

Alumni News

WWU DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM • WINTER 2017

Western's SPJ Club Wins Outstanding Chapter Award

By Sandra Rees-Bowen

After a year of producing engaging panels and presentations, Western's active and energetic campus chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists was named the 2016 Outstanding SPJ Chapter for Region 10, putting it in the running for the best overall chapter in the nation.

"The students were all surprised and excited about the award. It is really a recognition of all their creative work on programs and activities," said chapter adviser Peggy Watt. "I'm very proud of the Western students who led our chapter to the regional award for 2015-16."

Over the course of the year, the group put together what SPJ Region 10 director Ethan Chung called a broad range of programming.

SPJ kicked off the year by introducing its newest staff member, Brian Bowe, who spoke about his professional experience covering music journalism and research of religion coverage. Following that, there was a seminar on the ethics of clickbait.

The program featured a panel discussion on the intertwining of

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The executive committee of Western Washington University's Society of Professional Journalists club. From left, Asher King, James Hearne, Kieran Boyle and Ashley Hiroko. // Photo by Joe Gosen

Breaking the Mold

How 2016 reshaped a journalistic cornerstone

By Asher King

The Western Front is undoubtedly an icon for those who have studied in the journalism program. It is a cornerstone of the major, vaulting prospective journalists straight into the thick of the field.

But even icons are not immune to change.

While it is fairly common to see aesthetic changes take place, with each new editor-in-chief coming

in with new ideas and methods, major changes are fewer and further between.

Yet in January 2016, The Western Front began the process of undergoing major changes, starting with going from two print issues a week to just one. In time, a second production would be returned to the foray, but would prove to delve into an entirely different field.

The process began after Western Front instructor Jack Keith approached the Student Publications Council with this proposition, which was discussed previously by both editors and students within the program. The idea was approved by a unanimous vote, thusly vaulting The Western Front into entirely new

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from the chair



Greetings to our #JKids – near and far. I am excited to let you know how we are doing here in Bellingham. The journalism department is thriving with many familiar faces, but also some new additions and changes.

First, we are very excited to have another new faculty member – this makes three years in a row! Derek Moscato has joined us, teaching primarily in the public relations track. Derek worked in PR for more than 10 years prior to returning to school for his PhD. He worked for both nonprofits and universities, with his most recent job as director of marketing and communications for the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. Prior to going into PR he was an editor and writer. He is just completing his dissertation for a PhD in media studies at the University of Oregon.

As we begin the 2016-17 academic year, we have 224 majors and premajors. The latest numbers place 92 in the public relations track, 67 in the visual journalism track and 65 in the news/editorial track, plus a few undecided. We also have 67 minors, with 47 choosing the PR minor and another 20 choosing the news-editorial minor. These numbers are up from last year and we expect that trend to continue. Also, environmental studies has begun the process to reinstate the environmental journalism major, which will make many of our students very happy.

Last year, our students landed a wide variety of internships from broadcast internships with KCTS and KEZI for our VJ students (the KEZI internship led to a job!), news-editorial internships across the area including Port Townsend Leader and Skagit Valley Herald, and PR internships including the Seattle EPA office and the Omaha Storm Chasers. Our students also give back to the community through service-learning courses across all three tracks. Last year the students devoted more than 22,000 community service hours through internships and service-learning classes.

This year, Western's publications were also honored by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) again. On a national level, The Western Front was a finalist for Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper; The Planet was a finalist for Best Student Magazine; and Planet Radio won Best All-Around Radio Newscast. The student publications were also finalists for several awards from the regional Mark of Excellence competition sponsored by the SPJ including feature writing and nonfiction magazine articles.

Be sure to like the WWU Journalism Alumni page on Facebook to share information and hear more about what's going on in the department. You'll find more news about faculty, student clubs and activities in this newsletter, as well as some updates about alumni. Please drop us a note to share what's new with you, too.

Jennifer Keller

Associate Professor

Chair, Department of Journalism

featured articles

PR Student Stephanie Cheng elected AS President

By Kelsey Fowler

Her comprehensive campaign swept across voters using media-based tactics, traditional outreach and branding; strategies greatly influenced by her public relations major here at Western.

Stephanie Cheng, now the president of the Associated Students owes a lot to her background in the major.

“My major definitely helped me with campaigning,” she said. “I learned a lot in my PR classes about best practices and how to run a successful awareness campaign, so I really utilized what I learned in my courses.”

Cheng said she always had an interest in marketing, photography, content creating and storytelling. “The more I got into the major, I found I had opportunities to combine what I loved.”

Among her passions, engagement

through digital media is one of them. Cheng identified her widespread social media presence and used it to promote herself online and through apps.

“My posters had my Snapchat code on them, and I encouraged people to use that to add me,” she said. She also created a BuzzFeed quiz voters could take titled, “Which Stephanie Cheng are you?” as a way to learn more about her.

Social media also helped her tackle the abysmal voting rates on campus. In previous elections, only 7 percent of students have voted, Cheng said, presenting a challenge for her.

“I turned to social media to get the word out,” she said. Her methods appear to have been effective, as the election for the 2016-2017 school year doubled its engagement, with 15 percent of students voting.

Aside from campaign tactics,

Cheng contributed additional skills in her campaign from the major, such as interviewing techniques, communication approaches, written skills and AP Style knowledge, she said.

Cheng said public relations offers her a lens that stresses the dynamics of communication between an individual or organization and their audience.



Photo by
Rhys
Logan

RECAP: A year of hard work results in award for SPJ group

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journalism and the internet. Local journalists participated, discussing the tension between fair news reporting and the pressure for hits.

Next there was the freedom of information program which featured the award-winning film, “Spotlight,” as well as an open discussion on the use of public records in breaking stories.

Following the “Spotlight” program, there came a discussion on the ethics of gender in journalism. The panel focused on proper handling of transgender and non-binary sources, and featured community members, including Scout Hartman of the Queer Resource Center.

“I’d witnessed some pretty troubling trends when it came to

dealing with sources like me,” said Asher King, an SPJ member and transgender student. “Not only was Peggy Watt 100 percent on board, but even the regional director was interested.”

That interest took the panel to the SPJ regional conference in Seattle in June, and featured a panel with Danni Askini, founder of the Gender Justice League; Western journalism ethics professor, Joan Connell; and Josh Feit, a political writer for Seattle Met magazine.

These programs, as well as the many others hosted by the SPJ club, were praised for touching on what Chung called “keystone topics of successful chapters.” Those topics were diversity, freedom of information and

ethics.

“I was really thrilled to see our little corner of the SPJ recognized like this,” James Hearne said, crediting Watt for all of her efforts. “She was the one who pressed us to keep holding meetings and made sure we didn’t miss deadlines with the regional or national organizations.”

Watt, on the other hand, had nothing but praise for her students.

“A small, dedicated, core group worked hard to put together relevant, timely, interesting programs and activities for Western journalism students and the community. It’s wonderful to see them recognized for their efforts.”

New Faculty Member Derek Moscato Tells All



Derek Moscato in his Communications Facility office. // Photo by Asher King

By Sandra Rees-Bowen

The journalism department has welcomed its third faculty addition in as many years: Derek Moscato, who can be found primarily teaching classes related to the PR track of the department.

Moscato agreed to sit down with the alumni newsletter and answer some questions.

Question: What were you like as a college-age person?

Answer: I did an undergraduate degree in history. At the same time, I started to take some courses outside of my major in the journalism school and began working for campus publications. That got me really interested in getting more involved in journalism and media; which in turn, inspired me to go to graduate school for a master's degree in journalism.

Q: What led you to choose Western?

A: There were certain factors that were really compelling to me about Western and the Department of Journalism. First and foremost is the community of students, alumni and scholars that we have here in journalism department. Our faculty

come from a rich array of professional backgrounds—including national and regional publications and media outlets, leading public relations agencies and technology startups. There is a great academic tradition here as well, with scholarly expertise in areas like civic journalism, strategic communication and visual media.

Secondly, Western as a university is unique in that it's situated in this wonderful location, it has a very energized campus community and it maintains meaningful linkages with Bellingham, Washington state, and really the whole Cascadia region, including British Columbia. That was something that truly interested me. I also discovered that Western has a longstanding tradition of scholarly leadership in environmental issues.

Thirdly, there is the Bellingham factor. I spent the three years prior to moving to Bellingham in Eugene, Oregon, and came to really appreciate a midsized city that has a lot of the cultural opportunities that you would normally expect in a much larger city. Bellingham reflects this optimal balance, with a wonderful downtown, and just a lot going on.

Q: Tell me something about yourself that we might never guess.

A: I collect antique bottles and have a collection from old soda companies from a century ago. Vintage soda bottles are increasingly rare, especially the ones with unique colors, labels or inscriptions. One of the neat things about the antique bottle realm is that it is highly localized. A lot of small cities had their own soda companies and breweries, so these bottle relics are very localized.

Q: What is your goal as an instructor?

A: My goal is to help my students acquire the professional and theoretical skills to engage and excel in the world of media and communication. Whether they are going onto professional communication positions with companies or media outlets or not-for-profits, they will have that underlying understanding of how communication works, and how it can be effective for organizations. They will also have a broader understanding of the implications of communication in society; and how journalism and strategic communication in the public sphere can foster positive social, environmental and political change.

The arrival of social media has only accelerated the prominence of media and communication in our lives. Having our students grounded in professional best practices, communication ethics and an understanding of growing communication areas like social media and corporate social responsibility really prepares them holistically to enter the workforce and engage deeply as citizens.

CORNERSTONE:

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territory.

With The Front's first release of the quarter, the changes were immediately obvious. With all advertising focused into one weekly release, the page count of the newspaper increased exponentially, with only a handful of issues dipping below the 16-page mark. In addition to the quantity of content improving, so too did the workmanship of the articles.

"For the first time in a long time we saw a jump in the quality in the content that was produced," said winter 2016 Editor-in-Chief Brenna Visser.

This also gave both writers and editors more time to work on their stories, something that was undoubtedly crucial given the climate during winter quarter. Both the Ethnic Student Center and a new group, the Student Assembly for Power and Liberation, were facing their own conflicts. The Western Front was able to attempt to navigate these stories with the respect they deserved.

"It gave us a chance to sink our teeth into those types of stories," Visser said.

Simultaneously, The Front beefed up its online coverage at westernfrontonline.com. Rather than publishing event coverage days after it occurred in the print edition, timely pieces were able to be published almost immediately. This kept the online section relevant.

Meanwhile, Online Editor Katie Rickel worked behind the scenes to make sure that stories were posted to social media during prime viewing times, resulting in prominent spikes to views and readership.

But without a second issue, there was an open gap to be explored. Several ideas were kicked around, from a short insert all the way to a full-on magazine. As Visser worked to nail down and improve upon the new online system, her features editors, Daisey James and Janae Easlon, laid the groundwork for what has become Western Weekend, an entertainment publication chock full of event coverage and briefings.

Instead of being strictly news-focused, with stringent emphasis on the crucial 5-Ws, Western Weekend provided an early look at long-form styles of journalism, the likes of which typically couldn't be explored until students delved into Klipsun Magazine. For many students, Klipsun often proved to be interesting, but came too late for them to truly explore.

The option was well-received, as students who were more inclined to the more creative forms of journalism were able to have fun with their work. Students work



A scan of 2017's first edition of Western Weekend, a year after The Western Front underwent a series of dramatic changes.

on listicles and reviews, practice with travel stories or even just retell their own adventures for other people -- all things that they'd have to do if they ever found themselves in a magazine job or internship.

"I think it was a really good addition to the program," said spring 2016 Editor-in-Chief Kara Spencer. "It appeals to a lot of different sections of journalism."

Western Weekend was headed by the spring features editors, Layne Carter and Nick Johnson, two people whom Spencer described as being in touch with all parts of Bellingham.

"They were the perfect people to start it off," Spencer said.

Thus far, the enjoyment of Western Weekend doesn't appear to be limited solely to the journalism department. During her time, Spencer noted that she was receiving emails about the crossword puzzle, showing that people were engaging with the magazine. Moreover, the broader appeal to more than just the news seems to be drawing people in.

After a year of tumult and change, however, The Western Front finally seems to be settling back into normalcy. And no matter how much has changed, one thing will always be true. The beloved newspaper will always be dedicated to getting it first, and getting it right.

student awards

WWU Student Scholars Week – Recognized Posters

Keely Killebrew: The Anatomy of Bias

Libby Keller: Until I met Adam: Recovering from an Eating Disorder Relapse

Monea Kerr: Examination of Methods Used in Truth® Campaign Advertisements

Trisha Patterson: The Ethics of the Western Foundation's Decision to Invest \$1.5 million of its Endowment in Fossil Fuels.

Sarah Sharp: Best Practices for Covering Religion

Brenna Visser: Ethics of Covering the Immigration Crisis

Society of Professional Journalists: 2015 Mark of Excellence Awards

Region 10

Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper:
Finalist: The Western Front

Best student magazine
Finalist: "The Justice Issue," Editor-in-Chief Beth Carlson, The Planet

Best All-Around Radio Newscast:
Winner: Planet Radio, Winter 2015

Feature Writing, 10,000+ Students
"The Bridge to Recovery," by Sarah Sharp, The Western Front

Non-fiction magazine article
Finalist: "Toxic Turf" by Elise Dresel, The Planet

Finalist: "Not your Fault" by Katelyn Doggett, Klipsun

Radio feature
Winner: "Martian Miasma" by Sam Carlos, KUGS

National

Best All-Around Non-Daily Student Newspaper:
Finalist: The Western Front

Best All-Around Radio Newscast:
Winner: Planet Radio

Best student magazine
Finalist: "The Justice Issue," Editor-in-Chief Beth Carlson, The Planet

scholarship recipients

AAF Seattle Scholarship
\$2000 to Monea Kerr

Gerson F. Miller Journalism Scholarship
\$1000 to Maria Matson
\$1000 to Mikayla Nicholson
\$1000 to Sarah Sharp

Journalism Alumni Scholarship
\$500 to Asher King
\$500 to Megan Campbell

Pioneer Newspapers Scholarship
\$1000 to Elizabeth Kayser
\$1000 to Ryan Parish
\$1200 to Laura Ann Poehner

Frank Varga Visual Journalism Scholarship
\$1500 to Christina Becker

Department Tuition and Fee Waiver
\$900 to Kyra Bruce
\$900 to Carolyn Trainer

Nancy and Ralph Babcock Jr. Memorial Scholarship
\$750 to Brie Cleveland
\$750 to Kjell Redal

Pete Steffens Native American Scholarship
\$1200 to Monea Kerr

Steven Rupp Memorial Scholarship
\$1000 to Evan Elliott
\$1000 to Daisey James

Pacific Northwest Newspaper Association Scholarship
\$600 to Sarah Sharp

Shearlean Duke Memorial Scholarship
\$1200 to Madison Krueger

from the students

The Planet

The Planet continued to produce important, high-quality environmental stories this year, focusing on innovation, resilience, politics and human health. Our reporters covered stories near and far – one of our reporters even went to Paris to cover the 2015 United Nations climate negotiations. Journalism and public relations major Yvonne Worden (Class of 2016) led the staff as editor-in-chief for the first part of the year. She was succeeded by Jesse Nichols, a junior studying visual journalism.

Warren Cornwall joined The Planet as faculty adviser in fall 2015. Warren is a professional environmental journalist who has written for Science, Outside, The New York Times Magazine and High Country News.

We expect another great year ahead at The Planet.

Jesse Nichols, fall editor-in-chief
www.theplanetmagazine.net

PRSSA

This year, WWU PRSSA is continuing to grow within the Western community. Fall quarter brought in new faces and opportunities for club member growth in more ways than one. We currently have 12 registered members and about 10 drop-in members who come to gatherings regularly. Individually, members took advantage of our resume and cover letter workshops to sharpen their personal brand. WWU PRSSA consistently holds fundraising bake sales every two weeks to supply our club funds. We have four members participating in the PRSA Mentorship Program, which helped us kick off winter quarter. We've continued to hold webinars and workshops, such as LinkedIn How-To and Blogging with Style. WWU PRSSA is also in the midst of planning PR agency tours and networking opportunities. If you are a PR alumnus and are interested in connecting with us, please send an email to wwuprssa@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Katherine Misel
WWU PRSSA chapter president

NPPA

Western's chapter of the National Press Photographers Association has been busy with photo critiques, educational presentations, visiting professionals and more! The club is gearing up for its two main spring events as well. They'll be hosting a photojournalism showcase displaying student work from the past year in Western's B Gallery as well as an end-of-the-year professional showcase event and BBQ.

The club is looking for any interested professional visual journalists who would like to present on photo or video journalism for students and faculty. The event dates haven't been locked down yet, but it's anticipated for late May.



Kjell Redal, NPPA president
kjelltristanredal@gmail.com

Photo by Kjell Redal

Klipsun

A lot has changed for me in the past year. Some of it was good, and some of it wasn't. When thinking about the theme I wanted to choose for Klipsun Magazine, I wanted it to reflect the change I had gone through in my life and the change that many others have undoubtedly experienced in their own lives.

In the winter issue of Klipsun, titled "Forward," you will find stories of grief and loss, the relationship between old and new and discovering brightness in the midst of our weary journey. Each story in this collection encapsulates what it means to look toward the future.

In the face of life's seemingly infinite adversities, there is one constant: life goes on. There is no turning back, what's done is done. We all must decide which path we want to take, but all any of us can really do is move forward.

Katherine Misel, fall editor-in-chief
www.klipsunmagazine.com

Western Front

The Western Front continues to thrive. The end of fall quarter marks one year since the Front has gone down to one issue a week. With that, we have been able to focus on refining writing skills and putting our energies toward producing investigative pieces throughout the quarter. I feel like the Front has grown a lot and is a product to be reckoned with.

We still are trying to keep up with the ever-changing way people receive news and with that we are trying new things with our website and multimedia pieces.

Elizabeth Kayser, fall editor-in-chief
westernfrontonline.com

obituaries



Kris Passey, a longtime newspaper publisher and editor in the Pacific Northwest, passed away Nov. 27, 2016 in the Washington, D.C. area after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. He and his wife, Catherine, had moved there to be close to family.

In 2008 Passey sold the Marysville Globe and Arlington Times, which he had edited since the 1990s, and went on to obtain a master's degree in journalism at the University of Missouri. He taught journalism at Western in 2013 and 2014.

He was a longtime board member of the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association, which is honoring Passey by naming one of its Olympia News Bureau internships after him. He was also a founding member and two-term president of the Washington Coalition for Open Government, which recently honored him with the James Madison Lifetime Achievement Award. WCOG is assembling a collection of letters to his family, which can be submitted online at <http://washingtoncog.org/kris-passey-legacy-fund/> (memorial donations are optional, but friends and former students are encouraged to leave a note).

Valerie Alia, who taught at Western in the Canadian-American Studies program and in the journalism department, passed away on Nov. 30, 2016 in Toronto, Canada.

She was a distinguished visiting professor in the Canadian-American Studies program from 1996 to 1998. At Western, she met and married Pete Steffens, longtime journalism faculty member, and after retirement they lived in the United Kingdom and then in Nanaimo, British Columbia. When he passed away in 2012, Alia established the Pete Steffens Native American Journalism Scholarship, given annually by the department.

Alia was a scholar, broadcaster, writer and editor in the U.S. and Canada. Among her books was "The New Media Nation: Indigenous Peoples and Global Communication" and she researched and reported on First Nation issues.

Chris Jarvis (Class of 1980) passed away May 2, 2016 after a month-long battle with a rare and aggressive lung cancer. A Seattle native, he had reported for several newspapers, including the Bellevue Journal-American, where he covered cops, crime and courts. In 1996 he left newspapers to handle communications for a congressional campaign, and spent the next 20 years in communications in government (for the State Senate Democrats and the attorney general's office) and corporate jobs (at Premera Blue Cross, March of Dimes and Microsoft). He is survived by his two sons, Jack and Will.

Louis Phillips (Class of 1976), of Shoreline, passed away Oct. 9, 2016. Besides studying journalism at Western (and serving as Western Front managing editor several times), he earned degrees in computer science and economics from the University of Washington. He generously supported journalism scholarships, and enjoyed visiting the Front recently and meeting its newest generation of editors. Lou worked for King County for 20 years and retired in 2015. He traveled extensively, taking his most recent trip to Europe shortly after retirement. His wife Jenny predeceased him and he is survived by two grandchildren, Nick and Elmer Ho.

faculty updates



Brian J. Bove
Assistant professor

Getting situated in Bellingham over the past year has been a great experience. The Western community has been warm and welcoming, and I've already forged many close friendships and productive collaborations.

The best part has been getting to know our students. I'm especially happy to work with the folks in Senior Seminar. These

students are at a moment of great transition as they prepare to enter the workplace. As I read their thoughtful and well-done final projects, I have great hope for the future of our field. I just hope some of them stay in touch.

Western prioritizes its role as a teaching university, and there are great resources here for faculty to perfect their craft. This year, I was honored to co-facilitate a course design workshop for new faculty. In the winter and spring quarters, I will also be one of the facilitators of a program to help internationalize Western's curriculum. What's great about both of these opportunities is I end up learning as much as the participants.

I've had some research successes over the last year. I published journal articles on media coverage of an anti-Shariah amendment campaign in Oklahoma and a series of mosque construction controversies across the U.S. I worked with Lawrence Pintak, the founding dean of WSU's Murrow College of Communication, on an article about journalism in Pakistan. With another research team, I published a piece on the effect of social media on young adults' exposure to (and attitudes toward) news. As scholars work to make sense of the 2016 election cycle, I suspect that topic will be of continuing interest.

My research agenda and professional practice have been separate in recent years. In my research, I focus on media portrayals of Islam and Muslims. As a journalist, I specialize in writing about music. In June, I began working on a project that I hope will bridge those two areas of inquiry. I visited a small village in Morocco to spend time with the Master Musicians of Joujouka. This group plays a particularly intense form of trance-folk music that has captured the imaginations of artists like William S. Burroughs, Brian Jones, Ornette Coleman and Jane's Addiction. I'm still thrashing out some ideas, but I have already contributed field recordings and liner notes to an upcoming cassette-only released by the Irish label Stitchy Press. I will be returning to the village next June to continue my work.

Joan Connell
Instructor

Lots of great work is being done at Klipsun fall quarter. Editor-in-Chief Katherine Misel and a top-notch editorial staff are pursuing the Winter edition theme of "Forward" with all deliberate speed.

Klipsun writers are turning in some of the best work I've seen in a long time; I'm excited for the finished product to be born. We are updating our website and expect to unveil a new online presence soon.

I'm also teaching J-404 while John Harris is on leave. I'm taking a studio approach to explore immersive techniques of narrative journalism in a multimedia environment. We're using the Medium publishing platform to produce multimedia narratives in draft format, do free writing and other exercises. Our airy seminar classroom on the top floor of Academic West has accommodated lively conversations, brave experiments (photos! playlists! podcasts! maps!) and a mutually supportive environment of young writers who inspire me daily.

In a return to my roots as a religion and ethics writer and editor, I'm wrapping up work on a book with scripture scholar

Adam Bartholomew -- "Healing All Creation: Genesis, Jesus and the Gospel of Mark." Pitched to millennials and people of all faiths, the book explores a spiritual response to a troubled world. It seeks to examine biblical narratives and the works of contemporary Christian and Jewish theologians and spiritual leaders, particularly women. Adam is using a draft of "Healing All Creation" as the text in his current class on scripture and the environment at Gonzaga University. We are cheered by the positive response.



Joe Gosen
Assistant professor

Time flies, as they say – I am already in my third year at Western! My experiences each day with students, faculty, staff and alums are a constant reminder of why this is such a special place to learn and grow. I continue to teach in our visual journalism track and have added a couple of other courses. During the 2016 summer session I taught the editing course and in winter 2017 I will be teaching newswriting. I also continue to advise our school's student chapter of the National Press Photographers Association.

On the research front, I have been working on a project with Professor Bowe examining wire service photo coverage related to the burkini ban in France. In April I presented a paper at the Western Social Science Association annual conference in Reno, Nevada, about incorporating community partners into a visual journalism capstone course. I also served as a discussant on a panel about entertainment media.

My involvement with Western's Community Engagement Fellowship last year inspired me on so many levels and continues to do so today. The fellowship really helped me foster connections across campus and in the greater community, which enhanced my advanced visual journalism classes. In the spring students explored the themes of sustainability and historic preservation in Bellingham's downtown core while the students in the fall worked on projects related to the rural-

urban divide. Their efforts can be viewed on a website they created – 48degreesnorth.com.

While I would love to recognize all of the great student work being done across the visual journalism track, I will highlight two noteworthy projects. I had the privilege of being the faculty advisor for Kristin Foster's honors project, a 15-minute documentary about WWU's women's rowing team. I also had an opportunity to work on a series of video profiles for an independent study with Daniella Beccaria for Block 52 Preservation Trust, which is a group of small business owners that is working to establish affordable commercial space for artistic and business incubating opportunities in the downtown core.

In addition to the student projects, I helped Professor Howie film a student profile for a Woodring College initiative called Family and Community Engaged Teaching. While this initial video will be used for recruitment and funding efforts, there are plans to include it with a series of videos intended to help pre-service teachers understand how to work with human services professionals.



John Harris
Associate professor

Fall quarter I finished writing a book on the Cleveland Browns. Even the most casual follower of the National Football League knows the Browns are a joke. As of this writing they're headed for a winless season: 0-16. It wasn't always that way; at one time they were the most dominant franchise in pro football. I wrote a magazine piece about the 1964 squad that won the NFL championship, and

after it was published Kent State University Press asked me to write a book about the team.

It's been a lot of work, but a labor of love. I grew up in Ohio and was a Browns fan from about age 8 on. This project allowed me to interview some of the old-timers I rooted for as a boy. It

also made me put into practice what I teach my students: write short sentences, use strong verbs, avoid adjectives, beware of adverbs, cut the clutter, don't overdo dashes and semicolons.

I enjoy teaching the basics of writing, because despite the uncertain future of journalism they'll always be invaluable tools. Don't forget it.

Stephen Howie
Senior instructor

For the last year, I have been co-writing a book on how lifestyle affects cancer risk and outcomes with the director of the Integrative Medicine Program at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. The project has given me the opportunity to get back to long-form writing, which has been both challenging and rewarding. I have enjoyed interviewing cancer survivors and hearing their incredible stories. In addition, I have interviewed some of the world's top scientists about their research and discoveries related to cancer and lifestyle. The experience has inspired me to start meditating and think more about diet, exercise and maintaining a balanced life.

During the 2015-16 academic year, I teamed up with assistant professor Joe Gosen to create a five-minute video profile for the Human Services Program at Woodring, featuring one of their graduating seniors. The project allowed Joe and me to work with a new motorized steady cam. In the wake of that experience, I submitted a successful proposal to have the university purchase two similar steady cams, which are now available for students to check out and use from the equipment loan pool.

Another video that I shot and co-produced with assistant professor Maria McLeod is being featured this fall as part of a social justice film festival. The piece focuses on the late WWU

Professor and peace activist Howard Harris, who, along with his wife, started the Bellingham Peace Vigil in 1966. The weekly vigil, which is in its 50th year, is the longest running peace vigil in the United States.

In terms of teaching, I am living on a steady diet of news writing and editing, with an occasional side dish of digital storytelling. I am continually impressed by the quality and engagement of our journalism majors and their dedication to the craft. Just this week, I had two former students, Kera Wanielista and Marilyn Napier, visit my newswriting course to discuss the challenge of covering the Cascadia Mall shooting in Burlington that left five people dead. Kera and Marilyn made me realize how important our teaching is and how central issues of ethics and empathy are to good journalism and good journalists.

Other than that, I am building a cedar sauna that I plan to use all the time if and when it is finally completed.



Jack Keith
Senior Instructor

I've started my 11th year in Western's journalism department, and I'm happy to say that I now work exclusively in the role of faculty adviser to The Western Front. I love helping develop our student journalists and get a great sense of pride when they launch their careers at newspapers, public relations companies and other

businesses that seek out Western's top-notch graduates.

I bring in guest speakers each quarter, and we've been hearing a clear message about how the media field is changing. No longer are reporters simply writing stories; these days they are expected to provide visual journalism skills as well. So at the Front, we have stepped up our focus on photography. A year ago, Lydia Love came on board the Front to assist me with teaching students about shooting videos. Lydia is a Western visual

journalism grad who works in our department as an assistant to Karen Smith, and she's been a terrific addition. We now require every Front student to shoot photos and videos to get them better prepared for today's evolving journalism jobs.

We pride ourselves in consistently winning awards, and last year the Front was named one of the top three student newspapers in the Northwest. We're also still celebrating the Pulitzer Prize won by a Seattle Times team of reporters, photographers and online news producers -- many of them Western journalism graduates -- for their in-depth coverage of the tragic Oso landslide near Seattle in 2014.

I've had a wonderful year in my personal life. Here are three top things:

1. I shot a hole-in-one playing golf last summer. I actually had another one when I was in my mid-20s.

2. My wife and I are proud that our oldest grandchild, Adam Smiley, 21, will be graduating from college next spring and getting married to his longtime girlfriend in July.

3. As many of you know, my lifelong favorite sports team is the Chicago Cubs, and this fall they won their first World Series title in 108 years.

I'd call 2016 one of my best years ever.



Jennifer Keller
Associate professor

It's hard to believe I've been at Western for nearly a decade now and am beginning my third year as chair of the department. It's been a wild (but fun) ride so far!

When I joined Western, the PR track consisted of two PR-specific classes (Principles of PR and Campaigns) and myself (with our chair, Shearlean Duke, who taught the campaigns course). Since then we've added both PR Writing and

PR Case Studies, and hired two more full-time PR professors: Maria McLeod in 2012 and Derek Moscato this year. I am so excited to have two amazing people teaching PR with me!

In addition to finding a new PR person I also served on the search committee for the new dean of the college of humanities and social sciences (CHSS). We miss Dean LeaAnn Martin, who retired in July, but our new dean, Brent Mallinckrodt, seems like he'll be a great fit.

I didn't have time for a lot of research this year but am happy to report that I'll be taking some professional leave next year to focus on a paper related to how media uses Twitter

in articles (source, subject, etc.). I'm also presenting a paper at AEJMC in March on Twitter use by Trump and Clinton following the debates. In addition, I'm continuing my work with the community as both a community engagement fellow (a group made up of both Western faculty and community partners) and part of the Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP). Through SCP nearly a dozen courses across campus are partnering with the city of Edmonds to provide everything from mobile apps to ecological surveys to PR campaigns. This fall the 440 class developed plans to promote the Arts/Cultural Corridor in Edmonds. The City of Edmonds lauded their ideas and issued a press release that led to a story in My Edmonds News.

On the personal side, I was really happy to celebrate my 50th with friends and family, including some of my #JKids. Then we had a fantastic trip to Italy this summer to celebrate Mark's and my birthdays. And, of course, the most important thing (and something I feared I'd never be able to write): The Cubs won the World Series!!! (This also made Jack Keith extremely happy.)

Maria McLeod
Assistant professor

Winter quarter 2015 through fall quarter 2016 proved to be an action-packed academic year. I attended two conferences, one being AEJMC's Minorities and Communication Division where I presented on "Reframing the College-Campus Race Conversation Through First-Person Accounts Derived from In-Depth Interviews." This work resulted from my Spratlen grant project: "First Person: Diverse Student Stories," a play I wrote from interviews with Western students, which was performed on campus last fall. It will be performed again, this winter, Feb. 23 and 24, as part of Western's Campus Race and Inclusion Forum for Western faculty, staff and students.

In October 2016, I traveled to the annual Public Relations Society of America conference to present on utilizing Vine video to produce promotional nonprofit narratives through multi-platform and transmedia storytelling. As my presentation was part of a pedagogical poster session, I had the opportunity to meet PR professors from across the U.S. and to see a range of ideas and examples for teaching PR.

Of course, the greatest joy of my position is teaching. I've continued to teach Intro to Mass Media, Principles of PR, and Advanced PR Writing & Techniques as well as sometimes serving as internship advisor. One classroom highlight occurred last spring in Principles of PR. Near the end of the quarter, I contacted one of the organizations for whom one student team had developed a mock pitch: Chipotle. In response to my inquiry, they provided burritos for the entire class, helping to create a great end-of-quarter celebration in line with student campaign presentations, scoring some Chipotle fans in the process — a good PR move (insert wink emoji here).





Derek Moscato
Assistant professor

This is my first year at Western Washington University and the Department of Journalism, and while I've only finished my first quarter of teaching, it has been a very rewarding journey to date. The welcome from the university and my colleagues has been extraordinary, and I've been very impressed with our students, not only in terms of their academic

acumen but also their meaningful engagement with the university community as well as the Bellingham and Whatcom County communities

This engagement is evidenced in the classroom as well. One of the courses I am teaching this year is called Case Studies in Public Relations, which explores best practices in strategic communication through investigation of organization-specific communication cases. As part of this class, our students have chosen to connect with Bellingham area retailers, government agencies, and not-for-profits to assess opportunities and challenges in media relations, social media, crisis communication and corporate social responsibility—and develop cases of their

own. I also taught Principles of Public Relations this past fall, where this year's dynamic news environment sparked lively discussions about the role of strategic communication in public life.

These themes are also paramount in my research, which focuses on the intersection of strategic communication with environmentalism and globalization. I have recently published a study about the DamNation documentary and campaign by outdoor apparel maker Patagonia, and how the company's efforts align with both corporate responsibility and environmental activism. Earlier this summer, I presented a study at the annual International Association of Media and Communication Research conference about the rise of so-called astroturfing in environmental politics, particularly in the realm of oil and gas pipelines.

I arrived at Western this past summer, after having spent three years in Eugene, Oregon at the University of Oregon, where I am completing my PhD. Previous to my time in Eugene, I worked professionally in public relations and journalism positions in Vancouver, B.C.—including PR leadership roles at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia, and teaching in the professional writing program at Douglas College. My family and I are thrilled to now be situated in Bellingham, and look forward to exploring this area's incredible natural environment and enjoying the many recreational activities that are possible here.

Carolyn Nielsen
Associate professor

I have spent most of the past year on professional leave working on research that will culminate in my doctoral dissertation – and, hopefully, published work. Broadly, this work explores how reporters working in different paradigms of journalism cover racial issues. It looks at traditional journalism alongside something I'm calling the "Interactive Race Beat" (NPR's Code Switch blog) and Journalism 3.0 (think BuzzFeed).

After reading more than 3,500 news articles looking at key racial moments from the 2008 election of Barack Obama through the aftermath of the Ferguson grand jury decision and identifying sourcing trends and narrative patterns in the coverage, I have been interviewing journalists about their work routines and their ideals. It has been compelling, immersive work and I have loved every moment of it. That said, I have missed my students, colleagues and being on campus. I look forward to returning in January and bringing what I have learned into the classroom with me. I am hoping to finish the PhD by June. (There now, I have put it in writing, so that was either motivating or an extremely poor decision.)

Over the summer, I was awarded a doctoral fellowship at Wayne State University in Detroit and had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Donald Shaw (of agenda-setting theory fame) and brainstorm with other journalism scholars who are also interested in digital transformations in the field of journalism. It's such a cool thing to see how many ways other scholars are thinking about and teaching about these issues.

I always enjoy receiving emails and updates from our alums, so please keep in touch!



Sheila Webb
Professor

I was fortunate to receive sabbatical for fall 2015 and devoted that time to producing the article “Radical Portrayals: Dickey Chapelle on the Front Lines” for a special issue of American Periodicals devoted to war coverage. Drawing from the archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society, I described the sojourn of photojournalist Dickey Chapelle into the Oriente Hills in Cuba, where she photographed Fidel Castro with his troops and then accompanied them on their march into Havana in January of 1959. I was also pleased to receive a grant that allowed me to conduct research at the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library on the visual self-presentation of suffragists in newspapers and magazines. Based on this work, I will be presenting “The Spectacle of Suffrage: Visual & Cultural Representations of Suffragists in Popular Magazines” in New York City in March. I enjoy interacting with students across campus, and last spring taught the Coverage of Science and

Technology in the Media for the Honors Program. WWU’s Viking Launch program aims to acclimate new students to campus, and our department’s class on photo and design was the most-attended offering last summer. I also enjoyed supervising our summer interns, which gives us insight into the career paths our students take and embodies the goals of the department at the same time it benefits the community.



Peggy Watt
Associate professor

I’ve been teaching two of my favorite classes: media law and reporting, and this fall we had a new twist: J-397G, an elective that could count as J-307 and focused on covering the presidential campaign and election from a local angle. Students went out into the community, attending debate watch parties and election night events sponsored by a wide variety of political groups. They learned about polls and campaign finance rules and, most of all, about the issues that concern people in Whatcom County. You can see their work on BellinghamMatters.com.

As a 2015-16 Community Engagement Fellow, I joined other faculty and community members exploring ways to strengthen community engagement in courses. In the J-450 Advanced Reporting class in spring quarter 2016, students worked in teams with news partners on long-term investigative projects that were published in local media. Two stories on rental inspection issues ran in the Bellingham Business Journal (May and June 2016 issues), the Skagit Valley Herald published a report on carbon emissions standards on July 3, an article on the “food desert” created by the closing of the Bellingham Albertsons appeared in the July 2016 issue of Whatcom Watch and a piece on resources for homeless women and children ran in the August 2016 issue of Whatcom Watch.

We’ve had a recent bump in news/editorial majors, and I think it’s because Western has been hosting the Washington Journalism Education Association “J Camp” for high school journalists and advisers. The Front, Klipsun and Planet have open houses during the high school journalists’ conference, and I usually teach a couple workshops on media law, with advice on how to get public records from their school district.

I also have enjoyed advising Western’s student chapter of Society of Professional Journalists, which is small but energetic. We were recognized as the outstanding student chapter for District 10 in 2015-16.

This academic year ends early for me, as I was granted professional leave for both winter and spring quarters to pursue research on public records issues. This may involve some exotic trips to Olympia, because the legislature is considering ways to amend the Public Records Act. I’m also studying the cost of complying with public records requests, and how agencies can use technology to process them more efficiently. Next year, media law and reporting classes will hear what I learn.



emeriti faculty

Floyd McKay

Floyd McKay's new book, *Reporting the Oregon Story: How Activists and Visionaries Transformed a State*, is doing well in the region, particularly in Oregon (of course). It is a political and media memoir of the period 1964-1986 when Oregon was leading the nation in environmental policy, and Floyd was covering the story. Oregon State University Press is the publisher.

It was a lively year for Floyd; he was named outstanding alumnus of Linfield College, published a book and, oh yes, had a heart attack just as the book was coming out; he's fine, but with eight stents in his clogged arteries!

Otherwise, not much is going on; he and Dixie continue to enjoy life on 14th Street and Bellingham in general. No new books—or heart attacks—are planned in 2017.

Tim Pilgrim

Tim Pilgrim, who retired in 2013, still writes poetry — he published 77 poems in 2016, 33 of them in a book, "Mapping water," available at FlyingTroutPress.org.

He relies on Hope, the journalism department server, which gets more than a million hits a year (288,580 in October alone) from visitors around the world looking for mass media material and links to alternative media (see <http://hope.journ.wvu.edu/tpilgrim>).

Pilgrim still hikes (no more running, only yoga and exercise biking) and travels with Carolyn Dale. Sometimes in the summer, they can be seen dancing at Elizabeth Park.

Lyle Harris

So, we were looking at Mount Baker on a dry afternoon in November when I turned around to go back to our house in the woods and noticed a large white rabbit stuck in a fork between two huge branches in a big maple tree. Odd, I thought -- as you do, too, I'm sure. It didn't move when I petted it, so we determined it was a mushroom. It was, in fact, a 10.5-pound Lion's Mane, an edible mushroom with flavors of lobster and nuts. It measured a foot across and 14 inches long to the root. Next, we had friends over and drank lots of toasts to the Lion's Mane, discussed how to prepare it and then carefully put it outside in a container for the night. The next day I spent two hours cleaning it and cutting it into slices. We froze some of it and sautéed several pieces in olive oil with a touch of garlic. Heavenly!

I would like this accomplishment mentioned prominently in my obituary!

Carolyn Dale

Now in my second year of retirement, I'm working on the second half of my second novel. As for the first one, after a round of copyediting, I'll try sending it out to the vast, cold publishing world. After which, I may publish it myself.

During the past year, I published an e-book for the first time, a memoir written by my grandmother about early pioneer life in Washington state. And I've wrapped up a year of monthly columns that I post on my website, www.carolyndale.com.

At first, I started writing humorous pieces, but the last couple have been more serious looks at current politics from a woman's—and a journalist's—viewpoint.

This year I also edited several fine books of poetry and fiction, work that often reminds me of my time at Western. And between these bouts of work have been travels to favorite places like Colorado, Canada, New Mexico and Hawaii. But Bellingham remains the best place anywhere for spending the summer, especially being by the water and hiking in the mountains.

R.E. "Ted" Stannard

Femmy and I did a lot of "tripping" in 2016.

Apart from an April trip in our bedroom that gave Femmy three weeks in rehab with a double-pelvic fracture, our trips included:

- * Christmas and New Year to Shaoxing, China, the hometown of my childhood and youth, as guests of the hospital my father headed;
- * May visiting Femmy's Dutch sisters in the north and south of Holland, and a Dutch nephew's wedding near the eastern border;
- * A June week at a Lake Chelan timeshare with my Hawaiian sister and her husband, with boat to Stehekin, and float-plane back;
- * Then another week driving down the Oregon coast to see my elder sister in Medford and nearby old town of Jacksonville.
- * An August day-drive down Whidbey Island to Port Townsend, returning on I-5 because the ferry was booked up.
- * In October, a colorful guided group-week in Cuba with the KCTS tour led by the station's president.

Otherwise, we were mostly at home pattering at my lifetime project of bringing order to the chaos in our den and garage. Retirement is full of challenges, interesting and otherwise.

Happy New Year!

*Thank you to our emeriti faculty and alumni,
who have strengthened the department for each
generation of journalists that follows.*

alumni updates

2016:

Becky Campbell has launched her own business in the field of genealogy, Life Stories Transcription Services. Her business can be found at lifestoriestranscription.com, and her blog can be found at thehipsterhistorian.com.

Genevieve Carrillo is marketing coordinator at U.S. Rowing, based in Princeton, New Jersey.

Sarah Climaco is a marketing assistant at Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism.

Ashley Hiroko is a reporter with The Lynden Tribune.

Robert Krause is a customer service associate at Ryman Hospitality Properties at The Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, Tennessee and the game day fan host for the Nashville Sounds Baseball Club.

Marilyn Napier is currently working as a reporter at the Skagit Valley Herald.

2015:

Daniella Beccaria is a staff photographer at The Daily Herald in Everett.

Rhoades Clark is the communications and marketing coordinator for the Downtown Seattle Association.

Tyler Crebar is a development associate for Washington State University Athletics.

Becca Freimuth has accepted a job with LocalTel Wenatchee, a cable service that is initiated local programming on its channels serving the Wenatchee area.

Stefanie Donahue is editor of The Northern Light, part of Point Roberts Press in Blaine, Washington.

Sigourney Gundy is the community and communications outreach fellow at Equity in Education Coalition.

Joshua Hart has been promoted to sports editor at The Daily News in Longview.

Anna Jentoft is a brand specialist for Amazon.

Kari Kato was just named an executive assistant/front office coordinator for Weber Shandwick PR in Bellevue.

Stephanie Kirk is an account executive at Curator.

Danny Miller is a staff photojournalist for The Daily Astorian in Oregon.

Shelby Moyer is the education reporter for the Tacoma News Tribune.

Danielle Oyama is the associate community manager at WeWork.

Jake Parrish has just started work as a photographer for the Yakima Herald-Republic. He previously worked at his hometown Coeur d' Alene Press.

Kameron Payne is public relations specialist for the Bellingham United, part of the Whatcom Sports Commission.

Elana Pidgeon is a digital content coordinator for Microsoft.

Evelyn Sisk is the assistant video producer for Veritas Media productions in Bellingham.

Keegan Strandness is a support manager for Holly Community Services.

Teena Thach is the social media manager at Socedo.

Josiah Ubben is a user experience designer at Ben Kinney companies.

Alexandra Withrow is the public relations specialist at Weidner Apartment Homes.

Annika Wolters is in the master's program at the Walter Cronkite School of Mass Communication and Journalism at Arizona State University. Between classes, she is regularly singing jazz/blues/pop gigs in Phoenix.

Devon Zahm is an account coordinator JMPR Public Relations.

2014:

Mason Luvera is director of communications for the Downtown Bellingham Partnership.

Georgina Napp is now executive project manager at Altig, the American Income Life Insurance Company, in Redmond.

2013:

Nasra Mohamud is a graduate student at the University of Illinois, Chicago, pursuing a degree in nursing.

Samantha Wohlfeil is now a reporter for Pacific Northwest Inlander in Spokane, Washington.

2012:

Gina Cole has been promoted to assistant editor/digital at The Seattle Times.

Paige Collins has been promoted to assistant features editor — online at The Seattle Times.

Erin Nash is a photographer with Lens Joy Photography in Leavenworth.

Elysia Nazareth is manager of international corporate affairs at the Alibaba Group, working out of San Francisco.

Kirsten O'Brien is homepage and social media editor at seattlepi.com.

Marya Purrington is a senior account executive at The Feary Group in Seattle.

2011:

Chelsea Asplund is senior communications specialist at Capital Insurance Group in Monterey, California.

Winnie Cao is senior associate for content marketing and outreach at iProspect in San Diego.

Elise Harrington is a marketing specialist at Nintex in Bellevue.

Andrew Lang is content specialist at Seattle Goodwill Industries, producing newsletter copy and photography and supporting social media projects.

Ben Woodard is the metro producer for The Seattle Times.

2010:

Allison Milton is a public relations manager at Expedia.

Amy Sanford completed a Masters Certificate in Human Centered Design and Engineering at the University of Washington and is SEO Manager at Sesame Communications in Seattle.

Colleen Toomey completed a master of public administration at the University of Washington Evans School in June 2016.

Stephanie (Castillo) Twining is now a social media marketing manager at REI in Seattle.

Jillian Vasquez completed a master's degree in comparative literature at University College in London and is now marketing manager for ACT Theatre in Seattle.

2009:

Coral Garnick is now a reporter for the Puget Sound Business Journal.

Danielle (Koagel) Lothrop is development officer at Leaf Nation and pursuing an MBA at the University of Washington at Bothell.

Paul Suarez is digital marketing manager for Cadet Heat, in Vancouver, Washington.

2008:

Kacie Leacy has become a shareholder at JayRay Ads & PR in Tacoma. As a senior advisor and principal, Kacie will continue leading work with clients while participating in JayRay business strategy and operational decisions. She started at JayRay as a college intern in 2007, and has expanded JayRay's digital expertise in social media, paid advertising and video.

Erin Miller is the director of development for Seattle Parks Foundation.

Nick Rohde is web and content developer at the University of Washington.

2007:

Amy Harder is covering energy issues for Axios in Washington, D.C.

2006:

Matthew Anderson and Brittany (Greenfield) Anderson (2007) moved to Budapest, Hungary in August so Matthew could attend graduate school. The couple and their three sons -- Oliver (5), Elijah

(5) and Job (1) -- are greatly enjoying living in Europe. Matthew just finished his first semester of a two-year program at Budapest Metropolitan University, where he's earning a master's degree in communications and media studies, and the family is looking forward to a little European travel during the break while they begin planning for life after school.

Megan Lum was recently promoted to employee engagement manager at the Better Business Bureau Northwest in DuPont, Washington.

2005:

Paolo Mottola is manager of content marketing at REI. In in March 2016 he began teaching storytelling and content strategy in the Communication Leadership program at the University of Washington.

2004:

Jeanna Barrett has started her own company, First Page Strategy, based in the San Francisco Bay Area, although her office is "virtual" and she works wherever she travels. She provides marketing consulting to startups and other businesses interested in driving brand awareness through multiple channels, including social media. Website: firstpagestrategy.com.

2001:

Andrea Abney is a self-support specialist with Vendini, writing manuals product manuals, product releases and other support materials for this software company based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Kelly Cudworth is president of NuLeaf Office Solutions and recently became a board member of the SoDo Business Improvement Area.

1997:

Jody (Lindstrom) Yarborough is enjoying life in Silicon Valley with her husband and golden retriever puppy. Between her freelancing clients, blog writing, and volunteering in disability advocacy, her days are very full. Connect with her on jodywritenow.com.

1992:

Scott Ayers is marketing and communications manager at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas.

1991:

Tim Boyles has retired from photographing celebrities in Tampa Bay for Getty Images. He has returned to his Altoona, Pennsylvania, hometown to be with his family and open a photography studio. His photographs have been published in *Time*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Washington Post* and the front pages of the *New York Times* and *USA Today*. In 2013, he was Nik Wallenda's personal photographer when he walked across the Grand Canyon on a high wire, as well as in 2014 when he walked across a high wire above the Chicago skyline. He is always looking for interesting people to photograph.

1990:

David Cuillier was awarded the Wells Memorial Key, the highest honor for a member of the Society of Professional Journalists, at the 2016 national convention in New Orleans. The award recognizes outstanding service to the organization and the profession. Cuillier is past national president and former chair of the Freedom of Information Committee, and has conducted FOI training around the country as well as testifying in Congress about FOIA reform. He is currently director of the University of Arizona School of Journalism in Tucson.

1987:

Jackie Zils has earned her Accreditation in Public Relations. The professional certification demonstrates a mastery of strategic communications practice and a commitment to lifelong learning and ethical standards. Jackie is an advisor at JayRay Ads & PR in Tacoma.

1986:

Ron Judd earned his master's degree in history from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. His thesis was "The Liberal Arts on Trial: Red Scare Politics and Charles H. Fisher at Western Washington College of Education, 1933-39."

Gary Nevan recently retired after 28 years as publisher and owner of the *Columbia Press* in Warrenton, Oregon. His dedication was recognized by community members, including the city commission, which recognized him as "a voice for this community through the *Columbia Press*."

1978:

Ed Mund wrote "Foundations of EMS Systems" and co-wrote "Public Information and Community Relations," two of the 13 textbooks in the curriculum for a bachelors in emergency medical services management. Ed is a self-employed technical writer specializing in the fire service, public health and emergency preparedness fields. He has been a volunteer firefighter/emergency medical technician for more than 25 years and serves in leadership positions in the Washington State Fire Fighters' Association and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

Sherry Wickwire is assistant vice president of wealth management marketing in the Investment and Fiduciary Services Department at Wells Fargo's corporate headquarters in San Francisco.

Former Journalism Staffer Celebrates 99th Birthday

Verdie Watson, who served as journalism department secretary/manager from 1979 to 1982, will celebrate her 99th birthday this spring.

She shares the April 8 birthdate with her grandson, JJ, who will turn 18.

"I'm still hanging around. I'm up in years, but I'm still active," Watson said. She keeps busy with church activities, genealogy research and both community and family events. She's part of a breakfast group of Western retirees who have met weekly for decades.

One son, Jeff, lives in Bellingham while her other son, Jay, visits regularly; he's an American Airlines pilot based in Dallas.

When she worked with the Department of Journalism, it was in a house on the corner of Pine and Garden Streets. (Western Front staffers still autograph the sign that was posted in front of that house for years). The only full-time faculty members were Gerson Miller, Pete Steffens, R.E. "Ted" Stannard, Lyle Harris and Carolyn Dale. Some classes were taught by adjuncts, many of whom were editors or writers at the *Bellingham Herald*.

Watson retired in 1985 after a few years working in the music department, but she says she retains affection for her years in journalism.

"It was a great bunch of people and I appreciated being there," she said, adding that she has enjoyed running into emeritus faculty in town recently.

Alumni who'd like to get in touch with Verdie Watson can reach her at verdiebird@msn.com.

donations appreciated

Every year, alumni, corporations and friends of the journalism department contribute to the journalism alumni fund, the Gerson Miller Memorial Scholarship, Pete Steffens Native American Journalism Scholarship and the Shearlean Duke Memorial Scholarship. If you wish to support a particular student publication or club, each can accept gifts individually. The alumni fund pays for subscriptions in the journalism library and goes toward scholarships and other special student needs such as the Scholars Week reception.

The faculty, staff and students thank you for your generous monetary donations and in-kind contributions, such as photographs to display in the department. A plaque in the journalism library pays tribute to alumni for increasing the library's subscription and student resources. These donations allow the department to support students and give them the best opportunities available.

Remember, check with employers because some companies will match your contributions.

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keep in touch

Have we heard from you lately? Keep us posted on your career changes, travel adventures, graduate degrees or any personal updates you want to share. Alumni news will be added to our online edition of the journalism newsletter.

Send your news to Karen Smith via email to karen.smith@wwu.edu; via fax to (360) 650-2848, or to Western Washington University, Department of Journalism, MS 9161, 516 High Street, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Complete alumni news and updates can be found on the web: chss.wwu.edu/journalism.

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