Whitman Teaches the Movement: Then and Now
Dear Readers of Fifty Plus News,

Our office has begun the process of transitioning Fifty Plus News to a new format. We are going to send the news, photos, letters and stories to you electronically as a special section within Whittie News, our monthly alumni news email.

I have enjoyed being your Fifty Plus News correspondent over the last four years and look forward to sharing the new version next fall. Please continue to send me your fond memories and cherished photos so we can continue to share them.

The Alumni Office is here to help you stay in touch with Whitman and your classmates. We maintain the alumni database called Whitman Connect (connect.whitman.edu), which can be especially helpful if you have lost track of a classmate. Please contact us for more information on alumni events or questions about our online services at alumni@whitman.edu.

Jennifer Dilworth Northam ’91
Assistant Director, Alumni Relations
Editor, Fifty Plus News

A winter sunset illuminates Lyman House and runner, 2016.

Photo: Matt Banderas ’04
I was born in Richmond, California, in the East Bay and went to El Cerrito High School (Go Gauchos!). Creedence Clearwater Revival, then the Blue Velvets, were my classmates but Ray Charles was the king. I grew up in a conservative, devoutly Baptist home. My maternal grandfather was a hellfire and damnation Baptist preacher and I know that because he scared the bejesus out of me while I sat in his church as a young boy. My father was a hellfire and damnation Republican, the kind who thought moderate New England Republicans to be Democrats and liberal Democrats to be “pinkos” and “commies.”

Growing up in California in the 1950s I was aware that there were black people, white people, Mexicans and Asians. Only later in my life, when I went to graduate school in New England, did I discover there was such a thing as white ethnicity, and eventually marrying my Irish wife, Margaret Mary Sullivan, was educational. To say the least.

At the start of junior high I can remember wondering if I would be able to tell black classmates—then called Negroes—a part. Turned out I could. From seventh through 12th grade my schools were racially and economically diverse and this was the norm I became used to.

The Civil Rights Movement had started to percolate and the newspapers, which was how we did news in those ancient days, had articles about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. At my church, Thousand Oaks Baptist in Berkeley (where I attended Sunday morning and evening services as well as Wednesday evening prayer service where my mom accompanied hymn singing on the piano; I still love Baptist hymns), an elderly black woman joined the congregation and about 20 people left the church. I remember being appalled.
and lucky for me, so were my parents—my mom was a clerk at Sears in Oakland and my dad was an elementary school principal in Richmond: black people were part of their lives as well as mine.

Also, I discovered that my church, a member of the American Baptist Convention, had split from the Southern Baptists in 1845, the split taking place over who did and who did not believe in slavery. After my first year at Whitman, along with two Whitman running buddies, I attended a national Baptist youth convention in Green Lake, Wisconsin. The Social Gospel, which argued that people should emulate Jesus Christ’s life, was dominant and civil rights involvement was how one lived the Social Gospel.

In high school I belonged to a social club that was kind of like a fraternity: it had some rituals, you had to be invited to join, it was monochromatic. You had to be a student at El Cerrito High to be a member and in my junior year I looked around and thought we were limiting our membership as there were talented classmates who were other than white. So I encouraged Danny Bernstine, a younger black student with a Jewish surname, to apply for membership.

Danny was one of those kids with a perpetual smile, an inclusive personality, and clearly someone who had “it,” that specialness you implicitly know but have trouble defining?

Danny got in even though he was “blackballed” (an interesting word) by several members, at least one of whom quit. Why did I encourage Danny to join? I was
not one to challenge the status quo but I had a pretty good understanding of right and wrong and clearly exclusion was wrong.

And this is the first lesson I want you to take from what I have to say: There is right and there is wrong.

As a senior I had a little part-time job at Silver's Men's Store on Richmond's main drag, back in those days before malls when small cities and towns had a real Main Street. Like Walla Walla.

The store catered primarily to blacks and the top salesman, a former four-star athlete at El Cerrito, was Calvin Winters. Calvin would have no clue what he did to me with one very quiet comment while looking at the front page of the *Richmond Independent*, a paper I delivered when younger. There was a large photo, now iconic, of young black demonstrators being attacked by police dogs. Calvin, only to himself but loud enough for me to hear, said, “They don't need to do that.” I was already unknowingly on the road to civil rights but Calvin's quiet, knowing comment—“They don’t need to do that”—crystalized my thinking and settled in my gut.

This is the second lesson: Be open to hearing when something of value is being said. A corollary to that may be, “Trust your gut.”

This is where I jump to my Whitman experience but before doing that, let me tell you about Danny, stuff I found out in the past decade after seeing an article about him in *The Oregonian* while eating breakfast one morning at Clarette’s. Danny’s father was a janitor, descended from Southern sharecroppers. After El Cerrito Danny went to Cal then to Northwestern School of Law. Among others things Danny was Dean of the University of Wisconsin Law School and President of Portland State University. I emailed him after reading the article and his responding email ended with, “Go Gauchos!” Danny died of a heart attack this past September.

I arrived at Whitman, on a train and sight unseen. You know The Depot restaurant on 2nd? That was the train station. Remember I said Ray Charles was king in high school? The Beatles burst onto the national scene my second semester, spring of 1964, and there were many copies of their first album, back in the glory days of vinyl, “Meet the Beatles.”

When I got to Whitman I felt like I was with “my people.” It was academically challenging (that is, it kicked my butt), my classmates were decent people, I could see I’d be the number two man on the XC team, and I really, really liked my new friends. Plus, I was with them all the time and my parents weren’t here.

But, as I said earlier, my demographic pool of comfort was the Bay Area, and I withdrew from Whitman at the end of my frosh year: it was too conservative, it was too insular, everyone was white, and, maybe worst of all, because it was such a regional college at that time, there was this vibe of “this is God’s country.” Well, I was from California—Northern California!—and that proud insularity irritated me.

However…I was back one semester later after a stint of working, going to Contra Costa Community College and living at home: I hungered for Whitman’s intellectual environment, that whole residential college thing, my simpatico friends, my running buddies, a certain young woman from Puyallup.

My return to Whitman is another lesson: You're allowed to change your mind.

I pledged Phi Delt, something I successfully avoided as a frosh—remember, I did that in high school—but quickly questioned why I joined (and I never learned whatever I was supposed to learn so I don’t know the handshake). This, if you're able to follow my jumpy chronology, was the spring of 1965—anyone know what happened that spring? Come on, you've been teaching the Movement.

The Selma March to Montgomery, Alabama, began on Sunday, March 7, 1965, also known as Bloody Sunday. The Free Speech Movement (which could be thought of as the white, privileged college student’s civil rights movement) had already been taking place on the Cal campus, about five miles from my El Cerrito home, and now back in Walla Walla, I felt as though we were badly left out of what was going on across the nation. Selma resonated with me in a way the Free Speech Movement did not, I really don’t know why but I’m guessing I thought the civil rights battle to be such a crystal-clear expression of fighting for human dignity and ever since Calvin Winters said, “They don’t need to do that,” there was a quiet fire burning in me: The Movement was, and still is, the defining moral touchstone of my life.

Activism on the Whitman campus, such as it was, percolated among students involved in the YMCA club, kind of an umbrella group of do-gooders—we tutored kids in the Walla Walla schools (I remember some of the kids I tutored were the sons and daughters of migrant workers, Mexicans who followed the ripening crops from California to British Columbia: There’s a reason Walla Walla has a significant Hispanic
population). We tried to raise awareness about civil rights and later, Vietnam.

I was galvanized by the Movement generally and quietly enraged by the Selma beatings. So, with white hot speed I organized a Walla Walla Selma march, a silent walk from Ankeny to the Courthouse down Main Street. The idea of the march was discussed with sympathetic professors, including fabled George Ball, after whom the basketball court is named, and in cell groups. (I don’t think they exist anymore: They were small groups of students that met every week or so at a professor’s home and discussed whatever was on anyone’s mind.)

I was a young man with my hair on fire and button-holed students all over campus to drum up support for the march. For me, in all my passionate, self-righteous glory, it was a march about right vs. wrong and even in remote Walla Walla I wanted to take a stand, be a part of something bigger than us—does this sound familiar to anyone who participated in Walla Walla’s Jan. 21 march and later occupation of the airport terminal? That’s how it felt, a rising up against what was wrong. But tiny, tiny compared to what happened here in January.

The night before the march, which took place on Sunday, March 14, one week after the Selma, Alabama, march began, I went to the President’s house—now the Admission Office—and knocked on the door. I wanted to tell President Perry what was about to happen as I knew the demonstration would not be popular in town—I mean it really wasn’t popular on campus, many seeing us as ridiculous rabble rousers. Dr. Perry opened the door (in retrospect this seems so typically, charmingly Whitman) and we had a conversation about the next day’s march. He basically said it won’t be popular but it’s the right thing to do. That was big for me, as I was always a good little boy, wanting approval for who I was and what I did.

About 125 of us (the Pioneer put the number at 400 but that may have been alternative facts), in suits and dresses (I now find our self-imposed dress code charmingly archaic; I haven’t owned a suit in 30 years), marched from Ankeny, leaving from the front of brand new Jewett Hall—where I would be an RA the next fall—we walked down Main Street—on the sidewalk—to the Courthouse.

Some curious and opposing students shadowed our walk from the other side of the street. Dr. Donald Blake, a Walla Walla College biology professor who was the first black professor hired into a tenure track position at a Seventh-Day Adventist college, spoke, as did George Ball. FBI agents in suits took film of us from the second floor of the Courthouse. We joined hands and sang “We Shall Overcome,” the battle hymn of the times. We broke up and drifted back to campus, happy with what we had done, happy about its success.

I remember there was a picnic at religion Professor Bob McKenzie’s house late that afternoon; Dr. McKenzie was the YMCA club adviser. I played on the lawn with his young daughter as we talked and processed the day and at some point, Dr. McKenzie asked me my thoughts about the day. I honestly told him I was simply happy, my manic work leading up to the march had come to successful fruition.

Lesson #4: Empower your passions.

What comes after an uplifting, successful effort, whether it’s a march or demonstration or some other type of gathering? What happens after the curtain falls and the cast party ends? What happens after you’re done with Whitman Teaches the Movement?

The small cadre of Whitman activists, some of whom are among my closest friends today, returned to campus in the fall, by which time Whitman had a student exchange program with historically black colleges Fisk and Howard. We raised money in various ways (I remember selling oranges) and got ASWC to match every $2 we raised with $1, and we sent Jim Owens ’66 to the South for a summer of voter registration and we sent ongoing contributions to SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which was sort of the angry young blacks answer to the more sober, established NAACP. We brought speakers to campus, the YMCA group ballooned but then slowly dwindled as Vietnam reared its head and a new generation of Whittie activists concentrated on that. Vietnam resonated more personally than civil rights because in those days there was a military draft, something many of my generation think should be reintroduced with a non-military, public service option.

Whitman, like all institutions in the ’60s, was rapidly changing and when the Class of ’69 arrived in the fall of 1965, there were students with long hair who had up close and personal relationships with various drugs that weren’t beer. They were not as squeaky clean as those who preceded them. There was still student activism regarding in loco parentis—the college acting as parent—and females really were second class citizens with “hours” they had to be in their dorms and dress codes.
This was a time when the Greek system was dominant, more than 80 percent membership, and I have many classmates whose current affiliation with Whitman is dominated by memories and relationships from their sorority and fraternity days. The fact that some of these organizations were racially and religiously exclusionary was argued and generally opposed but that didn’t stop anyone from joining as the view was that “that’s not us, that’s our ignorant national organizations.” Plus, you could count the total number of Jews and students of color on your fingers and toes.

The more visceral concern revolved around male fear of losing one’s draft deferment. I don’t want to sound like I was on higher moral ground here because, by the time I graduated, I was exempt from the draft because I was married and had an infant son. Married with a kid at Whitman was rare and somewhat scandalous in those days, but that infant son? He’s an ER doc at St. Mary’s.

That moral clarity about the Movement was still a major part of who I was and my graduate program at Wesleyan University in Connecticut prepared me to teach in city schools. (Here’s a little history lesson: President Johnson launched The Great Society in 1964, a multi-pronged effort to eliminate poverty and racial injustice; my graduate program was funded—meaning I was funded—by that. But there was a problem because our participation in Vietnam was ramping up and the cost of fighting a war and making America great—sorry, couldn’t help myself—was prohibitive, part of the federal financial hangover that continues.)

Anyway, until I became a member of the Whitman College Admission Office in 2005, I was a teacher, counselor, coach and administrator for 37 years, early on in inner city schools in Bridgeport and Hartford and then back home in Richmond, and eventually in a working-class suburb of Boston. My demonstrating days were
pretty much over. Well, I do remember participating in the Poor People's March in 1968 in Washington, D.C., organized by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, but held after Dr. King's assassination—which occurred one evening while I was tutoring black students. Again, in 1970, I was marching, this time in support of the Black Panthers in New Haven. It was the day of the Harvard/Yale football game at the Yale Bowl. (The Cal/Stanford game is known as The Big Game, Harvard/Yale is simply called The Game 😊.)

We marched through militarized streets surrounded by tanks and police in riot gear and chanted, “F*%& Harvard, f*%& Yale, get our sisters out of jail!” Fun times 😊

As a public-school educator, I was devoted to college access for underrepresented students, something that was (and is) an institutional goal when I started working for Whitman, and I can’t tell you how gratified I am that Whitman finally adopted a test-optional policy. My annual, somewhat paltry contribution, goes to a fund that provides financial aid to first generation students. Also to the W Club: I was a jock in addition to being an activist 😊

I lobbied the President’s Office—George’s not Kathy’s—to invite Rep. John Lewis of Georgia to be the Commencement speaker two years ago—I thought the 50th anniversary of the Selma March coinciding with the 50th reunion for the Class of ’65 as well as the anniversary of our little Walla Walla march would be pretty cool. As you may know, Rep. Lewis, prominent in SNCC, was badly beaten on Bloody Sunday. More recently he attracted the enmity of the Tweeter-in-Chief.

I don’t know if Whitman ever pursued Rep. Lewis to speak but quite by chance I ran into him at Terminal A of Boston’s Logan Airport last year and struck up a conversation with this special, gracious man. I told him I had raised money for SNCC when I was a college student and tried to get that college to get him to be the Commencement speaker. He asked me the name of the college and indicated he was doing seven commencements that spring 😊

Clearly these are interesting times in Make America Great country.

What do you take from being involved in Whitman Teaches the Movement? How will your values, experiences and education inform life after Whitman? In the Admission Office, as many of you know, we have our buzz words—unpretentious, collaborative, community. We talk about educating ethical leaders who will make a difference in their communities and in their careers. Think of “so-called” Judge Jim Robart ’69.

In researching and writing this talk (thank you Google, Wikipedia and David Schmitz) I revisited stuff I’ve been distant from for some time. You don’t know this yet—hopefully—but you get occupied with your career, you wonder how you’re going to send your kids to college and fund your retirement, how you’re going to play out your string. I’ve got 50 years, a half century on you. One of the things about aging is that it’s easy to get complacent, satisfied with where you’ve been, what you’ve done. Then my younger son, a Seattle school teacher, said, “You need to watch 13th.” So I did and that old rage was back in my gut. Then I watched The Butler, and now I’m waiting for I’m Not Your Negro, the James Baldwin film.

I’ve lived through some interesting times, as you are now. President Kennedy’s death was announced in my Intro to Psych class my frosh year; his brother was assassinated as I was hitch-hiking east to west across Canada. But time goes by and you’re busy with your work, your partner, your kids, your aging parents; life just sort of rolls out with its normal complications. But what has been energizing about researching and remembering is that we—I—shouldn’t leave the field of play: There’s a lot yet to accomplish.

Remember my lessons:
Know what’s right and what’s wrong.
Be a careful listener.
Don’t be afraid to change your mind.
Act on your passions.
And the last lesson: Live a life that makes a difference.

And I hope for some of you, that means as school teachers.
Jim Owens ’66 knows what it means to act on your beliefs. Headed into his junior year at Whitman, Owens decided to spend the summer of 1965 registering voters for the Civil Rights Movement in Americus, Georgia. As a volunteer, Owens joined hundreds of college students who were trained in non-violent activism by leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference such as Bayard Rustin and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. During his two months in Georgia, Owens helped black Americans pass the literacy test required to vote. He was also involved in a number of protests and arrested several times for attempting to integrate public spaces such as churches and swimming pools. I had the opportunity to ask Jim about his experience.

Q: Why did you join the Civil Rights Movement?
A: I was a junior at the time, and that year, 1964-1965, there had been a lot of civil rights activists across the nation. I recall that sometime that spring, a singing group called the Freedom Singers came through campus, and on a Sunday afternoon my girlfriend and I walked over to Prentiss to listen to their concert. I was struck by the songs about the inequalities that were going on in America and the difficulties of integrating places in the South and using the vote to address these inequalities. I was a political science major and as it turned out I had a summer coming up and I didn’t have anything to do. I thought, well, it’s time for me to put my values to work and see what I could do.

Q: How did Whitman prepare you for your experience?
A: Whitman taught me how to think for myself and to be strong and supportive of my own beliefs. The college gave me a framework of knowledge—legal knowledge, historical knowledge—so that I could go forward and do what I did in Georgia. I was a stronger person and I had the strength in my own beliefs and knew that I could act on those.

Q: Were there discussions about racial inequality on campus?
A: There were. It’s interesting, here we are in a small town in Walla Walla and you think you’re really separated from the rest of the world, but you’re reading the news and you’re discussing it in class. So these discussions were just going on all the time. You were sitting there B.S.-ing after class and that would come up. You were having dinner with a professor, that was going to come up. It was part of the daily flow of events and conversations.

Q: How did your experience in Americus affect the rest of your time at Whitman?
A: I think that my eyes had really been opened. I had left the confines of the college, gone out and seen that the world was a different place than I had anticipated. I think when I came back I was probably a bit more serious in my studies. I also was surprised and pleased when I gained support from professors at Whitman. [Professor of History, Emeritus] Dr. Tom Edwards told me that he was so impressed by my experience that he and his wife went down for two subsequent summers and volunteered as teachers in Alabama. So it pleased me to know that my experiences had had some impact on others that I knew or worked with in the Whitman community.

Q: What makes you proud of Whitman?
A: It’s just a culture and a community that helps people learn to think for themselves. It provides instruction in terms of learning about past lessons, and it’s very supportive of people thinking for themselves and doing what they think is right. There was also an effort by people at the college to learn about what I was doing. Would you write about this when you get back? What did you learn? So and so forth. This is a learning community.

Q: What words of inspiration do you have for current Whitties like me?
A: Go out and do it. Act on your own values. This is the time in your life when you can really explore what is important to you. This is a time when you can put aside the what-ifs, what if I had done this, what if I had done that, and just do it.
Editor’s note: Wonder what current Whitman students think about outdoor adventure courses? Kyle Levin ’20 not only signed up for one—Sea Kayaking Leadership Guide, which features an expedition as the culminating activity—but also wrote a reflection about the experience. The course taught him about leadership and collaboration. It also taught him the value of initiative: Levin penned this personal essay of his own volition and forwarded it to Whitman staff with the hope that it could be of use.

Sea Kayaking in Baja
By Kyle Levin ’20

Before this year I didn’t know I wanted to be a leader. I didn’t even know about the Sea Kayaking Leadership Guide course. Heck, I had never been sea kayaking before in my entire life. As a transfer student, I never got to be on a Scramble adventure. So being in the wilderness with nine other students was basically my own version of a Scramble. Plus, a trip to Baja didn’t sound too bad, and whale migration season meant lots of wildlife!

On the first day of class, I walked in and met our instructor, Brien Sheedy. He is the epitome of what I think of the Whitman Outdoor Program. He has been overseeing the Outdoor Program for 16 years and has quite a lot to show for it. Before coming to Whitman, he worked for the National Outdoor Leadership School and has traveled all around the world. He has climbed all seven summits, some of them twice. Brien was the perfect person to lead 10 inexperienced sea kayakers in the wilderness. He straddled the line of helping us grow while also making us feel safe.

To me, the leadership lessons were a second thought. Brien spent the first few days modeling to us what a good leader looked like and explained to us that we would each be co-leading a day in Baja. This entailed coming up with a float plan, which detailed how many nautical miles we were traveling, what campsite we were staying at, weather patterns, tide charts, backup campsites and any excursions. I remember dreading the day that I would have to co-lead. I even hoped that Brien would forget that we were on a leadership course and just lead through the whole trip.

Brien spent a lot of the free time we had at the beach teaching leader lessons. The first thing I learned from these lessons was what type of leader I am. I found that I am an architect analyst, which is characterized by gathering all the facts before making a decision and coming up with out-of-the-box situations that work. One of the biggest drawbacks of this leader type is that it’s harder for architect analysts to make snap decisions because they want to go through every solution before deciding which one is the best. Learning about what leader type I was, was important because it made me aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a leader.

Probably the most important lesson I learned throughout the trip concerned group dynamics and conflict/resolution models. As a teenager, I struggle with how to approach people when something is wrong. I tend to shy away from difficult conversations or things that make me uncomfortable. I had issues with a person on the trip but chose not to address them because I did not want to address the problems head-on. Brien taught us about the interpersonal gap. The diagram represents how what someone says can be completely misinterpreted by the other person. It made me realize that maybe the issue I was having with my other classmate could be just a misunderstanding. By learning from Brien, I was able to talk with the person and resolve the issue—something I wouldn’t have been able to do before.

So, back to the trip. After six days into the trip came the day I had to lead with my peer. And just my luck that it happened to be the windiest day yet! In Baja, there are huge winds that come from the...
north, collectively called a “Norte,” that can reach up to 50 miles an hour. We had received a weather forecast that a Norte would approach two days after my co-lead day. Nonetheless, we set out for the beach we were going to be picked up at. It was a very rough day. The waves were high and the wind was not in our favor. Walter (my co-leader) and I managed our small kayak pod of nine boats by yelling instructions at the top of our lungs. We paddled for a good two hours and then realized we needed to stop; the group was tired, we weren’t making progress and the wind was getting worse.

I heard one of our local guides ask Brien what constituted “a situation that was too great for the leaders of the day to handle.” I felt like I just wanted to give up; I didn’t want to be leader anymore.

However, we pushed onward until we paddled to Arroyo Verde, the beach we would camp at for the next three nights. When we reached the shore, I had the most euphoric feeling pass through me. Walter and I had done it! We led everyone to a safe beach, without having any previous skill, and navigated the roughest waves we had seen the whole trip.

After the trip, I realized that I could be a Scramble leader and that I loved sea kayaking. I learned so much about adversity and myself on the trip. I’m truly glad I took the plunge and signed up for the class.
Student discussion in Jewett Hall

In 2016, Whitman chose a book titled *In Other Shoes* to send to every freshman in the entering class. As a Whitman graduate of 1959, as the author of the above book, what does it mean to be a part of the Whitman “family”?

But that is not the story behind the book. The book was written for our granddaughter, Mika Laulainen. Mika was born in September 1990. My responsibility as a grandparent was to offer her advice. But consider: What advice did you give to your own children? And how did they like “them” apples. I fell back, instead, to offering my deepest concerns:

Should we expect differences in belief as a characteristic of life?

What can we do to better understand one another?

Do we consider how we respond to differences?

To my credit, it never did reach the level of advice; it was rather something for both of us to discuss.

Years later, when Mika and I were given the opportunity to understand 10 Whitman students who had read the essay, we had a discussion meeting at Whitman, where Mika directed the discussion. Introducing herself, here is how she described the development of the essay.

“When I entered high school, my grandfather started sharing excerpts from what was going to become this book. I was considering a career in creative writing and enjoyed sharing my thoughts on the material. As I grew up alongside the development of this work, I became more and more familiar with the ideas he had written about perspective, understanding, and the hope of collaboration and compromise instead of dividing disagreements. We are going to disagree. It’s going to happen. It is how we deal with those disagreements that will make all the difference. I feel like I was well prepared for life because of my ability to handle adversity, disagreements and compromise in a positive way, thanks to the ideas included in *In Other Shoes*.”

Not only did Mika read the material, so did academics, businessmen, students, friends (much put upon) and school administrators. It had an interest level, but it was not clear if it would reach liberal arts college students. Barbara Maxwell, associate dean of students at Whitman, made valuable suggestions to make it a better book, and Kazi Joshua, vice president for diversity and inclusion at Whitman, put the material to the test with a variety of students who represented the diversity that Whitman hoped to reach. When Mika and I made our presentation to the students, we found the Whitman students identified with the problem of understanding others and addressing the problem of “living with” perspective difference. Not only did they understand, they expanded on thoughtful approaches to the problem. They recognized in Mika someone with whom they could relate.

When Whitman decided to try the book with new students, my hope was to give something of value. I did recognize that the presentation of an idea rarely changes the world, but to try to introduce an idea as a part of the cultural discussion is a rare opportunity. In college, you have no requirement to agree with your instructor, but college requires that you recognize other points of view. By understanding the diversity of human nature, every culture becomes our neighbor.

Mika put it best toward the end of her introduction to the 10 students:

“My grandfather wrote a book that has ideas and suggestions about how we can look at the world in a more satisfying way, from others’ points of view as well as our own. As a theater professional, my job makes me imagine myself in other shoes every day, and to find those characters sympathetic. You won’t create a good play if you dislike the characters in the story. Similarly, you won’t find success in college, in your academic, social, or personal life if you can’t find a way to understand the people who surround you and the choices they have made.”

That brings us back to the original thought. What makes a family? Just as the idea that family is about each one developing to their best potential, the idea of an education is for everyone to care about the education offered. Ideas take on meaning when they are shared.
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*Assumes 2-year deferral period and 25% effective income tax rate.

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Jamie Kennedy ’96 • (509) 527-5989 • kennedjj@whitman.edu
The arrival of the *Fifty Plus News* motivates me to write about the Valentine Family, which is all Fifty Plus and most of which ended up at Whitman. Mother Ruth Valentine started it all: she wanted all of her six children to have a college education.

She attended the University of Minnesota for two years around 1905. She met and married Vey Valentine who had graduated from South Dakota State College and a large family was begun.

Oldest son, John, “jumped ship” and graduated from the Naval Academy in 1939. He ended up blowing up German tanks in Sicily as the gunnery officer on the USS *Brooklyn* in World War II. One shell did the job on each tank. Later he owned a newspaper in Lancaster, California. So he escaped Mother Valentine’s Whitman Plan.

When sister, Virginia, came along two years later, Mother V got her Whitman Plan going. Virginia Valentine Hailey ’40 entered Whitman but only spent two years there because it took five years to get a teaching certificate there and Central Washington College would give her one in three. Then she was off to Toppenish where they would pay her to teach school (the Depression was in full swing by then). There she found a husband and ended up half-owner of one of the largest ranches in Washington State. Mother V’s Plan was sort of making progress.

Next son, Jim, slipped out of the plan when he graduated from the University of Washington and worked developing new products for the Nalley Co. in Tacoma, Washington.

Charlie Valentine ’47 fit into the plan. After four years of war service, hauling ammunition to the Army and Marines and dodging Japanese artillery fire at various island landings, Lieutenant Charlie was able to return to Whitman. This writer remembers that because a Whitman coed asked, “Are you the brother of that CUTE Charlie Valentine?” (Ye gods, I never thought of him as cute!) Mother was pleased because her plan now had a Whitman attendee and a Whitman grad. Charlie ended up as vice-president of Washington Federal Savings and Loan Bank.

Next up was brother Bob Valentine ’50. After Navy service (the war was still on) Bob entered Whitman. He could even play “Claire de Lune” on the piano! Bob was famous for backing his Chevy coupe over Snoqualmie Pass because he did not want to put on chains! Bob did graduate from Whitman so Mother’s plan was working out. With the suggestion of faculty at Whitman, Bob graduated from Harvard Business School. Bob ended up as vice-president of the White Motor Truck Company.

So Mother V had one more recruit. This was brother Harold Valentine ’51, the writer of this letter. Harold was famous because he talked Marilyn Bird ’51 into marrying him after they both graduated; a marriage that lasted 55 years and earned Mother another Whitman grad.

Harold exchanged hand grenades with Chinese soldiers in...
the Korean War. After five years working up to branch manager of Washington Farmers Association, Harold ended up with a master’s degree in political science from the University of Washington and a doctorate in education from Washington State University. He taught at the high school level for 30 years, at Green River College for one year and at the Auburn Senior Center for 19 years. For nine years Harold has volunteered for the Auburn Citizens for Schools, passing bonds for two new high school buildings, one new middle school and six new elementary schools.

Thank you, Mother Ruth Valentine and Whitman College. Professor G. Thomas Edwards, in his book, Tradition in a Turbulent Age, tells us that Professor Tommy Howells could not even afford an automobile in 1945! So thank you also to the many professors who were paid so little to do so much.

Harold Valentine ’51
Auburn, Washington

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A Whitman-China Anagrams Connection

Several years ago, I picked up an old anagram game at an estate sale, something I have done frequently over the years. When I got home and looked at this game more carefully, I noticed that there were single-spaced, typewritten directions, much more complicated and thorough than usually come with this kind of game.

Curiously, at the end of the 13 pages of rules was a note that read, “In Japanese concentration made these notes,” dated 1945. There were two names listed: Dr. Leighton Stuart and Dr. Houghton. I assumed these were doctors supervising a Japanese internment camp in this country, and put the game away.

A few years ago, I got the game out thinking I would donate it. I mentioned the game and the notes to my son, who pulled out his phone to check on those names. He informed me that Dr. Leighton Stuart had been in China in the ’40s.

With the help of friends, I did additional research and discovered that Dr. Stuart and Dr. Houghton had been in China when the Japanese invaded and had been placed under house arrest in the old British embassy. They remained there for several years and were released at the end of the war. According to Dr. Stuart’s book, My Fifty Years in China, the doctors played Anagrams often during their house arrest years, which explains the complicated directions they had composed. I also discovered that Dr. Stuart was the son of missionaries to China and had lived most of his life there and had started Yenching University in Peking. Dr. Houghton had started the Peking Union Medical College.

So now that I knew more history of the game and the people involved, my mission became one of trying to find members of one of these families so I could return the game to them—over the years I have had some success and great pleasure in returning found objects to their “homes.” About this time, I attended my 50th Reunion at Whitman and mentioned this story to classmate Warren Gross ’62. He reminded me that we had gone to school with a Henry Houghton ’61.

Through the Alumni Office, I was able to contact Henry. He was a retired physician living in the nearby city of Sedro Woolley, Washington, and he was named for his grandfather, Dr. Henry Houghton—the same Dr. Houghton of the anagram connection. Henry and I have talked on the phone a few times, and I recently was able to return the game to him.

Carol Werner Berard ’62
Anacortes, Washington
“Future Alum Plans Avoiding Sentimentality”

Robert Perron

In seven months I will become a member of that fabled and somewhat mythic class of people: An Alumnus of Whitman College. What will I be like as an Alum? Will I live in Spokane and join the John Birch Society? Will I come back during Homecoming and search for my initials on a desk in Mem Chapel? No, I don’t think so...even though these are some of our most cherished illusions of how Whitman Alumni should act.

Will I go away and try to forget Whitman as I would a bad dream, as some of our more recent graduates have done, and even some undergraduates that I know of? Again, I don’t think so. One thing that I have learned during my stay at Whitman is that you do not solve problems by ignoring them. You solve them by reasoning them through to their solutions, and then having the courage to act on your reasoning.

You cannot save a burning building by ignoring it or walking away. Whitman is a burning building and if anyone can look at this campus today and claim not to see that it is going through a period of major decisions which will ultimately determine its status and very existence as an academic institution, then I can not help feeling that he is not using the intellectual capacity that gained him admittance to Whitman.

What will I do as an Alum? I will not act that much differently from the mature, responsible Alums of any school, or for radically different reasons. I will treasure the memories I have from Whitman that are worth treasuring, and I feel that I have a stake in Whitman’s future. No one wants to go through life mumbling his school’s name, or making jokes about wouldbe college, or worse, explaining: “No Whitman isn’t in Spokane. No Dick Nixon did not graduate there.”

I suppose every Alum wakes up at least once in a cold sweat after dreaming that Newsweek has just run banner headlines exposing his school as America’s Playpen, as they recently did Parsons College, and considered how this might affect his standing with The Corporation, or The Faculty, or his Clients. Every Alum has a certain stake in his school’s future.

As an Alum I will act for this school’s benefit. But I will be different from past Alums in this: I will be closer to the actual needs and problems of this college and of education as a whole today, than graduates of a generation ago. What reason and good sense I have will not be sentimentality when I look back on Whitman. I am too close to it now to be sentimental.

I will try to communicate what I know of Whitman’s present problems to the older Alums. I will try to tell them that white sunny-crisp football afternoons in a collegiate-fall are the stuff of which dreams are made, they are not crucial in the competition to produce first-rate education in a modern world. I will try to convince them that if they have any money at all to contribute, they must give it to expand the library, raise teachers’ salaries to keep those good men we have and to attract more, not for football, not for dreams of Raccoon Coats and PomPom Girls.

And finally, as an Alum, I would tell older graduates that while they can rest assured that Whitman still maintains the standards of quality and academic excellence it did 20 years ago, it has fallen far behind the improving quality of its peer colleges.

“A Casualty of War”

Art Hoppe

It is late in the winter of 1967. A blue-grey haze lies outside my window. Last week they were talking about peace in Vietnam. This week they are talking about “escalation” and “determination.”

We are prepared, our leaders say, to go on fighting for years, years more.

In the paper this morning there is a photograph of an American soldier hitting a Viet Cong prisoner with his fist.

The caption begins by talking of the strains and frustrations of war. Then it tells how a company of American GIs caught three of the enemy hiding in a stream.

In the photograph, the American soldier, knee deep in the water, has just thrown a roundhouse right. His arm is still extended, fist clenched. He looks tall with close-cropped hair. He looks like any American.

The Viet Cong prisoner seems very small. He is naked from the waist up. His head has snapped back. His empty hands are raised before his face, palms inwards in a gesture that seems almost beseeching. It is not an unusual picture. That’s not the way war is. We have seen such pictures for years now.
I thought for a moment of how that American soldier must have felt. The frustrations and strains, I believed that. The fear during the hunt. The triumph of capture. The anger at the whole bloody mess. The deep sense of satisfaction when fist slammed into cheek. Then afterward, the rationalizations to wash away the guilt.

For I don't believe you can strike a smaller unarmed helpless man without feeling guilt—not the first time.

To do so, I believe, you have to close off a small corner of your mind, you have to callous over a small corner of your soul.

You have to do this in the same way a fisherman does the first time he impales a living worm on a hook, the way a slaughter does the first time he swings the sledge, the way a Nazi must have felt the first time he incarcerated a Jew.

The first time is hard. But each time the callous grows. Each time it is easier than the last. Eventually the time comes that you can do these things with neither sensitivity nor compunction.

Suddenly I felt sorry, not so much for the little Viet Cong, as for the big American soldier. I felt that what he did was understandable and human. Yet how sad it is to have a callous on your soul. How much less a living man it makes you. And how fast, in war, it grows.

And then I turned the page. For after all, we have seen such photographs for years now.

But later, thinking back on that photograph in this winter of 1967, I never felt more strongly that we must end this war in Vietnam.

We must end the frustrations and strains and fears and triumphs and anger and satisfactions and guilt.

We must end it, not so much for their sake, but for our own.

**April 10, 1947**

**“Women's Intramural Sports Constitution Given in Part”**

*Ed. Note: The following Constitution for women's intramural sports, as approved by the Executive Council, will be run in part this issue and the next.*

**Article I: Name**

This organization shall be known as the Women's Athletic Association of Whitman College.

**Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of this association shall be to promote interest and participation in intramural and club organization sports on the Whitman Campus.

**April 10, 1947**

**“We Aim to Please”**

*Patient:* “What do you charge for pulling out a tooth?”

*Dr. Lion:* “Five dollars.”

*Patient:* “Five dollars for only two or three seconds of work?”

*Dr. Lion:* “Well, if you wish, I can extract it very slowly.”

**February 20, 1947**

**“Hands Across the Ocean”**

*The Capital Chimes*

Can communism and democracy live peaceably in the same world? This query heads the list of America’s big problems. Let us go over the question, examining the significance of its important words: can communism, a system of government which excludes the welfare of the individual and is ruthless in its attempts to stifle all “dangerous thought and competition,” exist in the same universe that houses democracy, a plan of government founded on the principle of freedom of the individual and dedicated to keeping alive the spark of freedom everywhere?

Neither poser can remove itself from the globe. We must live together or attempt to destroy one of us. However, the second proposition suggests that we can not live together in constant strife or attempt to eliminate one party because the other would probably approach annihilation also.

In other words, if we intended to continue on this earth we are forced to come to some agreement or be dispelled. The question, therefore, should be revised to read: How can we live together peaceably?

This answer is easy, but hard to take. Each country must make concessions to the other. Surrender of principles is not necessary, but our haggling over details must cease.

**September 30, 1954**

**“Eisenhower's Visit Heads Week's End at Whitman: Many Visiting Dignitaries Attend Presidential 'Party’”**

A wave of applause swept through the crowded lobby of the Marcus Whitman Hotel as a glare of flashbulbs lit up the beaming face of the President of the United States Dwight D. Eisenhower. Carrying a large bouquet of yellow roses, Ike raised his arms and waved them in greeting to the cheering throng.
"Twisp' Describes Home"
Pat Nelson

This article is written for the benefit of those who know absolutely nothing about Twisp, Washington. Frankly, it's hard to believe that there are people in this world who are so unenlightened but there is a rumor going around which indicates that this is the horrible truth.

To begin, Twisp is much larger than anyone could possibly imagine. It's a thriving metropolis—I'm not going to give the exact population because the World Almanac and I do not agree, and there are many gullible people who believe everything they read: after all, I don't want to be sued for libel.

Twisp Boasts

Twisp has the usual number of businesses—three grocery stores, three cafes, one drug store, two department (I use the term very loosely) stores and 22 taverns. This may seem like a large number of taverns but just the opposite is true. On Saturday night, a drinkin' man has a tough time finding a place to sit down. (We have no WCTU chapter—a real loss.)

There was once a theater in Twisp, a real landmark. As a matter of fact, it had previously been called the Twisp Opera house (this was during the days when the term "Opera" was extended to cover Vaudeville). Anyway, to make a long story short, it was made of solid wood, and unfortunately one dark night, burned to the ground—the only thing saved was a pair of snow shoes! My acquaintances inform me that this was the biggest bonfire they ever did see. It was rumored around that the fire started because the proprietor was showing hot movies. This is entirely without foundation; this feature starred Randolph Scott.

School Claims

Twisp High school is noted for its athletic prowess. As a matter of fact, when I was a sophomore (in high school that is), good old Twisp High won the state championship in football—something very surprising to "furriners." Twisp had the best eight-man football team in the state.

Twisp prides itself on having established a high level of literary achievement. This level has been practically unobtainable for the rest of the United States. I'm sure that all of you heard of The Virginian by Owen Wister, and probably most of you have read it six or seven times. Many of the characters in this book are patterned after "Twispites." In fact, Twisp might be called the last of the "Old West." This is probably because Twisp is fairly isolated. It's not on the road to anywhere except Mazama which is at the end of the road.
September 27-30, 2018
Fifty-Plus Reunion

All members of the Classes of 1967 and earlier are invited to the Fifty-Plus Reunion. Special events will be held for the 65th reunion of the Class of 1953, 60th Reunion of the Class of 1958 and the 55th Reunion of the Class of 1963.

The schedule of events, accommodation information, and RSVP form and a list of those likely to attend can be found online at www.whitman.edu/reunions. Watch for more Reunion news via Whittie News, your mailbox and email inbox.

Sponsored by the Whitman College Alumni Association

Fifty-Plus Reunion Classes during the Parade of Classes, Reunion Weekend 2017

Photos: Nhi Cao ’20