Chair’s Message

Dear Friends:

A few weeks ago I attended the opening of a new exhibit in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections here at WSU’s Terrell Library. Entitled “Protest: Students, War + Racism, 1969-1970,” the exhibit examined the range of campus and national controversies during that period and featured archival pieces from at least two of our faculty—Bob Johnson and Paul Brians. When I subsequently took students from my upper-division Milton class to work in the exhibit—Milton being something of a radical himself—I made sure to point out that their English department was right in the middle of many of these issues.

I’m glad to report that while the campus climate isn’t quite so hot these days the English department still retains a bit of that spirit. In particular, we’re certainly willing (if not eager) to challenge external assumptions about what we do and what we value. We do so, I think, from a position of comparative strength, as both our scholarly/creative accomplishments and our centrality to WSU’s core educational mission have been increasingly recognized at the upper levels of our university.

To be sure, that doesn’t always translate into firm financial commitments, especially in what looks in the near term to be something of a retrenchment period for WSU. There are some positive signs on the horizon, however, many of which emanate from the new president, Kirk Schulz, who readily and publicly acknowledges the importance of the humanities in ways we haven’t seen for some time. He’s also leading efforts to develop a more predictable and rational (my adjectives) budgeting process, which many of you will know would itself be an accomplishment for WSU.

We’re similarly continuing to press forward, in particular looking to reverse what over the past several years has amounted to a 40% decline in WSU students majoring in English. This isn’t just a problem we’re facing, however, as we’re hearing informally that English departments at other comparable universities are seeing similarly sharp declines of anywhere from 25-50%. It’s hard to identify precisely the catalysts for this shift, though certainly shifting student demographics and an increasing tendency to reduce general education requirements in favor of more immediate movement into a student’s major have played a part.

Drops that fast and sharp inevitably have an impact on our course offerings and expansion prospects, something we’re looking to meet head-on. In particular, this coming year we’ll be looking at both our undergraduate major and methods we can pursue to increase student interest in our department, the latter of which can include not
Drops that fast and sharp inevitably have an impact on our course offerings and expansion prospects, something we’re looking to meet head-on. In particular, this coming year we’ll be looking at both our undergraduate major and methods we can pursue to increase student interest in our department, the latter of which can include not only new curricular options but a revitalized commitment to engagement and mentoring of students by all our faculty.

We’ll be doing something similar in regards to our graduate curriculum, though not with the same immediate enrollment pressures. Though perhaps smaller than we’d like (this year’s entering class was 12), our graduate program continues to punch above its weight, with strong placement and a good balance of teachers and researchers. Some good news to report here—through the generous commitments of both Charlotte Avery and the family of John Ehrstine we were able this past year to fund two summer dissertation fellowships for advanced Ph.D. students. Providing this sort of support has been a priority in our fund-raising and development efforts, and it’s already paying real benefits in the lives of our best students. Please let me know if you’d like to know more about this work, and theirs.

In all of this we are joined this year by a new colleague in Tri-Cities, Patty Wilde, who will be that campus’ new Writing Program Administrator. She arrives to us from New Hampshire, where she got her Ph.D., by way of Portland, where she previously taught community college. We do face some losses though. Perhaps wanting to beat the post-election rush to Canada, T.V. Reed has formally retired from WSU but continues to do teaching and writing from a post at York University in Montreal. Both Bill Condon and Patty Ericsson have announced their retirements effective the end of this year, and I hope to get word soon on (re)-hires here in Pullman. We will be searching this year for a position at WSU-Vancouver in Technical Communications as that campus continues to grow.

Along with this letter I’ve sent to Paul a copy of the new photo array of retirees that stands in the vestibule just outside the Bundy. Begun as a labor of love by Alex Hammond, it now is something we walk by as we enter into the renovated Bundy for events, faculty meetings, and the like, reminding us of the larger community we’re fortunate to be a part of. If you’d ever like to come back and visit us, or just hear more about what we’re doing, please don’t hesitate to drop me a note. Until then, best wishes to you all.

Best,
Todd Butler
Editor’s note

This issue sadly begins with four obituaries of former colleagues. The two I knew best were John Ehrstine and Shirley Price, each of whom made the best of their later years against considerable odds.

John had a long career as a popular and effective teacher, and was able to to use some of those skills in his volunteer work with his local library.

Shirley kept up her amazing spirit during a very long period of illness. I’ll never forget her wit, kindness, and helpfulness.

Retirees’ portraits are now nicely framed and mounted in the Bundy, thanks to the efforts of Alex Hammond and the department. It’s nice to see so many familiar faces in the old space.

I’m impressed with how many of you have successfully continued your academic work in retirement, but also salute those who have shifted gears, like me, into other enjoyable activities.

Thanks for the photos, but please send them as separate attachments rather than inserting them in your Word documents. That makes them much easier for me to handle.

Thank you all for keeping in touch, and best wishes to you all.

Paul Brians

Obituaries

Dr. John W. Ehrstine, PhD

date of birth November 27, 1937
date of death January 5, 2016

John W. Ehrstine was born on November 27, 1937 to Elza Elroy "Buck" Ehrstine and Blenna D. "Dee" Widger. He was raised in Detroit, MI, where his father was a buyer for J. L. Hudson Corporation and his mother was a music teacher. John grew up with a love of music, the arts and language. After high school, John received a Bachelor of Arts in English at University of Colorado, Boulder. He followed that with an MA and a PhD in English at Wayne State University, in Detroit, MI.

At the age of 26, Dr. John Ehrstine, took a position as a Professor of English at Washington State University, where he would serve for his entire and very illustrious career. While at WSU, John became a published author as well as a celebrated teacher. Nothing gave him more purpose than inspiring his students. He has maintained lifelong friendships with many of them.

While there, John married Sue Ellen Fryer and they had three children: Ethan, Anne, and Amy. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, John served on a committee that brought visiting artists, of every kind, to the campus. Also, a lifelong lover of music, John sang in a variety of campus musical groups, as well as his church choir.

Following his retirement from Washington State University, John moved to Wilsonville, OR, where he began teaching classes at the Wilsonville Public Library. This second career was a great source of joy for him as well as for the community.

In addition to his teaching, John was passionately committed to his service in AA. He developed great friendships while involved in AA, and also invested in helping others find support and encouragement in the midst of addiction.

John is survived by his children: Ethan and Karen (Hornlacher) Ehrstine, Anne (Ehrstine) and Kraig Oman, and Amy (Ehrstine) and Steve Ellisor. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Esther and Caleb Ehrstine, Alex, Claire and Miles Oman, and Nick, Camden and Maggie Ellisor. He is further survived by his sister, Shirley Harden and her children: John David and Lisa (Stoianoff) Harden, Merilynne (Harden) and Steve Rush, and Julianne (Harden) and John Bartholomew. In addition, he is survived by numerous and beloved nieces and nephews.
William G. Hirschfeld, Jr. passed away peacefully at daybreak in the company of his son and daughter on Tuesday, August 25, 2015, in his residence at the Skyline Terraces in Seattle. His death marked the end of a seven-month battle with pancreatic cancer. Bill was born on September 14, 1933 and was 81 years of age.

Bill was born in New York City, and moved with his family to Oregon when he was a boy. After graduating from Stanford University, Bill served in the United States Air Force, with postings in New Hampshire, Pakistan, Texas, Hawaii, Alabama, Washington State, and Germany.

Retiring as a Lt. Colonel, Bill went on to teach technical writing at Washington State University for 10 years. In his "retirement" he was heavily involved in his communities, first at Bill Point in Bainbridge Island and then at Skyline in Seattle. In his free time, Bill loved to travel, collect stamps, create scrapbooks, watch movies, and read.

Bill lost his beloved wife of 51 years, Marilyn, in 2009 and is survived by his daughter, Mary, his son, Stuart, and his grandchildren, Elias, Anya and Caleb.

On the morning of Sept. 8, 2016, Mary Ellen Marta Pastor died in the comfort of her own home, surrounded by her children. She was 58 years old and died 18 months after being diagnosed with cancer. A native of New York, Mary Ellen had lived in Idaho for more than three decades, settling in Moscow after extensive domestic and international adventure.

Mary Ellen held two master's degrees, one in music and one in English. Her education reflects two of her great passions in life, which were hearing music and teaching English as a second language. Over the course of her career as a professor at both the University of Idaho and Washington State University, she taught thousands of students. She was also a great lover of nature and the outdoors, and she rode her bicycle, took long walks and swam laps until very close to the end of her life.

Mary Ellen was as fierce a life-liver as she was a mother, teacher and friend. Known for her critical insight, frankness and loyalty, her words and actions will live on long after her passing. She lived her life with little regard for convention and displayed boldness to the end. At age 22, she hitch-hiked from San Francisco, Calif., to Juneau, Alaska, where she lived in a yurt without electricity for two years while teaching English at a maximum security prison.

Mary Ellen was also a devoted baseball fan, cheering for the San Francisco Giants from near and afar. Over the summer of 2016, she attended the MLB All-Star Game in San Diego. The night before the game, Mary Ellen was hospitalized and underwent emergency surgery in the morning. Not wanting to miss the game, she and her son drove straight from the hospital to the ballpark, where she spent the game eating hot dogs, drinking lemonade, and booing every LA Dodgers player that came up to bat.

Perhaps stronger and more enduring than all of her distinctive qualities is the love she had for her two children, Isaac and Alina. She was known to travel great distances and perform great feats for her children, including flying unannounced from Chile to California for her son's college graduation from UC Berkeley, and living months beyond her cancer prognosis to attend her daughter's college graduation from New York University. They survive her and will carry on her legacy of appetite for life and captivation with the world around them.
Shirley E. Price
June 19, 1929–February 19, 2016

Shirley was born in South Bend, Washington in 1929, and spent most of her youth in Aberdeen, Washington. In her early teens she moved to Tacoma, where she graduated from Stadium High School in the class of 1947. Shirley met her husband, Merrill W. Price, in 1950 at Fort Lewis. They married in Fircrest, Washington and recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. They settled in Pullman where they both worked for Washington State University and raised their two daughters. After 25 years in the Department of English she retired as the Executive Assistant to the Dean. Her strong sense of organization and exceptional people skills kept things running smoothly. She had a reputation for creating order out of chaos.

Shirley and her husband moved to Gig Harbor in 1989 to enjoy retirement near their daughters and reconnect with long-time friends. Shirley was very social and active in the community. She was a member of the Gig Harbor Golf Club and enjoyed the challenge of chasing the little white ball while walking the course with her husband and other golf enthusiasts. During the summer months, she volunteered at the golf course, teaching and inspiring young golfers. Some of Shirley’s interests were, among others, socializing, volunteering for Peninsula Fish, politics and current events, reading, sewing, and cooking. Her true passion, however, was gardening (“dirt therapy”). Cannon Beach, Oregon had a special place in her heart. She looked forward to their beach retreats every spring and fall for rejuvenating walks on the beach, amazing sunsets, ice cream on the porch at Osborn’s and burgers at Bill’s Tavern.

Shirley’s yard is a reflection of her love and compassion for nature, and she loved designing her container gardens and landscaping in the green belt. She also enjoyed the many birds that her yard attracted, and she designated a “scratch and feed” area for all her fine feathered friends.

Shirley faced her illness with cancer bravely and carried on without complaint, staying true to herself as a strong and hopeful person. Shirley was a beloved wife, a warm and loving mother, a confidante and special friend to many, and much more. We miss her deeply and will keep her always close to our hearts. She leaves behind her husband, Merrill W. Price, daughters Kimberly Price and Sheila Harper (Michael), grandchildren Ross and Nicole Harper, life-long Friend Sharon Fitz, and a beautiful yard.

As Shirley would say, “this too shall pass and so it goes.”


Bob was born on July 16, 1916, to Marie Deem Ross and Robert Henry Ross, of Germantown, Ohio. He lost his mother in the 1918 flu pandemic, and in 1920, his father was remarried to Helen Bailey of Xenia, Ohio. An only child, he was raised by his father, stepmother, and live-in caretaker, Iola Watkins.

Bob attended the Germantown School through ninth grade, then joined the class of 1934 at Oakwood High School in Dayton, Ohio. He was an excellent student and a varsity track and field athlete. He spent his childhood summers at Camp Algonquin on Burt Lake, Mich., and at his family's summer home in Bay View, Mich. These were among the happiest days of his life, furthering his interest in nature and the joys of camaraderie.

In 1934, Bob set off by train for Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., where he developed personally, intellectually, and politically. He found lifelong friends among the "Russell Sage Six," named in honor of their freshman dorm. Under the instruction of inspiring teachers, Bob's passion for literature grew, as did his anti-isolationist political views. In 1937, Bob met his wife-to-be, Mary Bishop of Brooklyn, N.Y., a sophomore at Smith College. A very different young man from the one who had arrived by train in 1934, Bob graduated from Dartmouth in 1938 with a Bachelor's degree in English. On August 3, 1940, Bob and Mary were married in the
Congregational Church in Waterford, Maine, where her family had a summer home. Bob enrolled at Harvard to pursue graduate studies in English, and the couple settled in Cambridge, Mass. On Dec. 18, 1941, eleven days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Susan, their first child, was born. Feeling the call to duty, Bob joined the Army in 1942. He served as an Intelligence officer with the Army Air Force, 7th Battalion, in Saipan and Okinawa, achieving the rank of Captain and was awarded three battle stars on his Asiatic-Pacific Theater ribbon. Bob described his four years of service in World War II as "intense."

In 1946, the family, at last reunited, moved to Delaware, Ohio, where Bob joined the faculty of Ohio Wesleyan University and completed his Ph.D. in English at the Ohio State University. During the 18 years Bob taught at Ohio Wesleyan, the family settled and grew. Their son, Robert, was born in 1947, and Carolyn, their third, in 1951. The family spent a year in England in 1954-55, where Bob conducted research for his first book on British poetry, published in 1961. Another year in England in 1961-62 yielded a second book on the work of British poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Ready for a new adventure, the family went west in 1965. Bob briefly occupied an administrative position at the University of California, San Bernardino, and in 1966 accepted a position in the English Department at Washington State University in Pullman, teaching and serving as Director of Graduate Studies.

In the early seventies, Bob and Mary returned to New England, where they lived in Haverhill, N.H., and Norwich, Vt. Bob, retired from academic life, had a rare book business in Hanover, N.H., and Mary took a position as associate editor of the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine.

For over 35 years, Bob, Mary, and their children had returned again and again for summers at the family home in Waterford, and finally Bob and Mary retired there in 1982. The next 19 years were among the happiest of their lives.

In 2001, Bob and Mary moved to Piper Shores retirement community in Scarborough, returning often to Waterford for family gatherings, until Mary's death in 2008. In 2013, Bob moved to Assisted Living at Piper Shores, where he found comfort and companionship among an extraordinarily caring staff. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren visited often, spending as much time as possible with him right up to the moment of his death.

Robert is survived by his daughter Susan and her husband William Nelson of Madison, Wis., son Robert of Waterford, and daughter Carolyn of San Mateo, Calif. He is also survived by five grandchildren, Brook Steingass and his wife Linda of Madison, Wis., Kayvon Ross of Cambridge, Mass., Caitlin Ross Bailey of Oakland, Calif., Ruffin Ross Bailey of Fairfax, Calif., and Eli Ross of Waterford; two great-grandchildren, Oak and June Steingass, of Madison, Wis.; and nephews Jim Bishop and his husband Steve Ryan of Saco, and Stanley Bishop and his wife Ann, of Falmouth.
Paul Brians (1968-2008)

This was a year marked by many visits from friends and relatives. We love having people in our home and showing them around our beautiful island. Jana Argersinger spent a few days with us early in the summer and Megan came out from New York at the end, joining us for the annual neighborhood Labor Day potluck party which this year involved four families this year. Our latest visitors were Yolanda Schwager and her husband from Munich. Yolanda spent two years in Pullman on a professorial exchange in Foreign Languages many years ago.

I’ve been doing a lot of photography, mostly with my a new camera—a Canon 5D Mark III full-frame SLR that’s so heavy I got “golfer’s elbow” holding it up for three hours at a fundraising event for the Land Trust. The camera is letting me do much better work and is a treat to work with, if not—at four lbs—to carry.

I was hired in September to shoot a B&B for its owner to use in her online ads. Among many other events, I photographed most of the monthly volunteer weed pulls on Land Trust-protected properties. It’s a real challenge to capture people in motion in shaded woods punctuated by shafts of bright light and most shots seem to involve people’s butts as they bend over.

I was the official photographer for the local garden tour this summer, and sixteen of my shots appear in the current issue slick magazine West Sound Home & Garden.

During the winter I decided to photograph the sun shining on something here on the island every day it was possible and post the results on Facebook to remind everyone that our weather is not all gray and gloomy at that time of year. It was an exciting project that prompted me to experiment with a wide variety of subjects and techniques. This example shows the last rays of the sun lighting up the tips of the big trees in our yard at the end of January, 2015.

I’ve spent much of the year preparing for a major photo exhibit at Bainbridge Performing Arts this coming November.

I continue to serve as the audio-visual support person for our Photo Club, pleading in vain most of the year for someone else to agree to serve as backup. Finally I created detailed illustrated instructions and had someone make a video that convinced two of the other members to step up.

The big news in the garden is that we had our enormous laurel hedge removed, uncovering a vast area we’ll be working for some years to replant with more interesting species. Part of the new space is devoted to a labyrinth Paula created based on the one at Chartres. Many of her friends donated stones over the course of last year. It’s been quite a hit.
My “forest floor garden” is in its second year—half a dozen native species planted under the big trees in our front yard. It will take a few years to make a real carpet, but I’m enjoying the process.

I gave some talks at the Senior Center, the most successful of which involved my slide show of wildflowers on Bainbridge. There was a good-sized crowd, probably partly because I was a last-minute substitute for a better-known lecturer.

The need to save up for a roof replacement in the near future plus various other unexpected expenses have put a distinct crimp in our travel plans, though we hope to make to Italy next summer.

We did make an enjoyable car trip to Northern California in October to join Paula’s cousins and their families for a baby shower. I made a series of shots during the trip depicting the drought. I created a slideshow of the images that you can view on YouTube.

We continue to enjoy Island Theater play-reading potlucks, and Paula had a terrific time Brilliantly playing supporting roles in Bainbridge Performing Arts productions of *Amadeus* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

She continues to sing with the Amabile choral group and also writes eloquent and well-researched notes for their concerts.

We’ve made good friends with our new next-door neighbors, the Sigmonds, and have enjoyed sharing holidays, hikes, meals, movies, and other activities with them.

My weekly “Common Errors in English Usage” podcast with my editor, Tom Sumner, via Skype has been a lot of fun, attracting a small audience which continues to grow. It’s an opportunity for me to discuss all kinds of subjects, including Dostoyevsky’s *Notes from Underground* and musings on the names “Trump” and “Hillary.”

Best wishes to all of you from us.

Paul Brians

Hi, everyone,

I was saddened this year by the passing of Shirley Price and Bill Hirschfeld. I always considered Shirley much more than a friend and co-worker. She was a mentor to me—in many more areas of my life than just my career.

Dutch and I have just returned from wonderful trip to New York City, thanks to friends who invited us to their timeshare. While there, we also connected with friends we had met in Mexico. We had great weather, theater, and pizza. We hit many of the museums, as well. We put in several invigorating miles walking the city. On the few times we rode the subway, I discovered that I’ve become the little old lady who causes everyone to jump up out of their seat. I turn to look behind me to see who might need a seat and when I turn back, they’re looking at me! On reflection, it’s pretty good that I don’t feel as aged as I must look.

Our garden is having an unusual year. Things we normally grow are not doing so well, like green beans, pumpkin (which shriveled up before putting out one blossom), and edible pea pods. The tomatoes have withered leaves, but they’re still popping out tomatoes, which are much easier to find without so many leaves. And we successfully grew several eggplants. That’s what I’m hawking on the corner this year.

I mentioned last year about the coming light rail station that’s causing several other changes in our neighborhood. The latest change is several arterials being put on “road diets,” which means the lanes are made narrower and half the parking is lost so dedicated, safe bike lanes can be constructed. Additionally, discussion is underway about reducing traffic speeds in the city. There’s some grumbling, but the bike riders are happy.

Dutch and I both volunteered at the LPGA golf tournament held in our area last June. It was interesting to see how those professional women golfers dealt with crowds of fans. The vast majority of them were generous with their time, especially with the younger fans.

Kecia and Chad are both doing well. We see Chad almost every week and he takes care of our house when we travel. Our youngest grandchild, Evelyn, started kindergarten this year.

I’ve just realized it has been 30 years since I left the English Department. I spent 16 formative (for me), years there. Where did the time go? I think of many of you often, especially at this time of year when we’ve had the “call for papers.” However, life is still good and we hope you all remain healthy and happy.

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Diane Gillespie (WSU 1975-2001)
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We’re still on the move: a riverboat trip from Lyon to Marseilles, then on to Barcelona last fall; time with Dick’s relatives in New Hampshire during the December holidays; a ecological trip to Costa Rica in February, a Woolf Conference trip for me to Leeds UK this past June to present a paper; and a drive up into Canadian wine country in July. Traveling retains its charms once we arrive at our destinations, but getting there these days, especially by plane, is increasingly daunting and uncomfortable. We plan to compromise in
December by flying to Quebec City for “Christmas at the Frontenac” with Road Scholar but then returning across Canada via Via Rail. It’s an early celebration of Dick’s 80th birthday and our 40th wedding anniversary, both coming up in January.

Dick and I are relieved to be in our last year as co-presidents of the Palouse Dance Club. Our tradition is a catered dinner followed by dancing to live music. It’s increasingly difficult, however, to find bands that like to play a variety of ballroom dance music. We may have to dance to more monotonous beats, or begin to use recorded ballroom music, as do young people who are parts of the current resurgence of interest in it.

We continue to support the arts—especially the Washington Idaho Symphony and, most recently, the proposed Great Community Hall portion of the new Museum of Art building at WSU. So much building on campus recently has been for athletics, it’s nice to anticipate the ground-breaking in October for the museum project.

Dick recently retired after twenty years on the Board of the Gladish Community and Cultural Center. The organization put on a really lovely retirement party for him. He still works on projects there, but no longer has to attend Board meetings. He’s still shooting competitively with the Troy/Deary Gun Club, but this summer has taken up golf more seriously.

My Pleiades Investment Club, in our 19th year, is happily ongoing in restructured form. I also have my “tread-mill book club,” what I call the group of women who exercise together three times/week at Anytime Fitness. A recent work-out for my brain is relearning some of the music I used to play on the piano. We’ve had our antique 1908 Fischer completely reconditioned so it’s playable again.

We continue to enjoy our little raised-bed “farm” with good crops this summer of raspberries, string beans, and summer squash. Our experiments with cucumbers have produced only bitter ones, but the tomatoes are beginning to recover from radical temperature changes.

May we all survive the current endless and bizarre election cycle. Thanks, Paul, for keeping us informed. Alex Hammond (1975-2009)

Barbara and I spent another year on Pullman’s College Hill with its always-lively student population, grateful to have a reasonably quiet group of coeds in the house across the street during the last academic year (unfortunately, Bob and Kathleen McLean’s old place up the hill had far rowdier tenants in 2015-16). My work as treasurer for the College Hill Association goes on, as do its efforts to save the neighborhood's historic district. The latter added four additional houses to the city's historic registry during the year, with Bruce and Loretta Anawalt's old home currently scheduled for this fall, as is ours in the near future.

My work with the Whitman County Democrats included helping with the astonishing turnout of Bernie supporters for the spring primaries, although the Democrats are now struggling a bit with the effects of the Trump campaign on Eastern Washington (as you may know, Trump was enthusiastically endorsed by our representative in Congress and by WSU’s football coach, and is now having a wall built in his honor by the WSU Young Republicans).

Barbara found time for her book and cooking clubs even while she took on expanded board service with the League of Women Voters and the Leaseholders Association at Idaho's Heyburn State Park, where we have enjoyed owning the old Lou McNew cabin for over a decade.

Our travels this year were rich but limited. In New Mexico, we toured Los Alamos and Taos and Santa Fe after a family celebration in Albuquerque and traveled to California multiple times on visits to our son Alec and his wife—as I've mentioned before, both work in L.A.'s film industry. Alec is currently in Serbia as production designer for a TV pilot being filmed in Belgrade, not an easy commute for someone with family in California. Our grandsons are now 16 and 13 and continue to astonish us with the levels at which they read and do math and music. We managed to see our daughter Elizabeth briefly last summer as she transitioned, via guiding work in Alaska, to a new position as co-director for an ecological tour firm in La Paz on Baja California's Sea of Cortez. We hope to join her there with other California family members this Christmas.

Some transitions during the past year were not easy to deal with. We returned to California to do a memorial for my older brother, lost to cancer in June, and again in August when Barbara helped a younger brother move back
back from Ecuador after a health emergency. On a much different level, I mourned the loss of a much-repaired surfboard, owned since 1960, when I managed to talk a thrift store into accepting it.

Finally, Barbara continued her small private practice as a psychologist while offering supervision and training seminars at the WSU Counseling Center. And I managed to go on with my work on Poe with new aid from WSU’s new Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation: the slow preparation of a guide to the Poe source collection at the library’s Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections; evaluations of submissions for two Poe journals; and delivery of papers at conferences in San Francisco and (forthcoming in October) Savannah. We are not finding retirement boring.

Until next year, Alex (and Barbara)

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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I see I have almost missed the deadline for my annual letter to all of you folks, so this will be a short one. We have fairly little news this year. We still enjoy our Pullman home, just down the street from the Coliseum, and find it handy to attend some of the presentations and fairs there. Many students from the nearby student housing area walk past our house on the way to and from classes and games, and the beginning of each new school year is always a nostalgic reminder that I would still like to be in the classroom despite the comforts and compensations of retirement.

I spend a great deal of time reading and writing and have just published an article on Lawrence's essays about Native Americans, “From the Pueblos to Cambridge.” It was my paper for the last national MLA Convention (January 2016, held in Austin this time), and I was happy that it was requested for publication by Archiv for Vol. 253.2; Fall, 2016. It was interesting to learn that the journal Archiv das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen (from the University of Bamberg) is believed to be the oldest multi-lingual philological journal in Europe. This paper and expanded article recalled to me my research days at pueblos and elsewhere, especially Taos Pueblo, for my Cambridge edition of Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays, which for the first time contained all of the Pueblo sketches. It also recalled the days of writing and campaigning to get the Lawrence Ranch, near Taos, on the National Register of Historic Places.

I have guest-edited another international English-language issue of a literary journal from Seoul National University, along with Michael Bell (UK) and Nak-chung Paik (Seoul). We included contributions from UK, the US, Prague, Belarus, Italy, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere.

Dave and I both have an interest in genealogy, and we found that the Victorian writer Elizabeth Gaskell wrote about some of my remote ancestors in the area of Crosthwaite Church in the English Lake Country. (This church was attended by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and Southey is buried there.) So I have been working on some of Gaskell's novels and short stories lately. I also belong to several literary groups besides the Lawrence Society: the Trollope Society, the Melville Society, and the Kafka Association. I have written a bit on each, in the past and recently. I do wish I could have my career all over again! But health would not permit it! We have travelled little in recent months, except to Spokane medical facilities!

I think I have mentioned that Dave's adopted son Mike lives in nearby Palouse with his family. So late August and September involve us in the fun of outfitting young Katie for another year of classes. Young David Michael (named for Dave) has graduated from high school and started college already.

I wish good health and happiness to you all and to your families!
Affectionate good wishes, Virginia Hyde
Dear All,

Another year older and deeper in debt? Not with TIAA/CREF, for which we are grateful. We’ve also been doing much better health-wise since the last newsletter; blood levels and creatinine levels are in an acceptable range. The big drawback is that at age 80, as of September 6, I can’t do what I did at 70 or even 75. But then again, when one hits the age of 80 it is no longer necessary to work at saving the world.

It’s usual for retirees to travel and we’ve done much the same. We had a week in London and two weeks in Oxford. The most frustrating time was at the BL and Bodleian trying to get use the new computer systems. With all the hacking, libraries are finally improving security, but that means innocents like me have to go through all sorts of protocols to get on line. Our Oxford friends are diminishing, but we still have academic and non-academic people whom we enjoy being with. In London the biggest surprise was our visit to the Dulwich Picture Gallery. How could we have missed that lovely place for so long? The building itself, a John Soane creation, and the choice of 17th–18th century paintings gathered around 1800 by collectors for a Polish king who was deposed before he received the collection, are first-rate.

We’ve always wanted to see what Prince Rupert was like so we took a Canadian trip for the fun of it and were intrigued by our visits to cities we barely knew existed: Kamloops, Prince George and the active Prince Rupert with its magnificent museum of the city itself and first nations artifacts. We still make the usual trips to the East 85th and Madison condo, to Swarthmore, to Anna Maria Island in Florida, to the Priest Lake cabin, to Wisconsin to visit my sister, and to Seattle for visits with friends.

On the professional side, I just received offprints of the last article, “James Molloy and Sales of Recusant Books to the United States,” in the summer 2016 issue of The Catholic Historical Review, which brings to a close my academic career. A copy is yours for the asking. It’s about a secular priest who left his job as a librarian at a Catholic school and took thousands of recusant books with him. He made a good living from sales to US libraries.

As to the future, we have trips planned to southern California in January, and I’d like to go to Iceland with members of the Rico’s philosophical club in late May – the latter may not happen, but a group of us are making arrangements anyway. The key, as Robert Burton well advised, is to keep busy, and whether things happen or not because of our labors is irrelevant.

We wish you all a happy 2016-17, and again we thank Paul for issuing the newsletter.

Nick and Karen Kiessling

Jillian Ho, Nick, Karen
Howard McCord (1960 – 1971)

Jenny and I attended the L’Intime Festival in Namur, Belgium, at the end of August, 2015. Parts of my novel were read by an actor, and I answered questions through two interlocutors-translators for nearly an hour. Eighteen authors were featured during the three day festival. Laird Hunt was the only other American writer. I was very happy to meet him, as he wrote one of the earliest reviews of my novel when it came out in 1997. He had bought an extra copy back then, and brought it with him for me to sign, saying he thought that someday we would meet.

We then traveled by the fast train to Paris from Brussels, with noticeable security. We had a lovely apartment just above a Metro stop in the Marais with tall windows that opened above the wide sidewalk there, and a wonderful view of Parisian street life. We spent ten very happy days there, and met with my friends, translators, publishers, and the staff of La Femelle du Requin, who interviewed me for several hours one day, and led to a multi-essay feature in the spring issue of the magazine, pp. 80 to 113, No. 45.

The English script for the motion picture to be made of my novel is nearly done, and I hope production can start next year. Making a movie is a very complex business!

It was a delight to see my friends again, and to have Jenny meet them. We wandered the Marais and Montmartre and had the delightful time I have come to expect from Paris.

The year since has been placid, though Spring brought some illness that has finally ended, and I am back to the gym with some regularity. I have been writing some small poems in the same key as The Thistlebone Poems of 2011. But where they are going is still happily unclear.

We enjoy our children, and their children, now eight in number, and our life in the Black Swamp, a piece of which remains as our near impenetrable back acre, full of whatever the swamp invites.

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Dear friends,

Thanks again to Paul for doing this; we always enjoy hearing what others are doing. I hope this finds everyone well.

This time last year we moved to a condo nearer to downtown San Diego, and thus most of the year has been taken up with remodeling and repairs. We hope we are done. It has taken a while to adjust to city living (read, the noise level), but the place finally feels like home; we are enjoying being within walking distance of Balboa Park (with all its museums and theaters) and many restaurants. We hardly use our car, and have discovered the joys of Uber.

I continue to work as Senior Editor for two book series and am enjoying tutoring international
students at San Diego State. I have also somehow wound up on an advisory board for a local choral group (interesting) and also on the HOA board of our condo (interesting in a different way, but I'm learning a lot). Doug and I continue to sing in several choirs, hoping that our voices hold up for yet another year.

Our travel this year has been constrained a bit because of the condo remodel, but we have managed to get to Portland, OR several times to see son Jon, his wife Shannah, and our granddaughter Paityn, now 4 1/2. I'll include a picture taken after her most recent dance recital, which was hilarious; you have not lived until you have seen half a dozen four-year-olds in pink tutus trying to coordinate the steps of a dance routine. One of the Portland trips included a wine tour of the Willamette Valley with old friends from graduate school days, folks who really know wine (which we do not). We are now fans of Oregon Pinot Noir. On this same trip we were able to see Alice Spitzer and Mike Owens and catch up on all their doings.

In other kid news, we enjoy spending time with daughter Alison and her partner Spencer, who live not far from us. Alison was nominated for a distinct honor recently: San Diego Woman of the Year. Since the other nominees are all CEOs of various local companies (or in one case, the president of a local university), it's even more impressive to us, since she works as the Director of Religious Education at a local Unitarian Church. Yes, we are very proud.

Since we didn't travel outside the country this year, we decided to vacation in San Diego instead, taking advantage of all those things we missed while traveling in previous years. The summer was full of chamber music events and a great choral festival. We have also enjoyed all the theater that San Diego has to offer, especially the Old Globe productions that are on their way to Broadway (like "Camp David").

This past December we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary, and in August celebrated the 50th anniversary of our time in Ethiopia with
the Peace Corps. Hard to believe it's been that long, although as I contemplate the difference between the political climate then and now, it makes me feel quite nostalgic for those bygone "Ask Not" days.

Greetings from house to house. If you are ever in the San Diego area, please let us know!

Greetings from a cooling western PA, and not a moment too soon, because August broke heat records. The almanacs, wooly caterpillars, and squirrels all predict a cold, cold winter. Right now it feels like it will be welcome.

Marcellus Shale and fracking issues continue in our area, and although we have had no problems with the well on the southern border of our community center property, we take water samples daily and continue to join neighbors in protesting Hillcorps efforts to bypass noise and lighting restrictions near their properties. The county is considering new noise restriction regulations, but efforts are hampered by the level of farm equipment noise.

I had a few health issues this year, but am fine now, still play keyboard for our congregational liturgies and hope to do so for as long as arthritic fingers allow. And Jeannette and I continue a subscription to the Pittsburgh Symphony, enjoy the Met in HD in Youngstown, and catch community theatre often.

Warm regards to all,
Barbara

Barbara Sitko 238 Meadowbrook Dr. New Wilmington PA 16142 sitko@wsu.edu
Cesar and I still reside in Pullman and we continue to travel whenever we can, as long as our legs allow us to walk.

Last September, 2015, we had a nerve-wracking experience in going to Barcelona to catch a Mediterranean cruise. Our flight from Pullman to Seattle was delayed for more than an hour and by the time we arrived in Seattle we had about 15 minutes to catch our flight to Amsterdam. We rushed to the Delta Airlines departure gate but upon arrival, nobody was at the gate although the TV monitor indicated that the plane was “Boarding.” Within a minute, the sign changed from “Boarding” to “Closed” and a Delta agent appeared telling us that we could no longer get on the plane but that she had a Plan B for us. She rebooked us for the flight to Amsterdam/Barcelona at a later time. The flights to Amsterdam and Barcelona were on time. However, we waited for 30 minutes at the Barcelona airport to pick up our luggage. When there was no sign of our luggage, we went to the lost luggage counter and to our relief, we were told that our luggage actually came on a flight that arrived three hours earlier. We then took a taxi and rushed to the cruise port. We were the last cruise passengers to check in and were finally able to board the ship 50 minutes before the scheduled departure. (Our travel brochure said that all passengers must be on board 2 hours before departure). All in all, aside from the harrowing experience in getting from Pullman to Barcelona, the cruise was very enjoyable.

We visited families and friends in the Philippines in October-November of 2015. We flew home to Pullman in late November to celebrate Thanksgiving with friends. We then spent Christmas in the San Francisco Bay Area with our daughters and their families.

We were back to the Philippines in February-March, 2016. This time, we were guests at the University of San Agustin in Iloilo, Philippines. Cesar was asked to present a lecture on Graduate Opportunities at WSU College of Veterinary Medicine. He made another presentation at Aklan State University, the only university in the Western Visayas provinces offering a degree in Veterinary Medicine.

In late June-July we travelled back to the Philippines to see if we can tolerate the hot and humid weather at that time of the year. It is the transition period from the dry to the wet rainy season. We did get a lot of rain, mainly in the afternoons and evenings, but were lucky not to encounter strong tropical depressions and typhoons. The “3-in-1” cherry tree I mentioned in last year’s newsletter gave us nearly 20 pounds this year. We took all the cherries we harvested to the Philippines. We gave each of our siblings’ families and close friends about 2 pounds for them to sample the cherries. It was the first time for most of them to taste fresh cherries and that was a big hit. My grandnephew, a first grader, even took six pieces to his school for his snack and was given a star for eating “Healthy Snack” that day.

In less than a week of this writing, we will be flying to Copenhagen and join Cesar’s brother and sister-in-law in a 12-day tour of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. We then will spend part of November-December in the Philippines but we will be back in the US for Christmas. We went to see daughter Pauline and her husband in late May and we will again see them together with our daughter Jennifer in the San Francisco Bay Area this Christmas.

Hard to believe that I have been retired 13 1/2 years! Even when health problems occur, I am still thankful that I am able to do many activities that I was not able to do while I was at work. I hope all of you are happy and in good health. Thank you, Paul, for taking care of the newsletter.