

Live

wire



WHITMAN COLLEGE
YOUNG ALUMNI MAGAZINE



Live|wire

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WHITMAN COLLEGE

Dear Whitties,

Since the summer of 1989, the Whitman College Alumni Association has published *Livewire*, a magazine for alumni who have graduated in the past 10 years. We've been proud to offer you news, articles and photographs that resonate with young alumni. This publication has seen feature articles from young alumni about what their Whitman experience means to them, pictures of the places where Whitties have met other Whitties, and hundreds of Whittie marriages/unions and babies.

The Alumni Association is pleased to announce exciting changes to the format of *Livewire*. With the help of the Office of Communications, we will begin accepting wedding/union photographs and Whittie babies/new additions for the Class Notes section of *Whitman Magazine*. This will allow young alumni to share their exciting Whitman news with the entire Whitman community!

Our office has begun the process of transitioning *Livewire* to a new format to better serve you. We know that young alumni are on the go and looking for different ways to stay connected with their classmates so we're going to send you *Livewire* electronically as a special section within *Whittie News*. No more looking for that last paper copy to read a cool story about a Whittie, plus you'll finally be able to enjoy your favorite photographs in color!

I have enjoyed being your *Livewire* correspondent over the years and look forward to seeing the new version of *Livewire* next winter. I'll be moving to Seattle to attend graduate school and can't wait to connect with other Seattle Whitties!

The Alumni Office staff is here to help you stay in touch with Whitman and your classmates. We help plan reunions, local alumni gatherings, faculty presentations and career networking events. We also maintain an alumni database called Whitman Connect, which can be especially helpful if you've moved to a new town or want to talk to a Whittie in your career field. Please contact us for more information on alumni events or questions about our online services at alumni@whitman.edu.

Liesl Olson '11
Alumni Relations Officer
Editor, *Livewire*





Conserving endangered species at 13,000 feet in the Andes

By **Sebastián Kohn '07**

Andean Condors fly more than 19,000 feet in elevation covering all of the highlands of Ecuador and South America. They are the national bird of five countries but face persecution and many threats throughout their range. Condors are dimorphic species, with the males having large crests on their heads. They are carrion feeders and thus have no feathers on their neck and face, which helps them stay clean.

In 2012, five years after leaving Whitman, I accompanied Dr. Hernan Vargas on a field trip to observe a newly discovered Andean Condor roost site in my home country, Ecuador. On that day we observed some 30 condors as they were feasting on a cow's carcass. I had hiked the Ecuadorian mountains since I was a boy, and had never seen a group of more than five condors, so to say that I was excited is an understatement. I didn't know it at the time, but that experience changed the course of my life for years to come.

The Andean Condor is Ecuador's national bird and listed as an endangered species at the national level — it was estimated there were around 50 wild condors in the country. Until



that point, I had spent more than four years working with captive condors in an effort to breed them and to release their offspring back into the wild. This is what other conservationists in the country were doing and was the path recommended by local and international experts to save the species. Being a young biologist just starting my career, I blindly followed this conventional wisdom.

On that pivotal day in 2012, I realized that we knew next to nothing about the actual situation of the species in the wild, and that in an effort to be humble and trust in the experts' advice, I had left behind one of the most important lessons I learned at Whitman — critical thinking. Dr. Vargas is The Peregrine Fund's Director of Neotropical Science Program and supervises a dozen different research projects studying raptors throughout Latin America. He had just started the first real nationwide research project on wild condors and soon I joined this great effort.

We had to get concrete scientific information on the species to gain empirical data on their actual status, how many are still surviving in the wild, where the condors are foraging and nesting, and what threats they face. To do this, one of our first goals was to capture, tag with satellite trackers, and release wild condors. This proved quite a challenge, and we spent almost two years with one failed capture attempt after another. Our luck finally struck when we were able to rescue, rehabilitate, and release a young male that had been injured due to a strong storm. We quickly learned from this success, and over the next couple of years we were able to rescue, or capture and release 12 condors. These condors became ambassadors for their species, and provided us with large amounts of vital information for decision making and understanding the species' ecological requirements.

Data from these condors have allowed us, in coordination with the local environmental authorities, to carry out a national census. Now we know there are at least 100 individuals flying in the country. We also have a database of more than 500 roosting sites and know where they forage, roost, and nest. With a clear picture of what is needed to conserve this culturally and ecologically important species, we can now plan our way forward.

Even though I wish I would have gotten more opportunities at Whitman to learn about field conservation work and the tools to do it, I am very glad for the critical thinking and analysis abilities learned at school. They have allowed me to be an integral part of a very successful project and to continue my life's passion of conservation work.

We still have so much to learn about the Andean Condor, and I expect that I will continue to implement my critical thinking skills for years to come so that when a young scientist walks the Andes 20 years from now, the conventional wisdom at that point will be more strongly founded in scientific fact.

Andean Condors' wingspan can reach more than 10 feet. Through satellite trackers, we have been able to monitor their movements and their ability to fly more than 120 miles in one day.



In January, Sebastián followed the footsteps of some of the tracked condors to a mountain called Altar located in the Sangay National Park in central Ecuador. "We were lucky enough to follow them throughout their range in the Ecuadorian Andes."



Sebastián Kohn '07 received his B.A. in biology and environmental studies at Whitman College in 2007. He did a study abroad program on community wildlife management at the School of Field Studies in Kenya, studied sustainable development planning and management at the Sustainability Institute in Stellenbosch, South Africa; and has a diploma in permaculture design from the Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura in Honduras. He currently runs the Ilitio Wildlife Rescue Center and Hacienda Ilitio in Cotopaxi, Ecuador; and is a researcher at the Andean Condor Research and Biological Monitoring Program in Ecuador. Sebastián is a founding member of the Andean Condor Conservation Group of Ecuador (Grupo Nacional de Trabajo del Cóndor Andino) and has been working with, and researching, both wild and captive condors for 10 years.

Student Engagement Center launches Whitman Wayfinder

The Student Engagement Center has launched a new online career exploration tool called Whitman Wayfinder. It features 34 career fields and potentially relevant Whitman experiences (including clubs, community service opportunities and off-campus study programs), and real-world information (such as professional associations and industry job boards) about each of those career fields.

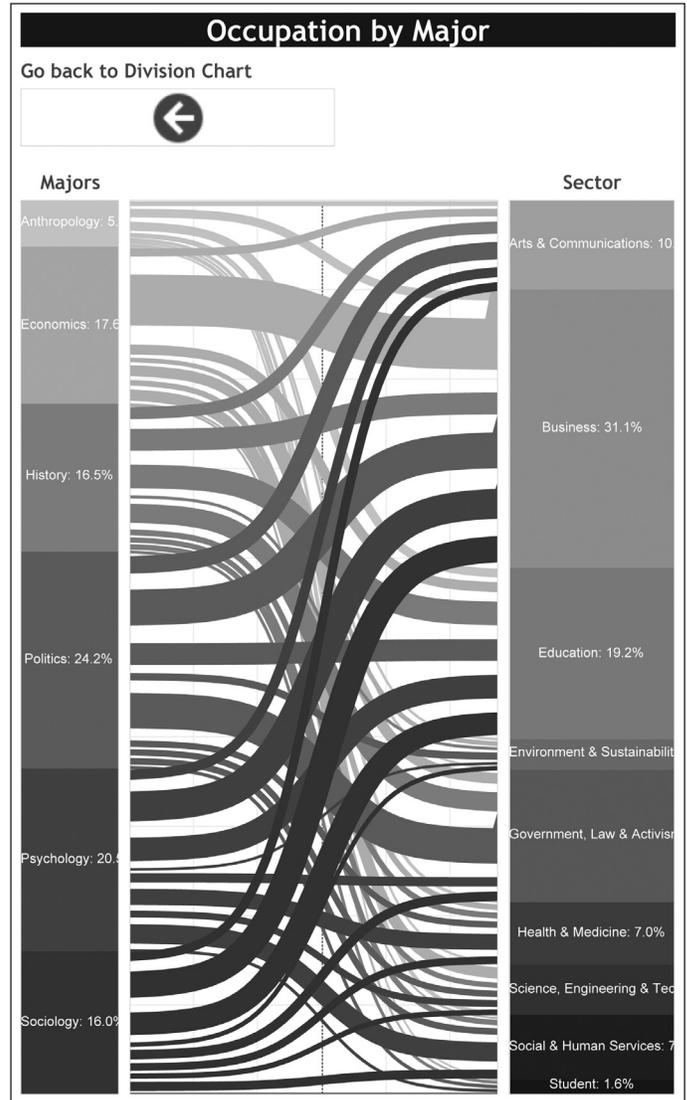


While primarily targeted toward current students, it includes knowledge and resources for young alumni, including lists of professional associations, information on post-graduate education, and connections to industry job boards and additional resources.

Be sure to check out the interactive Sankey diagram (several examples of searches shown below) to view data from 20 years of alumni about their field of study and their career decisions.

Visit Whitman Wayfinder at tinyurl.com/whitway or contact Technology and Marketing Fellow **Abby Seethoff '16** at seethoar@whitman.edu for more information.

Whitties often embrace non-linear paths from their major to their profession. In fact, many students study a subject they love at Whitman and then pursue a career in an entirely different field.



tinyurl.com/whitway



WHITMAN COLLEGE

Whitman Connect

Across generations and around the world

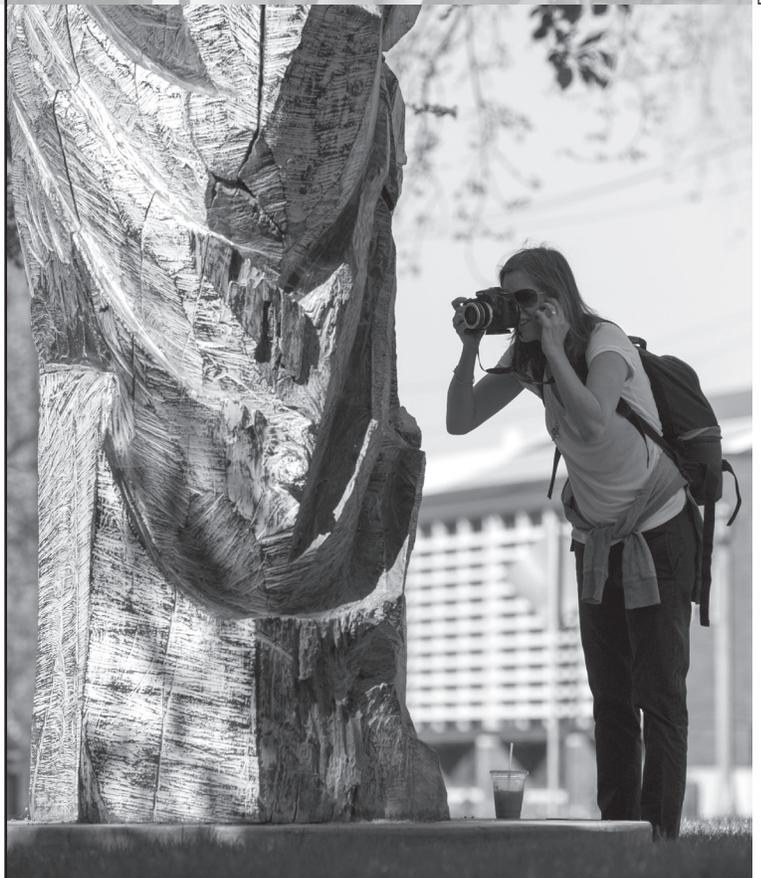
HAVE YOU HEARD?

Whitman Connect is our new and improved alumni community — it offers many great features to search for friends and classmates, network with fellow Whitties, mentor students and more!

Updating your profile is easy — just go to **connect.whitman.edu** to get started today. Were you a member of Whitman Online? If so, you are already registered! All you need is your email address and password from Whitman Online. If you are a new user, contact the Alumni Office at 509-527-5167 or alumni@whitman.edu for your Whitman ID (WID).

Please take a few minutes to join the more than 8,000 users of **Whitman Connect**.

connect.whitman.edu



Photos by Matt Banderas '04

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Whitman College Alumni Association
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Walla Walla, WA 99362

WHITMAN LIVEWIRE

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Published by the Whitman College Alumni Association

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Dear Young Alumni,

While some Whitman College Alumni may be thinking about winding up careers or sending their children to Whitman, those of us who have more recently graduated from Whitman have much different matters on our minds. We might be thinking about starting a career, graduate programs, or paying back loans. We may wish that we could retreat to the stability of college life or wonder if our liberal arts education will be appreciated by anyone besides ourselves. After four years in Walla Walla, it is a challenging time in our lives.

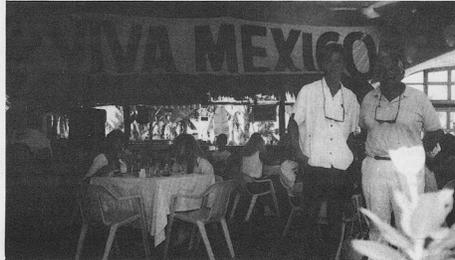
Because many issues and challenges are exclusive to younger alumni, the Whitman College Alumni Association has created the **WhitmanLiveWire**, a publication directed towards the interests of alumni who have graduated within the last ten years. The **LiveWire** includes detailed news of classmates and their careers, graduate programs or other beneficial information, Alumni Programs and any other topics that might be of particular interest to you. We welcome your ideas and comments.

You will notice that the **Notes** in the **LiveWire** are similar to the **Class Notes** in the Whitman magazine. These initial **Notes** were sent to us by many of your classmates who were randomly selected to help with this first issue. (By the way, thanks for writing, everybody!) We would like to have a **Note** from YOU about what you are doing, and you will find a form enclosed that you can fill out and send to us for publication in future issues.

We hope that you find the **WhitmanLiveWire** interesting, educational and entertaining. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Charley Rosenberry, '81
Dan Evans, Jr., '83
Alumni Assn. Board Members



SPRING BREAK . . .

David Stevens, '45, Roger and Davis Clapp Professor of Economic Thought, visited Bruce Bignold, '84, at Bruce's restaurant, Jalepenos, in Cancun, Mexico. And we thought Spring Break was just for students...

Excerpts from the Pioneer, February to May 1989

By Dan Evans, Jr., '83

Trustees approve '89-90 budget, 12% tuition hike (ouch!) . . . Sophomore awarded Truman Scholarship . . . Professor Tim Jeske thinks the Whitman campus is sexually immature . . . Academic Council drags feet on Colloquium and 3-2 questions . . . (The dread) of the Chemistry Department Dr. Todd retires . . . Master plan reveals \$10 million needed to improve College facilities. . . Committee formed to evaluate mascot name change (Fightin' Wombats!?) . . . The Green still advertises, "It's tradition" . . . Four new faculty members hired . . . Rapist arrested on campus, Whitman safer . . . Hoop van crashes, no one injured . . . Women's ski team to Nationals . . . Library experiments with later closing at 2:00 a.m . . . The Pioneer celebrates National Condom Week by enclosing a free condom in the February 16th issue; (issue sells out in record time?) . . . Two PoliSci professors resign . . . Student artwork enlivens SUB exterior . . . Men's and Women's hoop teams reach playoffs . . . A number of swimmers head to Nationals . . . Students Shiver, but survive cold snap . . . New blood in ASWC, (sound familiar?) . . . Men's lacrosse finishes undefeated . . . Women's tennis ended season 12-6 . . . New horoscope feature . . .

It says I should quit while I'm ahead. Sounds good . . . !

Check out the front page of the very first issue of *Livewire* from the summer of 1989!