

## Live from Baghdad

### Students connect with U.S. ambassador to Iraq in conference call

In late November 21 Whitman students experienced an exceptional learning moment in their expanding academic lives: an audience with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq **Ryan Crocker '71**.

Crocker talked live from Baghdad with students in Shampa Biswas and Bruce Magnusson's class on the Iraq War via a videoconference that filled a full class session.

At 7:30 p.m. in Baghdad — 8:30 a.m. in Walla Walla — Crocker greeted the students, two professors and Whitman College President George Bridges and Provost and Dean of the Faculty Lori Bettison-Varga, all gathered in a class-



Students in a politics class on the Iraq War talked to Ryan Crocker '71, U.S. ambassador to Iraq, in November via videoconference.

room specially equipped for videoconferences.

Magnusson introduced the ambassador and shared highlights of his resume, including his ties to Whitman. Crocker thanked the students for attending, joking that the early hour in Walla Walla probably seemed like “the middle of the night in undergraduate time.”

Biswas and Magnusson's students prepared more than a dozen questions in advance of the session. They ran the gamut of issues, from “the largest single obstacle to achieving U.S. objectives in Iraq” to “the domestic cost of continued spending in Iraq and the war on terror” to “U.S. citizens' understanding of world events, particularly in Iraq and Arabic-speaking countries.”

“The ambassador was receptive to all of the questions asked and answered them in some depth,” said Magnusson.

“He was particularly attentive to ques-

tions about the sectarian tensions at play in the creation of a new government in Iraq and spoke to those at length.”

“His answers demonstrated his strong grasp of regional issues and wide diplomatic experience,” said Biswas. “The ambassador is exceptionally sharp and able to think on his feet.”

“He reaffirmed the complexity of the issues in Iraq that we have tried to get across in class,” Magnusson added.

Biswas noted that “The Iraq War” course was designed as an international politics class that uses the war as a springboard for questions about the politics of international law, the future of the United Nations, the implications of a privatized military and other issues.

She and Magnusson were quick to salute their students for their contributions to the videoconference and the class. “They are an exceptional, highly motivated group,” said Biswas. “They have really grappled with some difficult

issues from a variety of perspectives.”

Crocker was expansive throughout the session. He also was mindful of his core audience — Biswas and Magnusson's students — and the roles they likely will play in the future of the country and the world.

For those considering a career in foreign service, he offered two essential pieces of advice: Acquire proficiency in a second language and work diligently to gain a deep understanding of history.

“To study the Iraq War as we have, and then be able to talk live to the most important policymaker on the issue, was a special experience — for all of us,” said Biswas.

Coincidental with the videoconference, a flag memorial honoring American soldiers and Iraqi civilians killed in the Iraq War was installed on Ankeny Field. Some 165,000 red and white flags made up the installation, which culminated with a candlelight vigil and an open forum on the Iraq War.

— Keith Raether

## Longtime organic chemistry Professor Skip Wade retires

In 1989 Leroy Grover “Skip” Wade brought to Whitman his expertise in organic chemistry, his interest in advising undergraduates, a profound working knowledge of forensic chemistry, a skill for repairing string instruments and a desire to teach at a place like Whitman, where he believes the art of teaching is more valued and appreciated than at large research institutions like Colorado State University, his former employer.

Over the past 19 years Wade has parlayed these attributes into a remarkable — even by Whitman standards — and memorable career. As he prepares to retire in December, he packs up an office filled with textbooks, among them his own “Organic Chemistry.” Now in its sixth edition, his text is recognized as one of the best in its category. It has been printed in Japanese, Spanish, Chinese and Korean. “There was an edition printed for schools in India, but that one is in English, too,” he said.

A quick survey of Wade's office reveals a handmade card from one of his students, awards he has received while at Whitman and photos of his daughters: Jennifer, who flies fighter jets in Korea, and Christine, who will receive her doctorate in child psychology this spring. As he talks about his daughters, whom he brought up with the idea that “they could do anything they wanted if they were willing to work for it” and whom he hopes to visit often in retirement, the familiar Wade grin lights up his face.

He will, of course, miss the students when he retires. “When I've gone through hard times, they were very understanding and supportive.”

Each year of students, which Wade has gotten to know in class and in the lab, has its own distinct personality. There's more empathy at Whitman than a lot of places, he maintains.

“The students here really appreciate education, and their parents appreciate education, and so you get a

really nice bunch of students.”

Some of Wade's memorable professional moments include receiving the Lange Award for Distinguished Science Teaching in 1993 and the Premed Mentoring and Advising Award in 2005, as well as working closely with the people at the Murdock Trust and attending the first 13 Murdock Science Research conferences.

When presenting Wade with the Lange Award in 1993, the dean of the faculty remarked: “Great teachers love their subject and show it and share it with students. They care about students. They feel privileged to teach. Leroy ‘Skip’ Wade is such a teacher.”

Wade maintains that it's a good time to let young people take his place, invigorating the department with enthusiasm, new ideas, and new and active research.

Before he can relax, however, there is more work to do. “I have to revise my book first,” he said. Then he and his wife, Sandra, will travel, and he hopes to return to hunting and fishing. He will definitely continue as a seasonal deputy for the Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office river patrol. “It gets me outdoors and gets me in shape, and I get to interact with people while I'm involved in boating and water sports,” he said.

Wade hopes Whitman maintains and strengthens the qualities that brought him to the college 19 years ago.

“I came to Whitman because it was and is different; it excels at undergraduate education,” he said. “Our support doesn't come primarily from the NSF (National Science Foundation) or the NIH (National Institutes of Health), but from our students, their parents and our alumni. ... Our faculty must continue to emphasize and improve their strengths in the areas and activities that make Whitman College a superior place for undergraduate students.”

— Lenel Parish



Skip Wade



Photo courtesy of U.S. Embassy in Pakistan

Crocker served as ambassador to Pakistan prior to his post in Iraq.

Hiking, kayaking, rafting and bonding create lifetime memories for three decades of first-years



30 years of Scrambles

Ginny Robbins '08



(Left) Packing up and heading out: This photo is from one of the early Scrambles. (Above) The 2007 Scrambles Olympic Gold Gallivanting trip provided the "ultimate combination of backpack trekking, beach-bumming and ocean views in Olympic National Park." Left to right: Luxas Heyvaert '11, Chad Trexler '11, Allan Crum '11, Caitlin Johnston '11, Marie Westover '10, Roxy Pierson '11 and Robin Lewis '11.

For the past 30 years Whitman first-years have been bonding with classmates, upperclassmen and Mother Nature all in one intense week of pre-Whitman activities known as Scrambles. These wilderness-based trips introduce new and seasoned Whitties to each other while also introducing first-years to some of the nonacademic aspects of life at Whitman.

This year's Scrambles in late August featured more outdoor adventures than any other in 30 years, according to Brien Sheedy, director of outdoor programs and lecturer of sport studies. "This year we had 16 trips with 46 leaders and 132 first-year students. The average trip was eight days." Activities included hiking, climbing, sea kayaking, canoeing and rafting.



Brien Sheedy

"We offer a variety of scrambles in varying skill areas," said Sheedy. "The rafting and sea kayaking Scrambles fill up the quickest, but we run more hiking Scrambles than any other." Each year he

has to turn away 30 to 40 Scrambles applicants.

One of the key elements of the program has always been the volunteer student leaders who donate their time and energy. "This was the fifth year of a four-day backcountry Scramble leader training," said Sheedy. Forty-six Scramble leaders split into groups and spent four days training with instructors from the National Outdoor Leadership School, Outward Bound and other outdoor education leaders in the Wallowa Mountains, Mt. Hood, John Day River, Smith Rocks and Canadian Gulf Islands.

Required training for Scrambles leaders includes first aid and CPR, and at least one leader per Scramble must be certified as a wilderness first-responder.

"Without these volunteer leaders, the program would not be possible," said Sheedy.

[www.whitman.edu/outdoor\\_program/scrambles/scrambleslideshow.cfm](http://www.whitman.edu/outdoor_program/scrambles/scrambleslideshow.cfm) For a glimpse of the 2007 Scrambles, see the slide show at



Andy Dappen '76 hams it up for the camera in his Outdoor Program office in this undated photo. He was the first coordinator of the program.



Jenny Kazam Stapleton '92

(Above) Students camp out on Shipwreck Trail on the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island, B.C., Canada, during the 1990 Scrambles.

(Right) Elise Otto '11, left, and Emily Jackson '11, right, finish their required summer reading on the 2007 Scrambles Bodaciously Bouncing Boating trip on the Lower Salmon River along the Idaho-Oregon-Washington border.



Caren Leslie '08



(Above) In this undated photo, Scrambles participants use teamwork to hoist a gear bag into a tree to keep their food away from bears.

Historic photos courtesy of Whitman Outdoor Program

## Student causes, activities illustrate many ways to protect the environment, serve the world

“Turning off the lights is really not enough anymore,” said **Megan Bush '10**, co-chair of the campus chapter of Focus the Nation, an organization planning a Jan. 31, 2008, nationwide teach-in on global warming solutions.

Stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions will require national policy changes, say



Megan Bush



Katie Rouse



Brittany Smith

Bush and co-chair **Katie Rouse '10**. The pair is planning the campus Focus the Nation event, which will stretch over several days in late January rather than the prescribed one day. Whitman's "teach-in" will include lectures and a roundtable discussion.

“It's not a coincidence that this event is set at the opening of an election year,” Bush said. Local and national organizers hope to gain the attention and participation of lawmakers.

While Bush and Rouse don't believe personal and campus conservation efforts alone will solve the global warming problem, they and other members of the Campus Climate Challenge and its parent group Campus Greens continue to work at all levels to preserve the environment.

Campus Greens has 25 active projects or campaigns in progress. They range from creating a Water Reduction and Awareness Campaign to placing composting worm bins in the residence halls to teaching students how to make food and clothes from scratch.

In addition, the Campus Climate Challenge subcommittee working on the Alternative Electricity Donation Fund reported that alumni, parents and friends



Morgan Dumitru '11

**JUST JAMMIN'** — The Do It Yourself Green Whitman Project, an offshoot of Campus Greens, sponsored a jam-making and canning session on a Saturday afternoon in October. Students learned how to can their own food and got a jar of homemade jam to take home for their efforts. Front, left to right, are Alice Bagley '08 and Arianna Cortesi '11. In back, left to right, are Raisa Stebbins '11 and David Mathews '10.

have donated \$14,000 to the cause. The increased funds raised the college's purchase of renewable energy by 12 percent to 30 percent, according to **Brittany Smith '08**, who spearheaded the effort.

For more information about the Alternative Electricity Donation Fund, contact the Whitman Fund Office at (509) 527-5189.

[www.focusthenation.org](http://www.focusthenation.org) For more information on the Focus the Nation event, visit [www.focusthenation.org](http://www.focusthenation.org). or the Whitman Campus Climate Challenge, [www.whitman.edu/climatechallenge](http://www.whitman.edu/climatechallenge). Watch for news about the Whitman Focus the Nation events at [www.whitman.edu](http://www.whitman.edu).

## Whitman Direct Action turns focus to clean water in India

What began as a personal quest to help a 4-year-old Nicaraguan boy after his father was killed in a fishing accident is now an organization of passionate college students driven to help marginalized people across the globe.

Whitman Direct Action is a by-product of the backbreaking summer that students spent building a house in Central America. Before they returned to the United States, they had wrapped their minds around a global problem: astronomical gas prices devastating economies in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. For its encore, the group learned how to make biodiesel and helped form biodiesel cooperatives and resource centers in Central America. The students also hosted an international conference on the subject and created a 110-page technical manual.

In the process of realizing the Build-A-House and Central American Biodiesel projects, WDA solidified its organizational mission: to help people by promoting economically and environmentally sustainable opportunity through community-focused development.

The group does not stand for a specific cause; instead, the passions of its members dictate where the group focuses its attention. Its current emphasis — the Sadhana Clean Water Project to improve safe and sustainable clean water for rural India — takes the work to yet another level.

WDA's appropriate technology study group, with the support of the nongovernmental agency Sadhana Village and United World College students, is already researching the complex socio-political obstacles surrounding previously unsuccessful water projects in the region through surveys, focus groups, personal interviews and participant observations.

“Intensive research and first-hand experiences will allow us to thoroughly explore the problems communities in India face which go beyond reasons of lack of access to technology,” said **Jyotsna Shivanandan '08**.

The research will culminate in a Safe and Sustainable Clean Water conference in Mumbai, India, on March 19, 2008. At the conference, representatives from nongovernmental organizations, government officials, lawyers and community leaders will gather to share knowledge, resources and experiences through presentations, workshops, forums and a water technology fair.

Rather than support one type of water technology, WDA believes in “bringing together a diverse community to network and educate itself and also work with members of that community to better understand some of the underlying problems,” said **Joseph Bornstein '08**, a WDA founder.

WDA will publish a series of case studies outlining the political, cultural, technological and economic obstacles faced by each respective nongovernmental organization, and detail approaches taken to overcome those obstacles.

“Because water solutions are never one-size-fits-all, we believe that generating a series of case studies will provide organizations and communities with the tools and resources needed to design their own creative initiatives to address the specific circumstances of their respective regions,” said **Hugo Vargas '07**, one of the WDA founders.

While WDA members toil away on water project research and conference details, the seniors who have created and nurtured this organization are planning for its future by establishing a board of advisers, including faculty and staff, and recruiting younger students to carry on their mission.



Jyotsna Shivanandan

### INDIA'S WATER BY THE NUMBERS

14 Number of major river systems into which contamination flows.

30 Percentage of viable groundwater reserves that have been tapped.

50 Millions of cubic tons of raw sewage flowing into rivers.

70 Percent of India's surface water that is contaminated.

80 Percent of India's rural water supply that comes from groundwater.

700,000 Number of people who contract water-related diseases annually in the region where Whitman Direct Action will hold its Safe and Sustainable Clean Water Conference in March 2008.

Statistics provided by Whitman Direct Action.

To learn more about Whitman Direct Action and for updates on the Sadhana Clean Water Project, visit [www.whitmandirectaction.org](http://www.whitmandirectaction.org).

## Talent, drive propel senior onto world cycling scene

It takes a minimal stretch of the imagination to understand why Whitman College senior **Mara Abbott** might feel a bit dizzy at times. Abbott, an economics major, has watched her stock in the world of women's professional cycling skyrocket in recent months, hitting one stunning plateau after another.

The latest surge in Abbott's rising star came at the end of October, when she signed with the T-Mobile cycling team, a powerhouse squad based in Germany and San Luis Obispo, Calif., that finished the 2007 season at the top of the International Cycling Union rankings. In many ways, riding with T-Mobile as a 22-year-old is like being a rookie with the New York Yankees in baseball or Manchester United in soccer.

Of the 13 riders on the new team's roster, Abbott is one of only two Americans and its second youngest athlete. The roster features five riders from Germany, including 23-year-old Luise Keller, the country's reigning national road champion, and Judith Arndt, a 31-year-old veteran with a raft of world and Olympic victories on her resume. Three Australians and riders from Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands also grace the roster.

"It is kind of unbelievable for me to ride with T-Mobile," Abbott admits.

"It's definitely the best team I could aspire to be on. I alternate between days when it feels totally unbelievable and days when it feels normal."

More often than not, however, Abbott sees no logical reason why she should not be riding with the world's best. And that says a lot about a confident 5-foot-4-inch dynamo driven by seemingly inexhaustible stores of energy. After three-plus years of juggling school, cycling and the varsity swim team, riding with T-Mobile "feels like part of the process, that this is the way it should be," she says. "If your ultimate goal is to be the best, T-Mobile is where you want to be."

Beginning in March, Abbott will join her professional cycling teammates for races on weekends. Once she graduates in May, she will hit the cycling circuit in earnest.

Abbott, a native of Boulder, Colo., joined Whitman's club cycling team in the spring of her first year on campus, after placing fourth in the 1,650-yard freestyle at the Northwest Conference Swimming Championships. Abbott and the cycling team quickly rose to prominence, winning the 2005 and 2006 National Collegiate Cycling Association's Division II championships. Abbott also captured the last two all-around individual titles while winning or sharing the national crown nine times in various events over the past three years.

By last spring, Abbott was riding on the national circuit with Webcor Builders, one of America's top professional teams, and doing quite well. Her resume soon included victories in the Redlands Bicycle Classic, Tour of Gila (New Mexico) and

Iron Horse Bicycle Classic. After finishing a close second to Italian great Fabiana Luperini at the Montreal World Club, Abbott captured the U.S. road race title in July, outsprinting defending champion and 2004 Olympian Kristin Armstrong.

In late September, taking a break from classes, Abbott was in Europe as one of six Americans representing the United States at the 2007 World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany. After a tune-up race (she placed ninth in Italy's six-day Giro di Toscana), she finished 45th in a field of about 140 riders at the World Championships.

The level and depth of talent at the World Championships were astounding, Abbott says. "It was the best six riders from every cycling country in the world. That much talent changes the race and makes it more tactical. Riders from each country work as a team. The goal is to have your best rider on any particular day place as high as possible. For me, it was great to be at the World Championships early in my career. It was a learning experience that allows me to prepare for the future."

By no means, however, was Abbott satisfied with her results or contribution to the team goal. "For my first time at worlds, my race went OK, but I wasn't satisfied at all," she says. "With the way the race developed, I wasn't as useful as I could have been in terms of helping our team place one of our riders as high as



Kathryn Farrell Guizar '05

Mara Abbott '08 rode this red, white and blue custom-made bike in the 2007 World Championships in September. Her second Whitman sport, swimming, finds her spending time in the Harvey Pool at the Baker Ferguson Fitness Center.

*"Mara is the type of person who sees no reason why she can't do something. It is that ignoring of limits that makes a great athlete and spectacular person."*

— Michael Engleman

director, U.S. Women's Cycling Development Program

She studied in Mexico during the fall 2006 semester, and she views economics as the key to understanding the politics of a nation or region. "Jan Crouter has probably been my favorite professor,

One of Abbott's biggest fans is her cycling coach, Michael Engleman, director of the U.S. Women's Cycling Development Program. He sees no limit to her future success.

"Mara is the type of person who sees no reason why she can't do something," he says. "It is that ignoring of limits that makes a great athlete and spectacular person. Honestly, though, it's one thing to have talent, but there is no shortcut to experience. Mara is very good at paying attention and learning, and her refusal to make excuses is a sign of her toughness. I see her evolving quickly and being a world-class cyclist for many years to come."

"If Mara is representative of the type of student walking around Whitman College, then it is one remarkable place."

— Dave Holden

possible. Kristin (Armstrong) was our top finisher at No. 13, so we obviously could have done better."

After the race, one veteran competitor made a point to remind Abbott that her best days as a cyclist are still years ahead of her.

Abbott counts her blessings that Whitman paved her way into the cycling universe, but she also appreciates the other facets of her college experience.

and I really enjoyed a class taught by Aaron Bobrow-Strain called 'Politics of Development in Latin America,'" Abbott said.

"I visited colleges all over the country before choosing Whitman. I had lots of reasons at the time, but Whitman just felt best for me. You don't really know what to expect when you start college, but I know I've enjoyed my time at Whitman. It's been a great experience."

### WHITMAN SCOREBOARD

**Achievements  
by Whitman  
scholar-athletes**

July to Nov. 10, 2007

#### WOMEN'S SOCCER

**Kristen Berndt** (North Bend, Wash.)  
All-NWC First Team  
NWC Offensive Player of Week (twice)  
Academic All-District Second Team  
Topped 100 career points (44 goals,  
14 assists)

**Corina Gabbert** (Portland, Ore.)  
All-NWC First Team  
NWC Offensive Player of Week  
Academic All-District Second Team

**Courtney Porter** (Redmond, Wash.)

All-NWC Second Team  
NWC Defensive Player of Week (three times)

**Sarah Nostdal** (Walla Walla)  
All-NWC Honorable Mention

**Kate Newman** (Bellevue, Wash.)  
All-NWC Honorable Mention

**Kristen Mittelsteadt** (Woodinville, Wash.)  
Academic All-District Second Team

#### MEN'S SOCCER

**Andy Huntington** (Seattle)  
All-NWC First Team

**Stephen Phillips** (Sandy, Utah)  
All-NWC First Team  
NWC Offensive Player of Week

#### MEN'S TENNIS

**Matt Solomon** (Los Altos, Calif.)  
ITA All-American (singles, doubles)  
No. 15 National Singles Ranking  
No. 7 National Doubles Ranking

**Etienne Moshevich** (Richmond, B.C.)

ITA All-American (doubles)  
No. 7 National Doubles Ranking

#### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

**Rosa Brey** (Bozeman, Mont.)  
All-NWC First Team  
NWC Player of Week

**Lydia Hayes** (Boise, Idaho)  
All-NWC Honorable Mention  
Topped 1,000 career kills

**Kristan Brown** (Reno, Nev.)  
NWC Player of Week

#### CROSS COUNTRY

**Brian Woods** (Bellingham, Wash.)  
NCAA DIII All-Region

**Yasmeen Colis** (Walla Walla)  
NCAA DIII All-Region

**Sara McCune** (Corvallis, Ore.)  
NCAA DIII All-Region

**Michela Corcorran** (Bellevue, Wash.)  
NCAA DIII All-Region

Information compiled by Dave Holden,  
sports information director.

## British author Salman Rushdie packs Cordiner

Some 1,400 students, faculty, staff and area residents filled Cordiner Hall to capacity to hear Salman Rushdie speak in November. Others were turned away at the door.

Rushdie was introduced by Assistant Professor of English Gaurav Majumdar.

Rushdie's talk, "Culture Wars and the Importance of Free Speech," dealt with the much-publicized *fatwa*, or religious edict, issued against him by Iranian leadership in 1989 in response to his fourth novel, "The Satanic Verses." He drew from his own experience with censorship to discuss the necessity of free speech.

Rushdie currently serves as Distinguished Writer in Residence at Emory University in Georgia. Prior to his speech, the author dined with Whitman students and professors.

His visit to campus was sponsored by the Associated Students of Whitman College, the Whitman Intercultural Center and the President's Office.



Salman Rushdie spoke at Whitman in November.



Former Washington Gov. Dan Evans, center, talks politics over lunch with Bruce Magnusson, associate professor of politics, left, and students.

## Former governor visits with students

Dan Evans, former Washington state governor and U.S. senator, is quick to point out that his decades-long political career is not a vocation.

"It's part of my life. It is the art of science and government, and I'm a full-time practitioner," he told Whitman students who joined him for lunch in Maxey Hall in November.

Evans also spoke in one of Professor of Politics Phil Brick's classes, and to a campus and community audience on the topic "Where Have All the Moderates Gone?"

"Dan Evans breaks political stereotypes," said Bruce Magnusson, associate professor of politics and coordinator of Evans' visit, which was supported by the Governor Arthur B. Langlie Fund for Northwest History, Politics and Public Service.

"It is a good thing for students to talk to someone like Evans, especially in this cynical age," Magnusson added. "It's a good thing for all of us to hear his message in this cynical age."

"Evans talks about the hard work of politics, and that all of us are to some extent politicians, and about the fun of politics. This experience makes a difference to these students."

Evans, a Republican, shared enter-

taining and enlightening anecdotes from his three-term governorship (1964-76) and his time in the U.S. Senate (1983-88), drawing laughs and smiles from students. He also answered questions on subjects that ranged from energy alternatives to the role of the United States in the world, and offered tactical advice to **Kramer Phillips '08** about the best way to get a state initiative on the ballot.

Evans' visit was a boon for students, Phillips said, "both in terms of hearing him describe his experiences and the personal aspect of meeting him and networking." Evans reinforced for Phillips the importance of the personal aspect of politics, the ability to talk to people about important issues.

He also shared some fundamental secrets to his success:

- Be prepared. When Evans was governor he attended every major budget presentation.

"When I was through I knew more about the budget than any department head or legislator. Knowledge is power."

- Work across party lines and be willing to let others take the credit.

"When you reach out to others, work with people in a bipartisan way, it's amazing what you can accomplish," Evans said.

## Bookstore merchandise buyer earns Town-Gown Award for her extensive service to the community

From Carnegie Art Center to the YWCA to the Parks and Recreation Department, Ann Stull has quietly and diligently worked to make a difference in Walla Walla.

Stull, general merchandise buyer for Whitman Bookstore, is the recipient of the 2007 Town-Gown Award, established to underscore the importance the college places on community service and community relations.

Stull served 17 years on the Carnegie Art Center Board of Directors and participated in the Picture Lady Program to expose local first- through fifth-graders to art and artists. "Art in the schools is important," she said. "It's fun to see the different reactions to the art from children."

Her volunteer efforts include eight years of service on the YWCA Board of Directors, an organization, she said, "is important because of its mission and its advocacy for families." She feels the same way about Walla Walla Catholic Schools, which she continues to support even after

sending the youngest of her three children to college this fall.

Stull has worked on the American Association of University Women Project Read program, and she helped implement an AAUW program to get girls interested in math and science. She still serves on the Parks and Recreation Board and enjoys the opportunity to be involved with decision-making about the health of Walla Walla's parks system.

"In my years working for organizations, I seemed to end up as chairman of the board (YWCA, Carnegie) or president of the group (AAUW, Home and School). The leadership roles helped me understand the importance of finding the members' strengths and delegating responsibility," she said. "We can never do it all on our own."

Stull joined the Whitman staff in 1998 and worked with Sandy Kimball, longtime textbook buyer for the college. This year's Town-Gown Award was presented in memory of Kimball, who died in April 2007.



Ann Stull, general merchandise buyer for Whitman Bookstore, holds her 2007 Town-Gown Award.

The memorial award reads, "Sandy is remembered by students, alumni, faculty and staff members for her kindness, her true interest in the lives of every single person she met each day, her passion for the well-being of the college's students, and her stubborn insistence that each book purchased by students and faculty was both the highest quality and the lowest price available."

## Executive assistant to four Whitman presidents retires this fall



JoAnn Collins

JoAnn Collins' first day on the job as executive assistant to interim President Ed Foster in 1987 lasted until 10 p.m. Her first task: typing the ID cards for everyone on campus, on a typewriter, with a new type of slick paper. "I had to go over each ID card three times to get the type to stick," she remembers with a laugh.

The job changed a lot in 20 years. Collins no longer had to go to work at 4 a.m. to start the coffee and run to the bakery to get the food for trustee meetings, or hand-write and address 5,000 Christmas cards (with student help, of course).

Still, what she considers the most important part of her job — greeting guests and putting people at ease before they met with the president — never changed. "I felt honored to play that role.

It was the perfect job for me," she said.

President George Bridges, her fourth president, agrees. "JoAnn had a unique gift for making everyone feel welcome from the moment they set foot in the office," he said.

In addition to Foster and Bridges, Collins served presidents David Maxwell and Tom Cronin.

While Collins will miss the "daily connection with some wonderful people," she is thrilled to have more time to spend with her husband, Larry (she has promised to go fishing with him, occasionally), the seven grown children they have between them, and three grandchildren who live across the street.

Part-time work in a wine tasting room, volunteer work and travel will fill out her days nicely.

IN THEIR WORDS

Scholarly perspectives from the classroom and beyond

Rurbia: the sudden arrival of new urban wealth in old rural places

By Donald Snow  
Senior Lecturer of Environmental Humanities and General Studies

The condition of the rural United States no longer seems to be of central concern to the federal government, and for most of the nation's history, rural policy stood near the core of national policy. Republicans and Democrats alike often tried to assure that a robust rural middle class would grow and thrive in rural places.

Big changes began to occur in the late 1970s, when the nation's suburban population finally rose to predominance and the idea that rich places needed to subsidize poorer ones fell into disfavor. Beginning with President Jimmy Carter's move to deregulate the airline industry and extending through the next four presidencies, national policies affecting rural regions became less and less protective. In effect, rural people have been told what former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

Earl Butz famously barked at American agriculture in the 1970s: "Get big, or get out." In other words, "You're on your own."

One way of ensuring that agriculture would "get big" is the farm program, and today, \$40 billion in subsidies to the nation's largest producers is mostly what we have in place of a cogent, effective rural policy. In the United States today, farm policy is rural policy. But farm policy alone does not speak to the real problems and opportunities rural places face today. While certain favored segments of agribusiness receive extraordinary federal supports, most rural economies at large are fighting for their lives.

Interestingly, the battle is often characterized by a two-way diaspora. In poor rural regions, young people are leaving at record rates and poverty is intensifying. In rich rural regions, new arrivals are bringing with them record levels of wealth and in-migration, causing a kind of economic and cultural revolution which

many longtime residents find upsetting.

What we find today when we look across all of rural America is a checkered landscape consisting of playgrounds for the rich, pockets of persistent poverty, communities struggling with explosive growth, communities crying for any kind of growth, and government policies that tend to ignore both the most persistent problems and the best opportunities. On our current trajectory, we are headed for significant portions of rural America populated mostly by the rich and the poor, with a shrinking middle class that serves both groups.

I learned much of the foregoing not from working as a rural economist or demographer (I am neither) but as a writer and journalist who two years ago fielded a research project on behalf of the Northwest Area Foundation of St. Paul, Minn. Foundation President Dr. Karl Stauber had written a paper titled "Why Invest in Rural America?" and engaged my services to help make his data-heavy paper palatable to the average reader. My job was to go out and "get the story" by traveling to rural places and interviewing rural residents, businesspeople, farmers, development specialists and activists about their communities. The project proved immensely rewarding.

Fascinated with what I learned about the widening gulf between poor and rich places in rural America, I found myself most intrigued by the wealthy end of the spectrum. My peregrinations had taken me to some of the poorest rural places in the country, but also into rural growth centers in New England, the deep South and the Rocky Mountain West. No place impressed me as much as the tri-county region known as central Oregon and its growth-miracle city, Bend.

In a scant 20 years, Bend has exploded from being a remote, embattled Oregon timber town of fewer than 20,000 to a recreation, retirement and high-tech mecca of 80,000. The three-county area

(Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties) together tops 180,000, putting it on the path to become the second largest metro area in the state. But beyond the impressive numbers arose a story that can be told best in qualitative terms: Bend and its surrounding communities and countryside had undergone a thorough cultural transformation.

Central Oregon ceased being a rural place and has rapidly become a strange sort of urban place — a kind of rural-urban hybrid, actually, of a sort that seems to appeal to enormous numbers of people. In the Bend "miracle" I saw the futures of many other towns I had visited, or had known earlier in my life and career as a Mountain West environmentalist. Bozeman, Missoula, Kalispell, Durango, Grand Junction, Moab and many other places appear to be on the fast-track of an economic and cultural revolution.

What has happened around Bend represents not just the sudden growth of a nice town in lovely rural surroundings, but a new growth phenomenon in the United States. As I gathered information for my Northwest Area Foundation article, I came across a little-known, seldom-used neologism which I quickly adopted to describe the phenomenon I was witnessing. The word is "rurbia," a contraction of "rural," "urban" and "suburbia."

In a nutshell, "rurbia" means urban forms of growth in remote rural areas. It describes a pattern of growth that can radically transform the evidently rural qualities of a place into a new kind of hybrid living space: the "rurban" hybrid. As far as I can tell, there is not yet a clear, commonly accepted definition of "rurbia." No set of quantitative characteristics yet defines it, but certain qualities associated with this form of growth seem clear. I'll summarize a few.

Rurbia is a regional phenomenon. It affects large, broad areas, not just a single, growing town. The rurban explosion is directly related to and dependent upon the surrounding countryside. Rurbia can't happen just anywhere; it happens in places with peculiar attributes that attach to shifting American values about landscape, the sense of personal well-being and fitness, recreation and the sense of place.

In order for rurbia to take root, the deliberate maintenance of undeveloped land is crucial. Ironically, in the rapid economic transformation that comes with rurbia, it is the absence of obvious development that feeds development. What land developers call "build-out" is not in the best interests of rurbia.

Commercial businesses transform rapidly. In the rurban archipelagoes the commercial zones fill with an amalgam of high-end retailers and services that appeal to rurban sensibilities and tastes: specialty bicycle shops, Callaway golf club outlets, Orvis fly-fishing franchises, designer outdoor-wear shops, wine boutiques, microbreweries, sophisticated restaurants. The "old" businesses standing alongside them suddenly seem quaint by comparison.

Rurban growth, while effecting a thorough economic and social transformation in the communities where it occurs, also tends to value selective elements of the natural resource economy it replaces. Local agriculture, for example, may continue to exist, but often as a hobby rather than a vocation.

Rurbia might leave a few old lumber mill smokestacks or retired teepee burners standing as sentimental monuments to the past, turning what were once working industrial facilities into works of art.

What's driving rurbia? One of the strongest forces is certainly the Baby Boom generation, people born between 1946 and 1964. There are 78 million boomers today. By the year 2030, boomers will constitute 20 percent of the U.S. population, and the majority will be retired. According to the Federal Reserve, boomers in 2001 held a combined net worth of nearly \$18 trillion. Their average annual spending now exceeds \$2 trillion, according to a study by the American Association of Retired Persons.

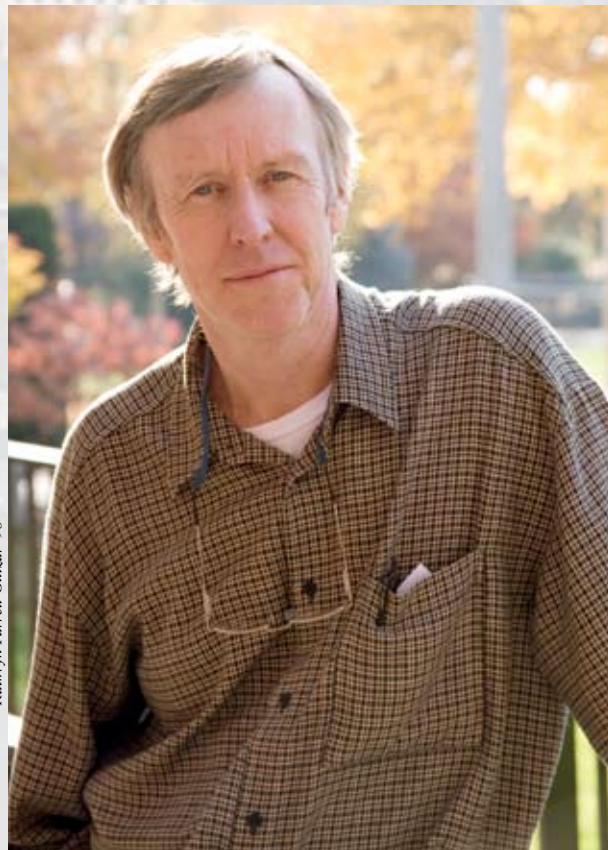
Boomers are likely to retire in record numbers to the nation's beauty spots, many in rural areas. Moreover, the richest members of this generation are lately showing a remarkable desire to own more than one residence, often to conduct a kind of town-and-country life. If the demographic hallmark of post-World War II America was the suburb, the hall-

*Rurbia might leave a few old lumber mill smokestacks or retired teepee burners standing as sentimental monuments to the past, turning what were once working industrial facilities into works of art.*

mark of the postmodern Information Age may be rurbia, the dispersed "rural city" of retirement homes, second homes and other new homes located in gorgeous natural settings within the most select spots of rural America. Today, we may be seeing merely the first trickles of what could become a tidal wave.

In the past year and a half, I have traveled to a dozen locations in the Northwest to present an expanded version of this discussion as a public lecture. Sponsored by the Oregon Council for the Humanities, my first foray onto the lecture circuit occurred in Pendleton, Ore., where more than 100 people turned out. The message touches a deep nerve in rural places, where residents are keenly aware of the pressures their communities face: feast at one end, famine at the other. Interestingly, in the absence of much support or even consistent attention from national policymakers, rural leaders find themselves on their own, increasingly empowered to try to "do the right thing." They need help, but help is seldom near at hand.

Don Snow, senior lecturer of environmental humanities and general studies, recently gave a talk in Astoria, Ore., titled "The Bubble Isn't Bursting for Everyone: Trophy Homes, Baby Boomers, and the Challenge to Rural Communities." It is available by contacting him at snowdr@whitman.edu. The original version of his lecture "Round the Next Bend" is available on the Web site of the Oregon Council for the Humanities, www.oregonhum.org. Click on Programs, then Common-place Lectures.



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