough moments. I see stronger relationships emerging, even across lines of difference. And although it’s not a magic wand that can fix every societal issue overnight, I see curiosity as a foundational tool to build a more just and sustainable society.”

— Adriana Janovich

Washington State Rising: Black Power on Campus in the Pacific Northwest
MARC ARSELL ROBINSON ’12 PHD
AMER. STUD. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS: 2023

Fifty-four Black high school students from Seattle visited Washington State University in May 1968 through Project 88, an initiative of the 1965 National Higher Education Act that aimed to increase college enrollment of academically capable low-income students, and the prejudicial treatment soon began as they checked into their assigned dormitories, writes Marc Arnell Robinson, assistant professor of history at California State University, San Bernardino.

The slights culminated at Stephenson Hall “for what they had been told would be a dance in their honor. However, when they arrived, they were rudely turned away.”

The “teens ‘could apparently see that Stephenson’s Residence Center appeared to be set up for a dance, with lights dimmed, furniture pushed aside, and music playing from the jukebox.”

They suspected the dance had been abruptly canceled due to racial bias. “I was upset and disappointed, the group initially refused to leave, but after about forty-five minutes they were persuaded by their chaperones to return to their respective rooms.”

“On the walk to Otton Hall,” white students proceeded to yell insults (at some of the non-white teens) from their dorm windows… and threw paper, trash, and cigarette butts on the Black students,” they also threw a glass bottle that hit the ground near the adolescent.”

At 3:30 a.m., just eight and a half hours after arriving in Pullman, the contingent cut short their campus visit. Fifty-five years
Man of Treacherous Charm: Territorial Justice Edmund C. Fitzhugh
CANDACE WELLMAN ’68 SOCIO.
WSU PRESS: 2023

Questionably qualified Edmund C. Fitzhugh was under indictment for murder when

President James Buchanan appointed him to Washington Territory’s Supreme Court in 1858. He had landed in Bellingham Bay four years earlier to run the Sehome Coal Mine, getting involved with politics and marrying two bigamous half-sisters. He fathered a child with each of them, a boy and girl, both of whom he later kidnapped and gave away. In all, he wed four women in ten years, including a cousin, and abandoned all six of his offspring. Born into one of the privileged first families of Virginia, Fitzhugh sought wealth and power, exploiting personal and professional relationships in the process. After flunking out of the United States Military Academy at West Point, he opened a law office at 22 and, in 1849, was listed west by the California gold rush.

In her third book with WSU Press, Candace Wellman explores a complex character who played important roles in Washington Territory’s early days, especially in what would become Whatcom County. She spent 24 years researching this authoritative account that will appeal to readers with an interest in American, particularly Pacific Northwest, history.

— Adriana Janovich

Alumni Association News

DRIVE WITH Cougar Pride

Driving around the Pacific Northwest, Cougar license plates are practically impossible to miss.

They are the number one specialty license plate in Washington state, with more than double the number of any other university in the state.

These crimson plates mean more than just Cougar pride. They mean Cougar support. Twenty-eight dollars from the cost of each specialty plate goes to supporting scholarships for Washington State University students. Last year, the program brought in more than $460,000.

Today, the Cougar plate is displayed on nearly 23,000 vehicles — and counting. The growth of this program means that an ever-growing number of WSU students receive scholarship support, helping them to complete their education.

To obtain a Cougar license plate, drivers must be a Washington state vehicle owner. Cougs can accept the standard alphanumeric crimson plate or opt to add a custom message. Motorcycle license plates are also available under the same program.

Not a WSU alum? No problem. Anyone who owns a vehicle in Washington state can purchase a Cougar plate.

To those who proudly sport Cougar plates on their vehicles already, the Washington State Alumni Association thanks you. Be sure to post photos of your Cougar plates, tagging WSUAA for a chance to be featured on WSUAA’s social media pages.
From the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to maintaining highways, he spent more than four decades on the roads.

GREG SELSTEAD (BS Const. Mgmt., ’79 MS Civ. Eng.) retired after more than 40 years with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), but he’s still working to make a difference.

It began as he became an engineering technician in 1982, and then as a transportation engineer on the I-595 completion project in early 1986. Following these first years in construction and then a master’s degree in civil engineering, Selstead moved on to his next phase. WSDOT’s next roles took him to north-central Washington for project management in 2001 and later director of project reporting and control.

Selstead successfully took on the challenge of toll operations director on the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge. He retired from WSDOT after 40 years as assistant state maintenance engineer, a role he says he relished.

He did advance local publicity for the 20th anniversary of the bridge, he spent more than four decades ing highways, he spent more than four decades on the roads.

NANCY LI SCHMIDT and her family are at home in the world.

She, her husband, and their two children are worldschooling, also known as travel schooling, an educational movement in which young people learn by interacting with the wider world.

“It’s homeschooling in the sense that we are educating within our home, but we are traveling abroad to use the world as our classroom,” explains Schmidt (’99 MA Comm., ’06 PhD Hum.), noting the family is also embracing slow travel, a concept that celebrates lingering a little longer in one place and taking time to make intentional connections—to the land, to the people, to the culture, to the cuisine.

Through this approach, she says, her kids, a junior high school and a seventh grader, are growing in confidence and independence. “They’re learning so much just from being out in the world.”

That was the goal. Schmidt was inspired to embark on extended travel with her family to explore other parts of planet Earth, to get to know other people and lifestyles, expand their worldview and connection to the world, and immerse themselves in other places and cultures.

Their plan is to travel abroad for a year, returning stateside for winter before likely re-embarking on another adventure. So far, they’ve visited Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, Costa Rica, Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia, and Sweden.

After the holidays, they’re considering continuing their travels to Portugal, the United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe.

“At we travel as a family, we hope to inspire and encourage others to step outside of their comfort zone, to take a chance to get to know people who are different from them, and to learn about other ways of being, so we can all grow into more compassionate global beings,” says Schmidt, who’s been documenting their journey on Instagram, Facebook, and a blog.

The handles, hashtags, and URL are the same: oursidetrackedlife. Posts offer a primer of ideas, inspiration, and highlights to name. But some of the most impactful experiences have been exploring medieval sites across Germany and France, making traditional pastas and pizzas in Tuscany, and visiting Dachau and the beaches of Normandy to learn about World War II.

So far, they’ve heard “Go Cong!” in Athens, Barcelona, Italy, Costa Rica, and Herceg Novi, Montenegro. “We just love the instant connection Congs feel when they see a fellow Cong.” Schmidt says. “It really is something special.”

Also special are the lessons they are learning, not only about the world but themselves. Says Schmidt, “A big lesson we have learned is we can do anything as long as we stick together and help each other stay calm and navigate circumstances as a family unit.”

BY ADRIANA JANOVICH
and forge an instant connection with other WSU fans. He took matters in a show of poor sportsmanship."

In his report, Martin says, "Take the Red River Debate between the Oklahoma Sooners, for example. UT support for the Longhorns and the Oklahoma Sooners proudly display their Hook 'em Horns and the Oklahoma’s hand sign upside down in a show of poor sportsmanship."

From the pitchfork sign of Arizona State University to the two-fingered hand sign used by the University of Oregon, universities have a unique, nonverbal way for their supporters to connect in a special bond shared by Cougs everywhere. Martin created a hand sign for WSU supporters to use forever."

**BY LARRY CLARK**

**check out a video of the WSU sign:** magazine.wsu.edu/extra/Coug-sign

**from the archives—say “Go Cougs” in sign language:** magazine.wsu.edu/extra/GoCougs-signing

As a Cougar sports fan, WILL MARTIN (’81 Comm.) felt some thing was missing for supporters of Washington State University. WSU has no hand sign.

"Dozens of other universities have a unique, nonverbal way for their supporters to connect instan-

**COURTESY WILL MARTIN**

associate dean and director of veterinary medical services and clinical professor of emergency and internal medicine at North Carolina State University.

CHERYL OLIVER (’99 Elem. Ed., ’09 MEd) was appointed to Pullman Regional Hospital’s Board of Commissioners, replacing C. Michael Murphy. Oliver is associate dean of professional programs at the Carson College of Business. She also serves on the WSU Global Campus Academic Council.

**MARK GOTTSCHALK (’01 History)** is dean of Learning Commons at Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, Texas. Previously, Gottschalk was director of libraries at South Plains College for four years. He is a mentor for the Texas Accelerated Library Leader Class of 2022 and is active in the Texas Library Association.

**JENNIFER ROBINSON (’09 Poli. Sci.)** is chief operating officer on Blue Origin’s BE-4 Rocket Engine Program in Kent, Washington. He has more than 25 years of experience in industries including the military, construction, energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.

**CEDAR CUNNINGHAM (’22 Finance)** is competing for a place on the US Olympic mixed team for the 2024 Olympic Games. He rowed for Cougar Crew, earning Pac-12 All-Conference team honors and American Collegiate Rowing Association First Team All-American honors.

**JERID COTTLE (’08 Const. Mgmt.)** is project manager at Rahn Co., a Bellevue-based general contractor. He has worked at Rahn for 10 years and is leading the Nook at Northaven Apartments project in Seattle.

**JOHN SKADORVIA (’08 Bus., ’09 Soc. Sci., ’12 MBA) is chief operating officer at Kenzi Loli Corp., a Valma-based company. Previously, Skadoria served as a program management director on Blue Origin’s BE-4 Rocket Engine Program in Kent, Washington. He has more than 25 years of experience in industries including the military, construction, energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.

**Cedar Cunningham (’22 Finance)** is competing for a place on the US Olympic mixed team for the 2024 Olympic Games. He rowed for Cougar Crew, earning Pac-12 All-Conference team honors and American Collegiate Rowing Association First Team All-American honors.

**Spencer Walker (’22 Finance)** is a donor experience officer for athletics in Boise State University’s Division of University Advancement. Previously, he served as a development assistant for WSU Athletics and as a special events and operations intern at the University of California Irvine Athletics Department.

**MARTINE W. SANDFORD (’84 MEd)* is director of military, construction, energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.

**GARY BRUCE COLLINS (’70 Pharm.)** is director of military, construction, energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.

**JENNIFER ROBINSON** (’08 Busi., ’11 MBA) is chief operating officer on Blue Origin’s BE-4 Rocket Engine Program in Kent, Washington. He has more than 25 years of experience in industries including the military, construction, energy, aerospace, and manufacturing.

**Spencer Walker** (’22 Finance) is a donor experience officer for athletics in Boise State University’s Division of University Advancement. Previously, he served as a development assistant for WSU Athletics and as a special events and operations intern at the University of California Irvine Athletics Department.
Fifty years ago, I showed up at Washington State University wondering if I was smart enough to make it through the doctoral program in history. I knew I wanted to focus on the history of the West or the Pacific Northwest, and the first person I met was David H. Stratton. I quickly realized a couple of things about him. He was one of the nicest human beings I had ever met, with an infectious sense of humor. He also had a way of making me feel like I could really get this doctorate in history.

From that first encounter, Dr. Stratton became one of the most important persons in my life. I had some physical issues that required this doctorate in history. I knew I wanted to focus on the history of the West or the Pacific Northwest, and the first person I met was David H. Stratton. I quickly realized a couple of things about him. He was one of the nicest human beings I had ever met, with an infectious sense of humor. He also had a way of making me feel like I could really get this doctorate in history.

One of the truly brutal parts of a doctoral program is taking out of a deep and abiding respect. With his books and numerous articles, his academic legacy will live on. But for me, the fact that he took me under his wing as a nerd, was a very good friend, so much so that he asked me to call him David. Something in me made that extremely difficult and I always felt like I needed to call him Professor Stratton out of a deep and abiding respect.

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The WSU Foundation commemorates the most recent class of WSU’s most generous donors—those who achieved Crimson Laureate, Laureate, and Crimson Benefactor giving levels during the past two fiscal years.*

It was our great pleasure to honor these remarkable individuals, families, and charitable foundations during the WSU Foundation’s 43rd annual Donor Recognition Gala in Pullman on Oct. 12, 2023.

Among the honorees were four new Crimson Laureates—recognized for their extraordinary generosity of achieving more than $5 million in lifetime giving to WSU.

We were also thrilled to celebrate 21 Laureates—an exceptional group of donors whose cumulative giving to the WSU Foundation has reached $1 million.

The Gala was also an occasion to joyously celebrate 21 Crimson Benefactors, who have reached the $500,000 giving milestone.

Scan the QR code or visit foundation.wsu.edu/gala2023 to learn all about our distinguished honorees, see stories of impact, and watch a recording of the 2023 WSU Foundation Donor Recognition Gala.

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The WSU Breadlab is a research station, a bakery, and a school. But mostly, the WSU Breadlab is a movement.

The Breadlab is spreading a message of whole-grain goodness worldwide.

Learn more about the movement at: gocoug.wsu.edu/means/lead
THE ELSON S. FLOYD COLLEGE OF MEDICINE has a place to call its own.

Since its founding in 2015, the College of Medicine has shared space with Washington State University’s other health sciences colleges on the WSU Spokane campus. That made for a fragmented operation, with faculty and staff offices and student classrooms spread across multiple buildings.

The departure of Eastern Washington University from campus in 2021 gave WSU the opportunity to create a home for the College of Medicine.

A $17 million remodeling and “reimagining” project brought modern learning and collaboration spaces, a campus testing center, and faculty offices to one of the first buildings constructed on the WSU Spokane campus. The new WSU Medicine Building was dedicated in a ceremony in August, and students began classes there shortly afterward.

The Washington legislature contributed $15.5 million of the project’s cost, with the remainder raised through private donations.

The Medicine Building on campus is “another step in our growth as a health sciences campus,” said Daryll DeWald, executive vice president for WSU Health Sciences and WSU Spokane chancellor, in August. Added Jim Record, interim dean of the College of Medicine, “This building is emblematic of WSU’s commitment to the community it serves.”

Back-to-back record years of philanthropic activity signal positive momentum as our donors and volunteers believe in the power of higher education to improve lives across the state of Washington and beyond.

MIKE CONNELL
VICE PRESIDENT, ADVANCEMENT
CEO, WSU FOUNDATION

For the second consecutive year, WSU achieved a new high-water mark with more than $167.9 million in philanthropic activity during Fiscal Year 2023.

The creation of the first pediatric residency east of the Cascades in Washington state

Advances in life science and STEM education in Southwest Washington

More than $28.1 million invested in student scholarships across WSU

These are among the thousands of ways WSU’s alumni and friends opened doors through their generous philanthropic support during the last year.

Thank you for making a difference for our students, faculty, and the communities WSU proudly serves each and every day.

For more information on the impact of your support, visit FOUNDATION.WSU.EDU/RECORDYEAR
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Washington State Magazine

WINTER 2023

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An ongoing game of catch; memories and great moments from 50 years of Beasley Coliseum; turkey recipes and trivia; adapting potatoes; wheat facts; Maui recovery; remembering David Stratton

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