Chair’s Note

This year has been incredibly challenging, but I am proud to say that our faculty, staff, and students are meeting the challenges with grace, good will, and creativity.

Just before Spring Break, we received Governor Inslee’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order and had to suspend on-campus classes. Our faculty and students transitioned well to online teaching. Without physical access to our archives and libraries, we learned to rely even more on electronic resources. Ingenuity and dedication to excellence in education, research, and service were demonstrated department-wide.

Immediately before the broader shutdown, the editors of our undergraduate journal, *LandEscapes*, attended the Associated Writing Programs annual conference—the largest Creative Writing Conference in the country. Despite the circumstances, they managed to produce a beautiful edition of the journal in April.

In support for our community in Pullman, Linda Russo, director of Creative Writing, organized an online fundraiser for baristas at the local coffee shop who have hosted our Open Mic for nearly seven years and are now unemployed or underemployed. And, although no recognition ceremonies could be held, we were honored with a record number of departmental, college, and University awards.

The following month, in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, which highlighted the heart-breaking pattern of violence against people of color, we responded in various ways to the Black Lives Matter movement. Our new director of Composition, Melissa Nicolas, worked with graduate students and faculty to craft a statement and to meet weekly to read and discuss anti-racist pedagogy. We hope to continue these conversations in the fall, expanding them to include our undergraduates.

When the pandemic ends, we look forward to resuming our plans for Summer Experimental Theatre, English Club (reading groups, attendance at community theatre performances, movies, parties, and more), Visiting Writers Series, and other activities. Meanwhile, our English Club advisor, Rachael Wolney, has agreed to offer online opportunities for English Club members this fall.

Take care, and stay healthy.

Sincerely,
Donna L. Potts
Editor’s Note

This year’s contributors seem to be the mostly the same as last year’s. Welcome back—and we hope to hear from more of you all in the future.

The newsletter is dominated by the last half of the year that’s passed, of course (wishing it were really past). But there’s still a lot of good cheer and no retiree obituaries this time.

Special thanks to those of you that submitted photos, which keep us just that much more connected.

Best wishes to you all,

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Paul Brians (1968–2008)

Things have changed so much since March that last fall seems like a different world. I was then running all over the island frantically taking photos for a new edition of Walks on Bainbridge. I had been disappointed by the monochrome reproduction of my pictures in the second edition (I call the look “five shades of gray”) and was thrilled when the book’s designer recruited me at the last minute to shoot new ones for the expanded 3rd edition, to be printed in color by the same Chinese press that printed last year’s Natural Bainbridge.

The spectacular new book finally arrived in July smack in the middle of the pandemic but managed to become a bestseller at local stores even though most people were sheltering in place. Recently I began posting supplementary photos on Facebook, one walk at a time. It’s nice to finally be able to share these shots; and it’s a way to keep promoting the book, whose profits go to the Bainbridge Island Land Trust.

In March Bainbridge Youth Services decided to decorate their offices with a number of my landscapes as large canvas prints. I got to preview two of them on my front porch before the pandemic shut down their operations. I hope some day to be able to see them in place.

The other big personal event for me in November and December was cataract surgery, followed recently by an operation to eliminate an eye misalignment that previously could be corrected only with expensive prisms. I’m delighted that I can now walk, drive, watch TV—do most things other than read and work on the computer—without glasses, with everything bright and clear.

We feel really fortunate to be living on this beautiful island right now. Infection rates have been very low, with only one Covid-19 death at the very beginning. At first we worried that the flood of new Amazon employees that recently moved here might spread Seattle’s serious infection rate to us, but most of the people who used to commute by ferry are now working at home.
As I write the smoke which had wafted our way from Oregon and California has finally lifted and let us go outdoors safely again. Now we can resume our daily walks, including in the lovely park at the other end of our block.

Our current read-aloud book is selections from Samuel Pepys’ diary, which seems eerily pertinent containing as it does accounts of a spectacular comet, a raging plague, a huge fire and the disastrous government surrounding a dissolute, profligate, self-centered new head of state (Charles II).

We’ve continued to socialize a bit with our neighbors following social distancing guidelines, like gathering around a fire pit in widely spaced chairs. One younger family across the street volunteered to fetch our groceries for us: each family orders from Safeway online, then they drive to the store and wait while employees load the bags for both families in their SUV.

I was scheduled to have an exhibit of my candid shots of people around the world in April, but with the venue closing down it became an online show co-sponsored by our photo club and the local senior center. [Click here to view it.]

I’ve given three online talks so far sponsored the center, participated via Zoom in Land Trust committee meetings, with Paula did one play reading with a local group, and participated in some Facetime chats with distant friends of ours.

Paula’s been doing remote exercise and renaissance dance classes in her office as well as participating in a virtual choir led by our friend Anne Pell, who moved to Italy a few years ago and formed “Singers Without Borders,” composed mostly of people she used to conduct here on the island.

She’s also been enjoying socializing safely with her former WSU library colleague Tina Frolund, who first introduced us to Bainbridge Island and recently moved back here with her husband.

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We get our nightly fix of anti-Trump satire through Stephen Colbert and Seth Meyers on YouTube, and last night greatly enjoyed the brilliant performances in Paul Rudnick’s Coastal Elites. Fierce, funny political satire for our times. Highly recommended.
The Pandemic—What is there left to say about this? Here’s my first, and ineffective, attempt at making face masks without using a sewing machine: three ingredients: shoulder pads, rubber bands and a paperclip. (Is it correct to use 2 colons in one sentence? Probably not. I’m retired and I care only because I’m writing to all you folks. My standards are on the slippery slope.)

Forty-eight years of marriage and seventeen years of retirement are great preparation for a pandemic. We don’t need to be anywhere but home on a regular basis, we don’t have to figure out how to get by on less money, and we have no serious health issues. Golfing is a great social-distancing activity. If someone gets too close, you just stick your club out at them and push them away—well, maybe not. However, an outstretched arm and golf club are just about 6 feet.

Family connections are harder. Our son, Chad, works in a grocery store and is being careful not to bring any exposure into our home. In order to see him, we’ve been having him for dinner, placing him at one end of our 6-foot table and we huddled together at the other, windows open behind him and a fan blowing at him. Fortunately, he thinks that’s funny.

Our daughter, Kecia, was laid off from facilitating convention planning. However, over the past few years, she’s worked toward and achieved certification as a Life Coach and has several clients. Her kids’ school is online right now and that’s been a little difficult, but still early in the year. We’re trying to connect with them in active outside games, but right now the wildfire smoke has closed Seattle parks. Their other grandma is older than us and has underlying health issues. Jae, their dad, is her main support for doctors’ appointments, groceries, etc., so any personal connections we make could potentially impact her. So, no hugs with our grandchildren.

Last fall, Dutch and I spent five weeks in Italy—one in Milan and the rest at an agriturismo in Tuscany, located, we learned, just a mile from the home of friends we met in Mexico. The agriturismo had advertised as English speaking, but the host, who spoke English, was actually in Rome rather than Tuscany. When someone speaks to me in another language, I automatically revert to Spanish, which has some fortunate similarities. We nodded, shrugged, smiled and pointed a lot. We also participated in their grape harvest with all the neighbors. There’s nothing romantic about winemaking—it is hard, physical labor!

We drove our rental car around to Montalcino, Montepulciano, Assisi, and everywhere. We had some great food and wine. Months after we came home, we received a traffic violation in the mail, photos included, for something we didn’t remember doing. It’s not like we’re wild and crazy drivers.
I’m wondering if this photo from an Etruscan museum shows the origins of the ten-gallon hat!

Our annual Mexican trip was as wonderful as always. It’s fantastic to get away from the grey, dark winter months here in Seattle. Next year, however, may not happen because of the pandemic. I love the irony that Mexico has closed the border to us. We have had other road trips cancelled this year, as well. We will dearly miss all our vacation friends.

We hope you are well,

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Diane Gillespie (WSU 1975-2001)

We did some traveling before Covid-19 caused all the cancellations. It seems long ago now, but in October 2019, we went with Road Scholar to the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lakes, Ontario. We stayed in Niagara Falls and every day went to the Shaw Festival theatre sites to see another play either by Shaw or one set during his era, tour back-stage operations, and hear a variety of production people—from actors and stage managers to set designers. The lectures and productions were excellent.

In February 2020, like the year before, Dick and I drove to the Methow Valley, stayed at the Mazama Country Inn, and cross-country skied. We had icy conditions, high winds, and sore muscles, but we still had a good time.

In June 2019, I presented a paper in Cincinnati at the Twenty-ninth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf. Appropriate for a “Social Justice” theme, my paper was “‘The being grows rings’: Leonard and Virginia Woolf on Aging/Ageism.” An expanded version has been accepted for a selected papers volume, but various shutdowns have delayed publication.

The June 2020 Woolf Conference, scheduled for the University of SD in Vermillion, was postponed until 2021. I’m currently turning my accepted paper into a longer essay to submit to a journal. Not able to meet at the conference, some of us “Woolf pack” scholars get together twice a month on Zoom.

Many of Dick’s and my other activities have been cancelled—Palouse Dance Club dances and Washington Idaho Symphony concerts, most notably. We’ve been involved, however, in the launching of a new nonprofit, the Palouse Performing Arts Fund, a joint effort by the Gladish Community and Cultural Center and the Washington Idaho Symphony to remodel the large
auditorium and adjacent spaces where the Symphony will resume its concerts.

I’m currently exercising by gardening and was walking in the neighborhood until the smoke from the fires rolled in, but I’m missing my buddies at Anytime Fitness. Pullman is experiencing a surge in the virus numbers due to returning WSU student parties so we continue to stay close to home.

My Pleiades Investment Club is meeting successfully on Zoom, although one of our founding members, JoWashburn, has just died.

Dick, in addition to golfing and gardening, has been making attractive small wooden and fabric chests for a variety of uses. I’m using one as a tea chest.

Life goes on for us in our small eye of relative calm in the midst of swirling national and international storms of controversy, propaganda and violence, physical and economic suffering, and threats to life on the planet as a whole. Never was casting a ballot more important.

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Alex Hammond (1975–2009)

Before the pain and suffering of the pandemic erupted, Barbara and I traveled for visits with almost all members of our far-flung family save those spread across Canada. In 2019, after enjoying Thanksgiving in northern California with Barbara’s brother and his wife and children in their new home near Chico (they lost their prior one to the 2017 Paradise fire), and after Barbara’s helping her sister recuperate in Merced from a major back operation, we celebrated Christmas with our son Alec and his wife Amy and their sons, as well as Amy’s mother and our daughter Elizabeth and her partner Carlos, in Los Angeles. The visits were splendid even if the long-distance drives grow more difficult each year.

Then in early February 2020, we traveled to Puebla, Mexico, for a massive family reunion of the descendants of my mother and her six siblings, four of whom permanently settled in the United States in the 1920s. Elizabeth and Carlos were again able to join the party, as were two Hammond nephews and three of their children from California and some 75 first and second cousins, partners, and offspring from three generations of the Mexican and U.S. branches of the family.

The reunion was hosted by my first cousin Alejandro Paez, and only the family genealogist (the son of another first cousin Alejandra) and...
Elizabeth seemed able to identify everyone who gathered for four days of wonderful food and drink and very loud conversation in the city’s old town center. For my part, I struggled to keep track of just those bearing versions of my first name, the not-inconsiderable number who share it with my mother’s father and beloved older brother.

We extended this trip through the remainder of February with ten days in Ecuador, touring Quito and near-by Inca sites in the Andes with Barbara’s brother. The last week we spent getting to know his adopted city of Cuenca and its expatriate community. Among the many highlights of this month were returning to the National Museum of Anthropology on our way through Mexico City, discovering the art of Oswaldo Guayasamin in Quito, and eating an astonishing range of new foods for the first time.

Our return through California in early March featured cities and airports closing down behind us as the pandemic spread—at the same time, our son Alec finished up design work for movie locations in Japan and barely managed to fly out of Tokyo before travel to the U.S. was halted. Since then, we have been sheltering in place at our home in Pullman and our Idaho lake cabin, having far-too-few distanced backyard visits with friends, and enduring far-too-many Zoom meetings with our various boards and professional groups.

Painfully, Pullman restaurants managed by people we know may not survive the economic downturn, but most friends have stayed healthy in spite of this fall’s sudden spread of the virus from student partying of the virus in our College Hill neighborhood. Reserving more details until next year’s newsletter, thanking Paul again for doing them, and mourning the death of RGB.

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Dear Fellow Retirees,

Thanks again to Paul Brians for distributing yet another newsletter.

As I look out my study window, I can barely make out Bryan Tower through the smoke. It is worse today, Sept. 18, than when it began, on Sept. 12. We will cancel a trip to Priest Lake, scheduled for today, because the weather up there is exactly the same as it is here.

Our year went well until about March 1, when the implications of the COVID-19 invasion became clear. Our plans changed abruptly. No trip to Florida in April, to Wisconsin in May, to England in August, and or New York City in October. Karen’s service on the regional and state boards went from face to face meetings to Zoom. Her completion of the study, Women in the Government in Whitman County, for the League of Women Voters, was completed just before the fires, so she was able to deliver the results to all the incorporated cities in the county. We don’t know what happened to the copy delivered to the city clerk in Maldon, which lost its library, city hall, and post office, about a week after she delivered the document. Because of the virus, decisions on two projects that I was working on came to a

complete standstill; both depended upon libraries in England which have been closed for almost six months.

How are we getting on in these depressing times? Not too badly. We have Kanopy, Acorn, three public television stations, and lots of mysteries -- Bruised Books has remained open, with restrictions. We can also check out books from Neill Public Library by ordering on-line and then driving to the library parking area where a masked figure will come out with our books in a clear plastic bag. We can walk and go to Planet Fitness. I bike to Moscow, and even play outdoor pickleball while all university gyms are closed. The Tuesday and Friday afternoon philosophical/theological discussions still take place at bars which have outdoor seating. At our house we meet one or two people at a time, on our deck – nothing inside. Everybody we know has been careful about masking and keeping distance and we have disinfectant dispensers all over the place. So far, good. The students returned about three weeks ago and the number of infected rose from about 200 to over 1000. We stay clear of the campus.

And the mail and email continues, so we get jury notices, letters from friends, and will, we hope get ballots within a few days. Today I received an e-mail from Michael Kramp (Ph.D., 2000). He and Rita Jones (Ph.D. 2001) are doing very well at Lehigh University in northeastern Pennsylvania. We also hear from Hongbo Tan (Ph.D 1989, now an executive at M. Greenberg’s Starr Insurance Companies), and Bill Gruber (Ph.D. 1980, Emery University), who moved to Moscow after his retirement and resurfaced at Virginia Hyde’s funeral in January 2019.

Before the virus, we regularly convened with former colleagues, Nellie and Cesar Zamora, Stan and Lucy Linden (our neighbors), and Al and Jane von Frank. Good friends still active in the department, Will Hamlin and Michael Hanly, are within a few years of retirement. The younger members in Avery Hall are strangers to us.

The Department of English itself is changing. The focus before my retirement in 2000 had been exclusively on literature, but even at that time many literature courses had included a component of race, class or gender. At the same time the field of Rhetoric loomed much larger and has produced a growing number of Ph.D. students with the emphasis on rhetoric. These students have gotten jobs. Now digital humanities has become so important that a group of specialists may leave to form an academic unit of its own. It certainly is not the department I remember. I believe that the current chair, Donna Potts is well suited to lead the department in these times. Karen and I have met with her more than once and she is impressive.

We send greeting to all and our most sincere thanks for the joys of your friendship since we arrived on the Palouse in 1967.

Take care,

Nick and Karen Kiessling

Note: Nick sent me the following note earlier:

Linda Sue Emery, Ph.D. 1992, died in March. Al von Frank directed her dissertation, The Feminization of Christ: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Use of the Bible. Her closest friend at WSU was Shelley Spear, also deceased. She had taught for a time at Boise State. This is the only "obituary" I could find. She certainly deserved a bit more.

“Emery, Linda Sue, 68, of Boise, Idaho passed away March 27, 2020.”

I will be 88 in a few short weeks, and this has been the weirdest year of them all.

Like millions of others, we have been pretty much housebound since winter. We watch a lot of tv, read many books, and I put together a new book of poetry which will be out shortly. It has 45 poems and some prose, and will be titled *Ebb & Flow*.

We have escaped weird and destructive weather, and smoke in the air. Three of our children and four grandchildren on the coasts of WA and OR, are dealing with smoke. Our family in Shaker Heights and Crystal Lake are fine. And Robert has been teaching one in-person class as well as video classes.

Wood County has had over 1200 Covid-19 cases and 60+ deaths.

I am writing a requested piece for *Paideuma* on the wars in my life, and am about finished with the Crucero War in Mexico, Catholics fighting anticlerical laws and oppression.

And I have one small tale to tell about the time my ship, the aircraft carrier ESSEX, was sent from Subic Bay to deliver atomic bombs to be used in the battle at Dienbienphu, in February, 1954. John Foster Dulles was pushing for this, but cooler heads prevailed, and the big bombs in their containers were removed from the hanger deck, and the Marine guards and their tommy guns were sent back down to their quarters. It was all very secret until 1968. (For more, see John Prados, *The Sky Would Fall*, 1983).

I hope my old compadres from the 1960s are doing well! And the newbies, too!

Susan H. McLeod (1986-2001)

Dear friends,

I said in last year’s newsletter that 2019 had been uneventful, but in late October I was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of endometrial cancer, which made the year more eventful than I would have wished. I spent some time after the diagnosis researching this sort of cancer (depressing), then joined an on-line support group through the American Cancer Society (encouraging). Fortunately I had wonderful care from Kaiser: I was scheduled for surgery as fast as they could get me in and received frequent calls to check on me once I was home. Our retirement community staff and friends were also incredibly supportive. The pathology report came in just before Christmas saying the tumor was so small and had been caught so early that I did not need
chemo or radiation and I was declared cancer free. It was a celebratory Christmas.

My New Year’s resolution was to focus more on self-care. I have enjoyed my editorship of the Perspectives on Writing Series, and am particularly proud of some of the books I’ve midwifed over the years, especially the award-winning books by WSU’s own Asao Inoue (for example, https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/inoue/). But I felt that it was now time to turn the job over to some up-and-coming scholars. I already had a very capable co-editor, Rich Rice of Texas Tech, whom we brought on board a few years ago when the general editor and I agreed that the workload was more than one person could handle. Rich and I brought in two associate editors and after they had taken on various tasks, I bowed out with the exalted title of Consulting Editor. No one has consulted me about anything so far, and I’m content with that and with leaving the project in very capable hands.

Although I’m not doing much professionally these days, I am certainly not bored. The Covid-19 shutdown has given Doug and me the opportunity to actually start reading the books stacked here and there around our apartment; I belong to two book groups that meet on Zoom for discussion. In both groups we are trying to educate ourselves more deeply about racial issues; in one we are discussing The New Jim Crow, which I recommend.

I’m taking Zoom courses offered here, one on ancient Greece and another on the history of the oldest biblical texts. Our community is full of retired professionals, many of them college teachers, so there are some great discussions. One of the things that gives me the most satisfaction is chairing the scholarship committee here. The residents offer substantial scholarships to both employees and the children of employees through our foundation; almost all the recipients are young people who are the first in their families to go to college. It’s inspiring to hear what they plan for their futures.

Our kids are doing well; we keep up with them via FaceTime. Our son and his family in Portland, OR, are experiencing the terrible air quality that many of you in the Pacific Northwest are also dealing with, so we have been in touch with them often. They are not in the path of the flames but have many friends who have been evacuated. School has started for our granddaughter; she is learning virtually, like almost every other schoolchild these days. Luckily her mom works for the school district, so she can work from home and also keep an eye on Paityn. (I feel for the working parents with young children at home right now!)

Daughter Alison is also working from home and doing well. She recently got involved in an interesting project: A friend from her WSU days, Chris Klug, has asked her to be part of the philanthropic wing of his new product, Gothic Gin. I didn’t know any makers of booze had philanthropy in mind, but evidently this one does; you can read about it here if you are interested: https://gothicgin.com/gothic-gin-philanthropy/. I’ve included a few family pictures: Son Jon, his wife Shannah, and their daughter Paityn (8), Alison and her partner Spencer, and Doug and me celebrating a very happy Christmas.
Hope you are all doing well, or as well as can be expected in these bizarre times.

Warm wishes,
Sue

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We still live in Pullman; we came to town 48 years ago and we have counted 43 years in our present residence. There was a time when we thought we would move closer to one of our daughters but the prices of real estate in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Seattle area made us change our minds. We just need to be fit to travel to where they live or request them to come for a visit.

Due to a faculty resignation, Cesar was rehired by his old department at the College of Veterinary Medicine to help teach a course for Spring 2020. This meant a delay of our planned trip to the Philippines. But with Covid-19 cases becoming rampant in the state, students were requested not to return to the campus after spring break and continue their classes on-line.

We then planned to visit friends and relatives in the Philippines in March and April, returning to the US after Easter, but our daughters convinced us not to go. We are thankful we listened to them, otherwise, we would have been stranded and not able to return to the US.

We had also planned to visit daughters in the Bay Area and Renton; these plans were also cancelled on account of Covid-19. The end of the pandemic is nowhere near in sight and we are likely going to spend the rest of the year in Pullman.

We felt safe in Pullman during the summer months but not anymore. Covid-19 cases exploded in Whitman County (mainly Pullman) after thousands of WSU students came back to town in late August and we have taken more precautionary measures to prevent getting the virus.

We stay home most of the time; we go out mainly to meet medical appointments, go to the pharmacy, and go to grocery stores early in the morning when there are few shoppers. In the meantime, we keep
busy with house chores and sorting old documents and personal items.

I hope all of you are staying healthy and safe. Best wishes to all of you.

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No out-of-state travel to report this year. Little surprise. Jan is 70 and I am 80 and we’ve had little yen to leave the relative safety of the San Luis Valley to frolick with COVID19 among the world hotels, restaurants, and buses.

Recently Jan published a long article on the spiritual text, or subtext, in James Lee Burke’s 25 detective novels—a piece that his website immediately recommended to its readers.

In December I published Early holistic scoring of writing: A theory, a history, a reflection, with University Presses of Colorado. Five years in the making, the book’s history chapters largely were written by me, the theory chapters by my co-author, Norbert Elliot, now visiting professor at Florida State University.

I enjoyed researching the history—interviewing people involving in holistic scoring in the 1960’s and 1970’s, fishing out in-house research reports that hadn’t seen the light of day since they were shelved or filed away half a century ago, and resurrecting practitioners and researchers whose pioneering work had never been widely known.

Many of these pioneers were women, such as Kate Blickhahn of Sir Francis Drake High School in Marin County, CA; Catharine Keech of the Bay Area Writing Project; Ina Mullins of the National Assessment of Writing Progress; Edys Quellmalz of the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation; Frances Swineford of the Educational Testing Service; and D. M. Edwards Penfold, a British scholar whom even British scholars sometimes refer to as Edward Penfold.

Still, this year the pandemic didn’t keep me from searching Colorado for wildflowers, in the car, on the trail, or on my hands and knees. I figure one of the safest places in the world is sitting in an alpine meadow of the San Luis Valley at 12,000’ elevation. A couple of weeks ago I discovered and photographed an aquatic flower that had been found in the Valley by botanist Brandegee in 1875 and never recorded from the area since. Experts believed it had been eradicated. (Understandably, Townshend Stith Brandegee was known by his friends as “T. S.” Once when he heard that his wife Mary Katharine, also a botanist, had been in a shipwreck, he first asked if her plant specimens were okay.)

I include my photograph of Crassula aquatica, or pygmyweed., to liven up these pages. The scale is millimeters.