Verbeck Smith, ’57, and his wife, Kathleen, received a Pathfinder Award from the Alaska Historical Society for their book Ice Window: Letters from a Bering Strait Village, 1892-1902. The award is given to individuals who have indexed or prepared guides or published materials that were not previously accessible. Ice Window is a compilation of letters written by Ellen Lopp who, with her husband, Tom, served as a missionary at Cape Prince of Wales in northwest Alaska. Lopp wrote about everyday Native life, visitors from trading and whaling ships, and the environment.

O. Alan Weltzien, ’74, professor of English at Western Montana College, is editor of The Literary Art and Activism of Rick Bass, published in 2001 by University of Utah Press. It is the first comprehensive collection of literary criticism to address Bass’s work. It contains the work of 15 scholars who examine the development of social, political, and personal issues in Bass’s fiction and nonfiction. Weltzien also is coeditor of Coming into McPhee Country: John McPhee and the Art of Literary Nonfiction, due out this spring from the University of Utah Press.

Janice Kay Johnson, ’76, is the author of 23 books. Her adult works include Setze the Day and Home Again, and All Through the House and Lifesaver, both of which were written under the name Janice Bartlett. Under the name Janice Stevens she has written six young adult novels including Take Back the Moment, which was named to the Children’s Choice list of the International Reading Association and Children’s Book Council. Her other books include an illustrated children’s book, Rosamund (Simon & Schuster, 1994). Johnson lives in Arlington, Washington, with her two daughters.

Joni Sensel, ’84, and illustrator Christopher Bivins received a Henry Bergh Children’s Book Award from the ASPCA for Bears Barge In, published in 2001. The book was honored in the environment and ecology category.

John Fulton, ’90, is the author of two books of fiction, the novel More Than Enough and a collection of stories titled Retribution. The novel was named a fall 2002 Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Selection. The short story collection won the Southern Review Award for the best first collection of stories published in 2001 by an American author. John has taught creative writing and literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Announcing the
Whitman Athletics Hall of Fame

In order to recognize contributions of former student-athletes and coaches to the life and history of Whitman College, the athletic department has established the Whitman Athletics Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame’s first inductees will be named in May 2003. This is the highest honor to be given to former Whitman athletes, said Travis Feezell, athletic director.

Alumni are encouraged to submit nominations, which are open until February 1, 2003. The award will be administered by the athletic department in cooperation with an executive board composed of former Whitman student-athletes and coaches. Induction into the Hall of Fame is scheduled for the annual athletics award banquet in late spring.

Submit nominations by February 1, 2003.

Induction is to be based on the following criteria.

- Inductees must be graduates of Whitman College or have served as a coach/administrator for at least five years.
- There will be a 10-year waiting period after graduation for athletes and a five-year waiting period after retirement for coaches/administrators. This may be waived in extraordinary circumstances.
- Primary emphasis for selection will be placed on the contributions to Whitman athletics. Other areas to be considered may include contribution to the College as a whole and/or achievements after graduation.
- No more than five candidates will be selected for induction in any given year.
- Individuals may stay in the nomination pool for a period of five years.
- In extraordinary circumstances, teams may be selected for induction.

To submit a nomination, contact Travis Feezell, athletic director, Whitman College, 345 Boyer Ave., Walla Walla, WA 99362. Email feezelt@whitman.edu. See www.whitman.edu/athletics/hof-nom.html.
On Campus

Commencement Weekend, May 22-25. 50th reunion of the class of 1953.
Summer College, June 15-21. Formerly called Senior Alumni College.

Whitman Clubs
Palm Desert, February 22. Alumni reception for area snowbirds. (Send the alumni office your winter address.)

Trips and Tours
Whitman in Ashland, August 8-10. 25th annual excursion to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Led by Professor Ed Foster. For plays, check www.whitman.edu/alumni, or call the alumni office at 1-800-835-9448, ext. 1.

Oaxaca, Mexico, March 23-29, 2003
Accompanied by Professor of Spanish Celia Weller, Whitman travelers will explore Mexico’s culture, history, archaeology, and folklore. The group will visit the mile-high colonial city of Oaxaca, indigenous villages, and ancient ruins.

Vietnam, January 5-18, 2004
Alumni, parents, and friends are invited to participate in this opportunity to visit Vietnam with Professor of History David Schmitz, an American foreign policy expert who is currently writing a book on Vietnam.

To save resources — both natural and financial — separate notices about trips will no longer be sent in the mail. For details on the trips, call 1-800-835-9448, ext. 1. Email hoglund@whitman.edu, or visit www.whitman.edu/alumni.

Whitman Magazine
Alumni
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Alumni Board Nominations
All alumni are invited to participate in nominating new members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. The procedure requires 12 or more alumni to sign a petition on behalf of someone they will nominate. Members of the board serve three-year terms. Selection is based upon volunteer service for Whitman and representation from class year, geographic area, gender, and ethnicity.

Nominating petitions should be sent by March 3, 2003, to Polly Powers, director of alumni relations, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA 99362. If you have any questions, please call 1-800-835-9448, ext. 1.

Spekeo admission volunteer honored
Whitman College honored Carol Murphy Ellis, ’69, in September with the Alumni Admission Volunteer Distinguished Service Award for 2002.
Ellis was recognized for her many hours of service to the College in helping recruit new students. The 14th recipient of the award, she was chosen from among more than 300 alumni volunteers who assist the admission office each year.
A first-grade teacher at Whitman Elementary School in Spokane, Ellis is the parent of two Whitman graduates, Juniper Ellis, ’92, and Ezra Ellis, ’97.
25th Reunion of the Class of 1977

20th Reunion of the Class of 1982


15th Reunion of the Class of 1987

ROW 1: Karen Langdon DeStefano, Anne Cottrell Spencer (with Quinn), Brent Baker with Dylan, Valerie Street, Peter Kane, Alice Cunningham, Audrey Peterson (with Connor), Andrew Emlen (with Riley), Jane Cover (with Nathan).

10th Reunion of the Class of 1992

ROW 1: Norrie Gregoire, '89, and Lucy Gordon Gregoire (with Sophia, Emma, and Nels), Flip Herndon, Michael McNaul, Jodi Wade-McNaul, Janna Cawrse, Graeme Esarvey, Kristi Handley with Jacob, Kenzie Kaha, Jessica Harris Burles, '93, and Mark Burles (with Molly and Anna), Tina Kay, Jodi Allison-Bunnell (with Camas), Monique Milius, Jeff Schnabel, Cindy Schnabel.


5th Reunion of the Class of 1997

Alumni winemakers and growers combine art, science . . . and hard labor

Washington state is now internationally known for its premium quality wine, and the Walla Walla Valley has come to play a significant role in that recognition. On some of the more than 1,000 acres now producing world-class grapes in the Walla Walla Valley, Whitman alumni are combining hard physical labor with a passion for their product.

L’Ecole No. 41, one of the most established wineries in the valley with Whitman roots, has been producing premium varietal wines since 1983 in the historic Lowden schoolhouse. Best known for its merlot, the winery now produces about 25,000 cases annually. The winery was founded by Baker Ferguson, ’39, and his wife, Jean, who passed the business along to their daughter, Megan Clubb, ’79, and her husband, Marty. Marty acts as chief winemaker for L’Ecole, while Megan, who also is the chief executive of Baker Boyer Bancorp, is involved primarily in promoting the winery, its history, and its products.

Jay Babbitt, ’02, recently joined the ranks of L’Ecole, where he takes charge of retail sales and runs a wine club for frequent customers. An English major, he saw the wine industry as an interesting and growing market as well as an opportunity to try something different, he says. He was surprised, not only by the amount of physical labor involved, but also the breadth and scope of the clientele, who represent all 50 states and numerous countries. “It’s exciting that a little place in the Walla Walla Valley can receive so much publicity.”

A newer operation with a Whitman background is Buty Winery, founded and managed by Caleb Foster, ’91, and Nina Buty Foster, ’97, in 1998. Caleb worked at two wineries in Washington before the couple married and spent their three-month honeymoon in New Zealand. There Caleb apprenticed under an enologist while Nina observed winemaking and wine marketing.

At the winery, Caleb is the primary winemaker. Nina, who serves as general manager, enjoys the way her work combines formula with creativity. “Making a blend of wine is like making a painting using a fluid palette. Winemaking combines art and science to create a variable and often spontaneous product,” she says. The Fosters plan to open a wine tasting room in the future.

Jim McCarthy, ’63, and his business partner, Larry Krivoshein, launched Russell Creek Winery four years ago. Russell Creek’s production capacity and demand have steadily increased since its inception. A senior vice president at Baker Boyer Bank, McCarthy became involved in the industry through his passion for the product.

“If you like wine, you are fascinated by the process,” he says. Winemaking, however, takes not only great care and artistry but also plenty of physical labor. “The demanding and continual process required for a small winery is not for the faint of heart,” says McCarthy. It involves patience . . . and “a lot of stained clothes.”

Whitman alumni also work in other aspects of the wine industry. They include, for example, David and Priscilla Wyckoff, both 1967 graduates, who are proprietors of a vineyard at Wyckoff Farms in Prosser, Washington. Their nephew Charles Wyckoff, ’94, is vineyard unit manager. His responsibilities include supervising the daily operations of the vineyard, preparing land, and maintaining plants. Working on the land each day, he appreciates the creative
challenge of growing top-quality grapes. “It’s like a chess game,” he says. “Each operation can be made more efficient. The trick is to be as resourceful as possible in each stage of the growing.” And, he adds, “the work of those in the fields is crucial to the success of the wine industry.”

Grape growers Jeffrey and Kathy Bates Hill, both ’78, own Forgotten Hills’ Vineyard. The couple began planting grapes on their three-and-a-half acres of rocky land as an exciting way to “keep down the weeds.” Planted in 1996, their vineyard is considered an “old” one by Walla Walla Valley standards. More than five years in the ground allows the roots to grow deep and the plants to pick up trace elements from the soil that translate into the taste of the berry, according to the Hills.

Both gardeners at heart, Jeff and Kathy are excited about the cycle of growth in their vineyard. “Every April you see the sticks turn green, slowly grow their grapes, go through veraison [changing of color] until it’s time to harvest,” says Kathy. “Then the cycle starts all over again.” The Hills enjoy the growing recognition of the Walla Walla Valley in the industry, as well as the prospects for winemaking culture. “It’s going to get more exciting. This is merely the tip of the iceberg.”

Whitman alumni have found success in the wine industry outside of the Walla Walla Valley as well. Steve MacRostie, ’67, is owner and winemaker of MacRostie Winery near Sonoma, California. With more than 20 years of experience, he produces chardonnays and other wines that have been profiled in Food and Wine, Wine and Spirits, and other magazines. Mark Beaman, ’97, works as a wine tracker and viticulture technician for Stimson Lane Winery in Hopland, California. He follows the development of the wine from grape to bottle, performing laboratory analysis at both the winery and in the vineyard.

Beaman was one of several alumni who spoke last June at Whitman’s Summer College, which explored the Walla Walla wine industry from various perspectives. Beaman discussed the alchemy of winemaking, and McCarthy, Krivoshein, the Hills, and the Fosters also shared their expertise and passion with Summer College participants through presentations and samplings from local wineries.

— Mo Brady, ’03