

English Retirees Newsletter

Department of English Washington State University 32nd Edition • September 2022

Chair's Note:

We were thrilled that the past year was more normal for our students, faculty, and staff—culminating in our first in person Scholarship and Awards Ceremony and Spring Commencement in three years. Our Visiting Writers Series, co-directed by Cameron McGill and Julian Ankney, hosted a range of remarkable writers, including Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Natalie Diaz.

Professor Donna Campbell's "Editing Wharton in a Digital Age" provided opportunities for our graduate students to contribute to an edition of Wharton's 1905 novel, *The House of Mirth*.

Professor Linda Russo worked with our students on the Plant Poem Project, which gave students the opportunity to write poems about local flora and install signage featuring the poems along a walking trail that runs parallel to Grand Avenue.

The Spring 2022 semester began two days late, because our students on the west side were unable to drive through Snoqualmie Pass.

In April, we had an in person launch of our undergraduate journal, *LandEscapes*, featuring Ferdinand's ice cream and readings by contributors at the Art Museum.

Later that month, we had a performance of A.R. Gurney's "Love Letters" by our program coordinator, Kim Pedersen, and one of our poetry professors, Colin McNamara.

From May to June, Colin led a Study Abroad trip to Ireland with a group of students (the trip had been on hold for the past two years), and I was delighted to accompany the group. We visited various sites in Ireland—the Cliffs of Moher, the Burren, the Giant's Causeway--and students had opportunities to meet poets, discuss poetry, and explore the landscape. From 1997-1998, I had a Fulbright lecturing award in Galway, and I've returned to Ireland often; it was a pleasure to introduce an amazing group of students to the country, and we hope to make it an annual event.

I also hope to resume our Summer Experimental Theatre for high school students. Young Jean Lee, a Broadway playwright who grew up in Pullman, has been my inspiration, and I hope that she will come to Pullman to see the students perform.

Our English Department alumni provided money for Study Abroad, student travel to conferences, English Club activities, technology, and the general enhancement of experiences and opportunities of our students. Thanks to the generosity of our alums, we can begin to enjoy the light at the end of this long tunnel.

D. L. Potts

Paul Brians (1968–2008)

Last year I mentioned that I had been asked to be the featured photographer for our local Arts and Humanities newsletter. It was fun but a lot of work—and not many people seemed to know about it—so after twelve months I decided to give somebody else a chance.

But this summer they handed out copies of my photo book *Four Seasons on Bainbridge Island* at an Arts and Humanities event in the waterfront park. It's ten years old now and not selling at the local bookstore any more so I'm giving copies away left and right.

Only 400 more of the original 1,050 to go.

Meanwhile *Thirty Walks on Bainbridge*, for which I was chief photographer, sold out early in the summer and new copies have just arrived from the Chinese printers.

I continue to share my photos on Facebook, getting lots of feedback from all around the world in photography groups.

My favorite shot this year was taken at the Fremont Solstice Parade. This 1981 Czech sculpture of Lenin was rescued from a scrapyard by an American English teacher and in 1993 taken to Washington where it's been failing to attract a buyer ever since.

Although many people think of it as a symbol of Fremont's leftist leanings, it's actually on private land and neighborhood residents' attitudes toward it are highly ambivalent, with Lenin's hands frequently being painted a bloody red. But this summer it also sported the colors of the Ukrainian flag.



I've been watching the Ukraine invasion with some anxiety because of my own connection with Lyubov Sirota, whose [poems about undergoing the Chernobyl disaster](#) I had arranged to be translated and published in English, and the fact that I wear an official Kiev city watch given me by the survivors. She and her husband seem to have found refuge elsewhere because she's been in touch again lately, still putting fiercely anti-Russian posts up on Facebook

The best-known part of the Fremont arts parade is the preceding bike ride where the principal costumes are imaginative compositions in body paint, which I documented this year in slide shows mounted on YouTube where they've had over 2,500 views so far.

You'll also find my July 4th show and a study of changing Big-leaf maple foliage from last fall at youtube.com/user/paulbrians.

I've also resumed photographing volunteers pulling weeds on Bainbridge Island Land Trust properties. Usually these are fairly close up, but I like the way this panoramic view turned out.



But as the Covid threat waned and we could venture out more often we found ourselves often house-bound in the spring and early summer by cold and rain, followed later by excessive heat and forest fire smoke (one day in August Seattle had the most polluted air of any city on earth).

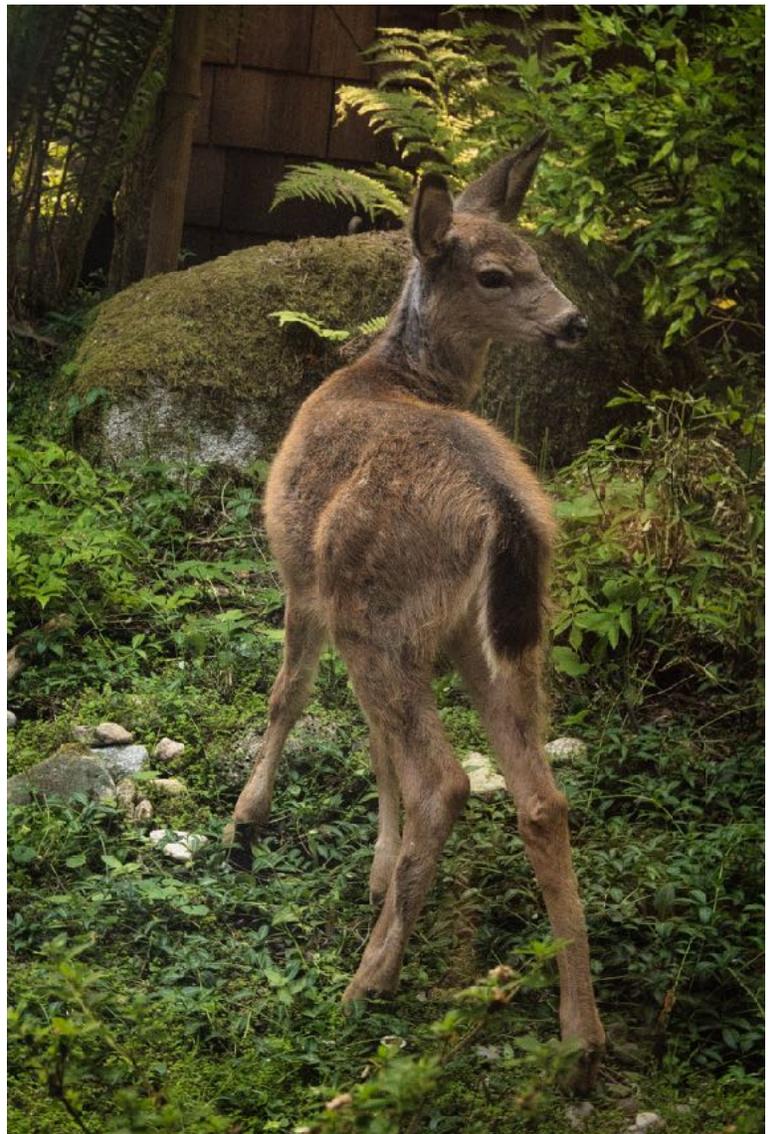
Paula and I enjoyed visiting Megan in Bend, Oregon on Mother's Day weekend (where it snowed briefly), and she later came to Bainbridge hoping to escape the heat wave there, only to find it was a mere 10 degrees cooler—in the high 80s. We nevertheless enjoyed getting together again.

Western Washington has escaped drought conditions this year, and the fire season has been lighter than usual. My sympathies for those of you experiencing climate change in the Palouse!

Paula's book club has decided this year to read famous banned books, and I recommended *Madame Bovary*. She asked me to speak briefly about it to the group, so I'm now rereading it in Flaubert's original French—but his descriptive vocabulary is enormous and I find myself tapping on words in Kindle quite often to bring up definitions.

We've gotten every possible Covid shot and booster, plus this year's flu vaccine and are doing quite well so far, enjoying our home, garden, and this wonderful island.

The view out our kitchen window one recent morning.



Leota Day (1970–1988)

Hello, folks,

Since Dutch and I are approaching our 50th wedding anniversary, I've been reflecting a little on how much has happened in what seems a very short time. It's been three decades since we left Pullman. How much longer will you allow me to participate in this newsletter? Our daughter, Kecia, also turns 50 this year. Along with memories of all these years, I've spent quite a bit of time sifting through thousands of slides my father took. I include a photo of one slide with us in much younger days.



Dutch and I did a first quick cut by tossing anything that didn't have people in it. There's still an overwhelming number to sort.

This past year has felt very unusual to me, but perhaps it is just that, having arrived in my mid-70's, various, and fortunately small, medical issues have overtaken my schedule. And I repeat, fortunately they're minor: physical therapy for sciatica, a swallowing issue that seems to be "an uncoordinated esophagus," and cataract surgery. As I write, I have one eye done and one to go. What is amazing to me about the surgery is that my brain chooses the best view it can get, whether it is from my dominant eye or not. I thought my dominant eye would, well, dominate.

We went to Ixtapa, Mexico again this year, after a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The resort was extremely careful, even requiring people, including the driver, arriving in cabs to exit the cab and wash their hands. Then they did a quick spray down of the cab interior. It felt extremely safe until our daily maid told us, excitedly, that she was taking a day off to get her first vaccine. There's clearly a hierarchy of who got vaccines, because the guy at the towel dispensing bar, who spoke pretty good English, was already getting his first booster. Obviously, his family could afford to send him to school beyond age 13 and he'll have opportunities to move up through the job ranks. I've known some of these employees since they were 13 and in their first full-time job which they are still working: running and maintaining the gondola. Now they're 38 with a wife and family!

I keep feeling I should say something about the political situation we find our country in, but I am so tired of all the disingenuous and divisive rhetoric that I'll stop here.

I'm very glad Paul continues to moderate this newsletter, because I love hearing from all of you.



Diane Gillespie (1975-2001)

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Not much has changed over the past year (the same sentence I used to begin last year's newsletter). In spite of highly contagious variants, many people think Covid is a thing of the past. It isn't, though, for "elderly," immunocompromised people like me who must "continue to be careful." Dick and I did plan a trip back to Minnesota this summer, but didn't go. Driving there and back would take too long and flying these days has its own complications. My 60th high school reunion, cancelled last summer, was rescheduled for this past July. As it turns out, the reunion was not well attended, in part because a shocking third of the class is no longer alive. More than classmates I couldn't even recognize from the photo, I missed seeing a few relatives I still know back there. We still plan to get to Baker City to see Dick's son Dan and wife Lynne.

Publication is delayed of two expanded papers from previous International Virginia Woolf Conferences, first because of earlier pandemic shutdowns, and now by a publisher who says the essay collections are not sufficiently profitable. Other options include on-line publication of the original, short papers. The June 2022 Woolf Conference, like the one before it, was "zoomed" successfully, this time from Beaumont, Texas. In spite of time-zone challenges, we had participants from North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Japan. The paper I presented will be the basis for another book chapter I've been asked to write on the Woolfs' Hogarth Press and religion. In lieu of in-person conferences, national and

international "Woolf packs" continue to meet enthusiastically twice/month on Zoom.

As for other activities, the Palouse Dance Club and Washington Idaho Symphony are resuming full schedules this fall. My Pleiades Investment Club (founded in 1997) still meets on Zoom while we patiently wait out current market volatility. Dick continues to play golf and create unusual items out of wood, fabric, and tile in his garage workshop. We're eating out and socializing a bit more, beginning with our hosting three couples for dinner last Thanksgiving. Mainly we're enjoying our flower and vegetable gardens (and amusing little cat) at home.

Thanks again Paul for organizing this newsletter in the midst of national and international disasters. In spite of heat, wind, and occasional wild-fire smoke, we feel lucky to live where we do, here in Eastern Washington (rather than eight miles away in red-state Idaho).

Alex Hammond (1975–2009)

The ebbing of the pandemic, I am glad to report, has finally allowed us to take a much-delayed Viking cruise to Alaska and beyond with old friends from UCLA. The voyage, first scheduled for spring 2020, originally combined an inland passage to Alaska with a crossing to Russia and Japan. COVID-19 forced its postponement twice, the war in Ukraine dropped Russian ports from its itinerary; and in August, after the trip's departure was delayed from the spring until this September, we learned Japan would not allow cruise ships into its ports. The voyage now ends in the Hawaiian Islands, the escape from everyday demands will be truly welcome after the long wait, and we leave on 18 September—just a few days after I rush out this letter.

Given my rush, I will focus this letter largely on our adventures with COVID-19 on our other trips this last year. Thus in April we traveled to New England for a pandemic-postponed Edgar Allan Poe conference in Boston and Providence, a gathering that allowed in-person attendance only for the fully vaccinated with last-minute negative COVID-19 tests. Thankfully passing these hurdles, I gave a paper on my retirement project on the Poe source collection at WSU, after which we took in theatre performances in Boston and Hartford, visited New Haven to see our grandson Max, and enjoyed returns to New Bedford and Newport.

In May we traveled to Los Angeles for the high school graduation of our grandson Christopher, who shortly before had managed to contract COVID-19—suffering almost no symptoms but having to sit out his last school volleyball game. I must add that Christopher has now begun his first year at Amherst—at 6’5” he’s the shortest of four new recruits on its basketball team and seems particularly excited about his first-year courses in art and theories of photographic representation.

In August, we went again to California for a family reunion in San Diego. The second day’s gathering of several generations of Hammonds went well, but immediately afterwards, my vaccinations and boosters notwithstanding, I came down with the Omicron variant. Before going into isolation at a very dull motel, I managed to pass on the virus to Barbara and my brother and his wife. We all survived quarantine and our relatively mild symptoms but missed the major day of the reunion, which without us drew over sixty Páez descendants from my mother’s side of family, many from Mexico.

Our daughter Elizabeth and her partner Carlos Means, come from Baja California to spend the summer helping with maintenance on our Pullman house and Idaho cabin, had shared planes and cars with us getting to our San Diego reunion. Improbably enough, both escaped the COVID-19 infection I was spreading around. Our son Alec, a production designer in feature films unable to attend the reunion, has also avoided COVID in spite of constantly traveling to and from Los Angeles by plane. Last year he spent much of the fall and spring in New Orleans working with large production crews on a vampire movie, returning to the city again this summer to do designs for a TV pilot, all without contracting the virus.

I will postpone until the next letter descriptions of Alec’s design works in New Orleans, or the equally fascinating TV and movie-project developments by his wife Amy (who did contract COVID-19 in the spring), or the growing recognition of his son Max’s talent as a pianist. I will also not detail any of Barbara’s and my ongoing involvements with various groups and boards in Pullman, but I must mark the fact that this year, after almost four decades of work as a licensed psychologist, Barbara has decided to give up formal practice as a therapist.

With thanks again to Paul for doing this newsletter,

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Rich Haswell (1967–1980)

Jan and I are still upright and trekking along. We like our south-central Colorado town, Del Norte, more and more every day—especially since a young local ranching family opened up a bakery and coffee shop with the best whole-wheat croissants and cheapest prices west of Norman, OK.

The name Del Norte, by the way, is short for “Rio del Norte,” the historic Mexican name for the Rio Grande, which flows through town. On the bridge across the river, the state just put up new signs reading “Rio Grande River.” The locals laugh every time they cross the bridge. “Great River River”? Classic bureaucratic verbosity.

I’ve signed off scholarship. I’m looking around for a library that will take the yards of lit/comp/rhet books that weigh down my shelves. Goodbye W. J. T. Mitchell and hello David Mitchell (of *Cloud Atlas* fame).

Last February we had a major health scare. Just before midnight, Jan suffered an aortic dissection. That’s usually prelude to aortic rupture, which is fatal. Unfortunately the entire region was experiencing its worst snow of the year. The regional hospital could not find any medevac plane willing to fly her to a cardiovascular surgeon. Finally around four in the morning a local ambulance crew agreed to drive her from Del Norte to Colorado Springs. It took them five hours, heavy snow all the way. (Colorado Springs got 22 inches that night.) The surgeon said he didn’t know how she survived the ride. But she did. A lifetime of novenas paid off, I guess.

It’s a long recovery following open-chest surgery, but this summer Jan was back to mowing the yard (on our lawn tractor). And to camping. We still tent it, and still prefer the county and hunter campsites.

I’ll end with a photo of an ancient logging road we like, near Luders Creek Campground, a mile from the Continental Divide and the old Cochetopa Pass. In a week this trail will be golden with turning aspen.



Nick Kiessler (1967–2000)

Dear Fellow Retirees,

First of all, I’d like to thank Paul for giving another two days to write this annual letter. The delay was caused when I decided on the spur of the moment — before the application deadline on September 22 — to attend the centenary dinner of the Oxford Bibliographical Society and a colloquium to be held on the same day, on September 29. I am now in the midst of the process of arranging the flights, lodging, entry requirements, and packing a suitcase and thinking about telephone and email connections in Oxford.

As the COVID epidemic continues, we have survived the without any major illnesses, but there was very little major travel anywhere except for a three-day trip to Tacoma to visit our son Mark, two weeks in New York City, and a week at Priest Lake to stay at the Castleberry cabin on the Thoroughfare. We kept in contact with the outside world almost entirely by email. I’m still diddling around with “research”, but that is getting harder to do. A note and an article should appear in 2022, but I’ll

believe it when I see them. Karen is the really busy one, and her service on the Washington State Council on Aging and the Eastern Washington division of that Council continues without any breaks. Since all physical meetings for last year were cancelled, she has become an adept at something she dislikes intensely – conducting and attending meetings on ZOOM – almost every week.

Our excursions in New York were limited by COVID and we attended plays and concerts only at small venues, where there was less chance of contacting the disease. We had planned to see Hongbo Tan, Ph.D., 1989, but we afraid to travel to Jersey City on subways and trains and missed her this year. Since our place was across the street to the Met, we could go there almost daily. Our son took a break from his traveling nurse occupation in Hanover/Lebanon, New Hampshire and we visited a few interesting sites, including the Hasidic community of Williamsburg in Brooklyn, and the Cloisters in the northwest of Manhattan. Before we left New York we took the train to Boston and a rented car to see Mark, who took us around the area of White River Junction where he lived. In one afternoon he took us to eleven covered bridges and after that to Dartmouth, which has a fine art museum and university library.

Our days in Pullman are not so exciting, but walks and bicycling to Moscow keep me going. I had to give up, over the last few years, first handball, then tennis, then racketball, and most recently, pickleball, which I enjoyed, but the knees could not take it anymore. So I play ping pong two or three times a week with my son Dan. We have good games and the knees hold up well. In our bicycling group only two real bicyclers remain: Harms and R.C. Johnson. The rest now have electric bikes, now including me as of September 6, my birthday (86).

All the best to all of you,

Nick Kiessling

Susan H. McLeod (1986-2001)

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds everyone doing well. Doug and I are fine, finally, after dealing with Covid for most of the month of June. Since the pandemic started Doug has been much more cautious than I about going out among the maskless, but at one point he decided he needed to keep a dental appointment. Three days later he tested positive, and three days after that I did too. Unlike some, our cases were not mild—Covid for us was like a nasty flu, in spite of being vaccinated and double-boosted. At least we were miserable together! The staff here in our retirement community took excellent care of us: They delivered three meals a day to our door and checked on us regularly.

We were quarantined in our apartment but it was no hardship, since we didn't feel like going anywhere; we amused ourselves by watching every televised match of the French Open. I can't tell you who won any of them. Doug has had no lasting issues from the virus, but I came out of it with a racing heart and chronic hoarseness, neither of which my doctor says is serious. I'm taking meds for both and feeling like myself again. (I was amused to discover that the medication for my heart, a beta blocker, is also the medication given to performers for severe stage fright.)

Our year during non-Covid quarantine has included a long-postponed visit from a dear friend from graduate school and a visit from my late sister's three girls and their kids, which included a trip to Petco Park to watch the Padres lose. I also reconnected with a student I used to tutor, a young woman who is from a Korean community in China (made up of refugees from the Korean war). It is gratifying to see how successful she has become since I first knew her. Doug and I don't travel anymore, so such visits are a treat.

We continue to be very happy with our retirement community, Casa de Mañana. During the Covid lockdown we had Zoom classes and meetings, which were OK but not always satisfactory (too many delays reminding people to mute themselves; my hat is off to anyone who had to teach virtually during that time). Now in-person gatherings have finally resumed. Doug

attends a class, “Great Decisions,” led by a resident here who is a former CIA agent. I’m engrossed in a class on Pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas. Doug and I have also started, cautiously, to attend a few concerts here in La Jolla as things open up.

We are looking forward to a visit from our granddaughter Paityn and our son Jon in October; I’ll include a few pictures: Paityn, now age 10, one of Casa de Mañana (from a distance) with our apartment circled, and one of Doug and me, taken by daughter Alison, that pretty much sums up our life right now.

Warm greetings to all!

Sue



Fred Schwarzbach (1987-1992)

Hello all,

This summer August 31st saw a major change for me: I finally did retire. I've been extraordinarily fortunate to have the opportunity to teach for 48 years, but all good things must come to an end. I'm still teaching at NYU as a part-timer (but thankfully only one class) and I will continue to direct an access project targeting local area high school students for our office of undergraduate admissions, so it's more of a gradual fade than a sudden break. (Here's a link to the high school program web site – <https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/high-school-programs/collegiate-seminar-program.html>)

This summer we again finally were able to travel internationally. We are double vaccinated and double boosted, and I've also had the virus (a mild case lasting a week), so we reckoned that our immunity was as strong as it was ever going to be and we were ready to take the plunge. The plunge was a month-long holiday in Switzerland, divided between Zurich and Bern. Highlights included a train journey to Europe's highest railway station, Jungfrauoch, and an open-air cable car to Mt Stanserhorn. (It was quite a ride!) Not to mention the best chocolate in the world and some very fine pastries as well.

I also traveled alone to London for two weeks. I finally found a publisher for the pedestrian guide to London that I've been working on for the last five years. It consists of fifteen guided walks that begin and end at stations on the Underground Circle Line. I figured I had better revisit a few places to record what has changed since the advent of the two great plagues, Brexit and Covid. As it happens, a lot has changed, and it would have been embarrassing not to have rewritten some

parts of the book. It is due out in Spring 2023 under the working title *Walking London's Circle Line*, which may change between now and then. (London, by the way, is as crowded as ever, as if the pandemic never happened.)

All best,

Fred

Albert Von Frank (1984–2006)

I will keep this short. I had my heart attack toward the middle of June and my quadruple by-pass surgery in Coeur d'Alene a few weeks later. I did some recovering at a residential physical therapy facility in Pullman, where I contracted Covid, delaying my scheduled discharge by another week. Recovery has been slow, which accounts for the shortness of this statement.

These events coincided with the publication of a 64-page booklet (*In Memoriam: JM*) that I had compiled, consisting, in the first part, of 42 commissioned memorials to and personal reminiscences of Joel Myerson, a close friend, colleague, and scholar extraordinaire (emeritus, University of South Carolina). A second part lists his many publications. Not retirement but death (his own heart attack) put a full stop to his career.

Al von Frank

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Nelly C. Zamora (1976-2003)

Greetings to former officemates, faculty, and friends of the WSU English Department. Hard to believe, we have lived in Pullman for the past 50 years.

We were able to travel to the Philippines last spring, April-May, despite the too many travel requirements. It was not the best time to visit, it was hot and humid, but we were glad to see families and friends.

We made a trip to the Seattle area in the middle of September to meet friends and visit our daughter Jen in Renton. At that time, we made a side trip to Bothell to take veterinary books to a friend, who would then ship them (gratis) via extra spaces in his container to the Philippines. The books were donated by retiring faculty members of the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine and they will then be donated to the libraries of veterinary schools in the Philippines.

We have not been able to travel often enough to visit our daughters, but we have kept in touch with Jen and Pauline via Zoom chats every Sunday afternoon.

I hope all of you are staying healthy and safe. My best regards to everyone, until we meet again, through this newsletter.

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Nick Kiessling put us in touch with Dick Fulton, who many of you will remember from our graduate program. he sent me the following:

Dick Fulton

I guess I should try to catch my colleagues up on my life since earning my PhD in 1975.

Briefly, my first job was with the WSU Graduate School, where I stayed until 1983. I was Director of Graduate Studies at Iona College from 83-87, Academic Vice President at Rocky Mountain College 87-89, Academic VP at Clark College in Vancouver 89-98, Academic VP at Whatcom CC 98-2007, and Academic Vice Chancellor at Windward CC 2007-2013. Retired in 2013, but did a couple of interim VP gigs in New Jersey and Texas, then retired for good in 2018.

My wife Suzanne, whom I married in Pullman in 1976, died in 2004. I married Debra Lee in 2013. We currently live half the year in Hawaii Kai, half in Bellingham. You can guess which halves. My two kids both live in Portland, and Deb and I are grandparents to three boys.

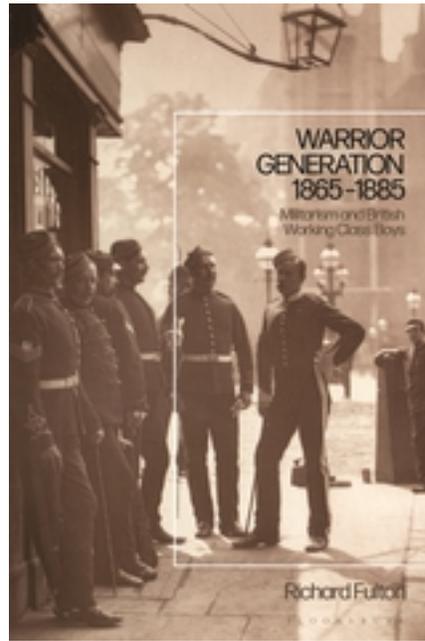
Through the many years as an administrator I tried to stay true to the advice I got from my dissertation director, the marvelous Virginia Hyde: use your curiosity to write, and contribute to the profession by publishing. I published some twenty essays and over thirty book reviews, as well as five books, the last—*Warrior Generation*—in 2020. I'm still doing research, and still writing, although more slowly than before.

Stan Linden, Bob Feasley and I used to run almost every noon throughout the year from 1974 until 1983; my knees finally gave out ten years back, but Debra and I still bike around the Fourth Corner here. In fact, we just last week got back from a Viking River Cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam, (portaging around the shallows in the Rhine!) and we biked in Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands on that trip.

I've heard recently from John Ramage and Roger Pettichord. Haven't heard much from anyone else. I remember softball games between faculty and grad students, and the grad student softball team—the Swyvers—fondly. Also our Swyvers basketball team the year Jim McKean was a grad student, Jim and the four dwarves.

Somewhere in my files is a copy of “Occasional Monotony”; I reread it about ten years ago and it's still hilarious, a nice encapsulation of the spirit of 1970. I could probably get a copy to you.

All the best,
Richard Fulton



Richard Fulton

Author, *Warrior Generation 1865-1885, Militarism and British Working Class Boys* (www.bloomsbury.com/9781350138759/)

Editor (with Peter Hoffenberg, Stephen Hancock, and Allison Paynter), *South Seas Encounters, Nineteenth Century Oceania, Britain, and America*, (<https://www.routledge.com/South-Seas-Encounters-Nineteenth-Century-Oceania-Britain-and-America/Fulton-Hoffenberg-Hancock-Paynter/p/book/9780367666453>)

Editor (with Peter Hoffenberg), *Oceania and the Victorian Imagination* (Ashgate, 2013)