SEPTEMBER 2011 ISSUE

Dear Center for,

School has started this week and campus feels alive again. Faculty, staff and students alike are eager for the promise of a new school year. It saddens me to be leaving this wonderful place. It has been an honor to come and serve my alma mater as Alumni Director; however, I have received a job offer from the Loma Linda University School of Medicine Alumni Association to serve as their Executive Director and will be leaving WWU soon.

WWU will always be dear to me, but I know I leave this place in good hands. The leadership team here is excellent, and God’s hand continues to guide this place. Please keep the faculty, staff, and students in your prayers and consider joining me in supporting our alma mater during Phonathon this year. Students will be calling you soon.

WWU will be looking for a new Alumni Director. If you know of someone who may be interested in the position, please contact Dennis Carlson. Lisa Krueger ’94 will be taking over as the new editor of this email newsletter so you will continue to receive it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Portland Alumni Dinner
Oct. 8 | Clackamas, Ore.
Join fellow alumni for good food, networking, and hear what's new at WWU on Sabbath at 6:30 p.m. at the Old Spaghetti Factory on 12725 SE 93rd Avenue. RSVP by Oct. 3.

Yakima Alumni Sabbath
Oct. 15 | Yakima, Wash.
Join President John McVay for a special Sabbath at the Yakima Seventh-day Adventist Church. The service will start at 10:45 a.m. A complimentary lunch and alumni reception will follow.

Denver Alumni Sabbath
Nov. 5 | Denver, Colo.
Join President John McVay for a special Sabbath at the Denver South
P.S. Check out pictures from our last three alumni events on our Flickr page—British Columbia Campmeeting, Boise Old Spaghetti Factory Dinner and Rosario Alumni Weekend.

Wishing you all the best!

Nicole Batton
Alumni Director
alumni@wallawalla.edu

ALUMNI NEWS

1981 Alumnus Raises Awareness about Rwandan Genocide

Alumni of Walla Walla University have served humanity all over the world, but perhaps none with more distinction than Carl Wilkens ’81. Wilkens served as the director of ADRA in Rwanda during the Genocide in 1994. While most foreigners left during the crisis, Wilkens chose to stay. His story has been featured in such media outlets as PBS Frontline, the New York Times, and National Public Radio. Recently, Wilkens also published a book about his experience in Rwanda. Read his story here.

Seventh-day Adventist Church. The service will start at 10:45 a.m. A potluck lunch and alumni reception will follow. Dessert provided by WWU.

Michigan Alumni Dinner
Join us at 6:30 p.m. for good food, fellowship, and an update on WWU with special guest Dave Thomas, Dean of the School of Theology, in the Whirlpool Room (Chan Shun Hall, Andrews University). A complimentary dinner will be provided. Please RSVP by Nov. 30.

Alaska Alumni Weekend
Jan. 6 & 7 | Anchorage, Alaska
Join Loren Dickinson, professor emeritus, for an alumni vespers Friday night, church service, potluck lunch and communication seminar Sabbath afternoon at Hillside O’Malley Seventh Day Adventist Church. More details coming soon!

For more information about any of the our events, call the Alumni Office at 800.377.2586.

RESOURCES

Give a gift to WWU

Reserve a guest room

Update your contact info

Get help with estate planning
1962 Alumna Publishes Memoir

"That guy is shooting at us!" Judy (Williams) de Chantal '62 recounts about a run-in with the Turkish military over a parking violation in an excerpt from her new book, Significant Journey. The book is an autobiography of her one-year journey through Europe and Asia in 1972. Read her story here.

1959 Alumnus' Engineering Legacy Spans Globe

Gary Curtis' engineering legacy spans from the top of the Space Needle to the Southern Pole. Curtis graduated from then Walla Walla College in 1959 with a degree in civil engineering, and over the course of his career he has been involved in a number of notable engineering projects, including the Seattle Space Needle, the Queensway Bridge and the Spruce Goose Dome, among others. In addition, Curtis is one of the three founders of Gossamer Space Frames, a successful civil engineering firm. Read his story here.

Have news to share? Send it to us at alumni@wallawalla.edu.

WWU Ranked Among Top Universities

Walla Walla University is pleased to announce that it once again placed in the top tier of the
U.S. News and World Report 2012 Best Colleges report. WWU ranks 39th out of 118 schools in the “Regional Universities – West” category. In addition, WWU was listed as having a top social work program. The Best Colleges rankings are based on a variety of factors, including retention and graduation rates, undergraduate academic reputation, faculty and financial resources and alumni giving rate, among others. Read the full story.

Student Applies Math to College Football
When Walla Walla University senior Nathan Reeves (engineering, history, and math major) was faced with the challenge of choosing a senior project that involved math not covered in any WWU classes, he decided to work out a new system for ranking college football teams. He recently presented the results of his project at a professional conference in Kentucky. Read the full story.

New WWU Board Members Announced
Walla Walla University welcomes 12 new members to its governing board of trustees. The new members were elected at the 2011 WWU Constituency Session, held on the university campus September 11. The new board members will serve a 5-year term. Read about the new board members.

More campus news online >>

ALUMNI PHOTOS

British Columbia Campmeeting

Boise Alumni Dinner

Rosario Alumni Weekend

Click on the photos above to see more pictures from these events.

Did you miss the last issue of Alumni Currents? Don’t worry, you can still read it. Visit the archives now to catch up on past issues.

BULLETIN BOARD

• Come out and support the WWU Wolves! Show your school spirit and support WWU students by attending a game in your area. Game schedules, team rosters, photos, and much more are
available on the Athletics website.

• **Phonathon starts next month!** A WWU student will be calling you soon about the Walla Walla University Fund, formerly known as the Annual Fund. This important fund benefits student scholarships, supports faculty professional development and enhances WWU’s learning environment. By giving to the Walla Walla University Fund, you can help WWU exceed its standards of excellence in higher education. Your gift also adds value to the education you acquired here. The percentage of alumni who give each year affects WWU’s ranking in *U.S. News & World Report*’s list of colleges and universities. Part of a school’s overall ranking is based on "alumni satisfaction" or percentage of alumni giving. If more alumni give, WWU’s ranking goes up, which increases the value of your degree and helps WWU attract prospective students. The percentage of alumni who give also increases WWU’s ability to obtain grants from corporations and foundations. Alumni giving is considered a vote of confidence by the university’s most important constituency!

• **Share what’s new in your life!** Whether your recently married, received a promotion or an award, completed a new degree or had a new baby, we want to hear about it. Submit your alumnote now!
Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
I'm Not Leaving

Carl Wilkens shares his experience in Rwanda

By: Andy Hanson

Alumni of Walla Walla University have served humanity all over world, but perhaps none with more distinction than that of the unique experience of Carl Wilkens ('81). Wilkens served as the director of ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) in Rwanda during the Genocide in 1994. While most foreigners left during the crisis, Wilkens chose to stay. His story has been featured in such media outlets as PBS Frontline, the New York Times, and National Public Radio. Today Pastor Wilkens resides in Spokane, Wash., with his wife, Theresa (Appley) Wilkens ('81), and three children, Mindy, Lisa, and Shaun. He has set up his own non-profit organization, WorldOutsideMyShoes.org, through which he tells his story and raises awareness to suffering around the world.

Wilkens' story in Rwanda began 1990 when he moved there with his young family after accepting an ADRA directorship position. He put to good purpose the skills he learned at then Walla Walla College as an Industrial Education major to help build new schools and to implement a program for creating garden tools and clay ovens for people displaced during the 1990 civil war. The civil war preempted the Genocide in 1994 in which the Hutu tribesmen slaughtered approximately 800,000 Tutsis. Wilkens evacuated his family along with other foreigners, but decided to stay himself.

“It just seemed the right thing to do,” said Wilkens, “I could take my blue passport and go, and moments later my housegirl and night watchman, both identifiable Tutsis, were going to be butchered.”

During the conflict, Wilkens was able to deliver water, food, and other aid around the city and in one case was able to prevent the slaughtering of more than 200 orphans.

“It was the student missions program at WWU that gave wings to the dreams I had as a kid of exploring Africa one day,” says Wilkens. “The year I spent doing maintenance and purchasing at Bethel College in the Transki, South Africa in the late 70s not only propelled me along the path of becoming a high school shop teacher, but ignited a life-long love affair with the people of Africa.”

In addition to the technical skills WWU gave him he also learned relational skills.

“I remember in particular the challenges and rewards of organizing and participating in Campus Ministries programs like big brother/big sister, adapt a grandparent, and others” he says. “During the Genocide it was the relational skills that really were instrumental in saving lives; the bigger challenges lay in relating to and negotiating with the leaders of the genocide as well as those swinging the machetes. They were the ones who controlled the stolen food supplies, fuel, and movement in Kigali.”

Perhaps one of the most important things Wilkens picked up at WWU was his lovely wife Theresa. Though they went on their
first date while students at Upper Columbia Academy, they really started dating at WWU when they shared a class.

“It was while taking accounting together that things really began to ‘add up,’” Wilkens jokes. “The teacher’s assistant for the class would make comments on our papers like, ‘The answers on both of your papers are remarkably similar.’”

Now Wilkens uses his organization to travel around the world visiting high schools and universities, telling his story and impacting the minds of future generations of policy makers and citizens of the world.

“It’s not always easy to tell what impact our story-telling has as we travel in and out of the US,” Wilkens admits. “After a visit, students sometimes tell us they know now what they want to study, and name things like peace and conflict studies, international development, or majors leading to human rights and social justice work. That’s good stuff.”

In his presentations he tries to combat the divisive “Us and Them” type of thinking. He works hard at inviting and equipping people to enter the world of ‘The Other.’

“Making a difference in the world is all about relationships and service,” says Wilkens. “A can-do attitude is invaluable. Relationships with our Maker and one another propel us into a fantastic adventure of serving others. Stories are the most powerful tool we have been given and when we hear stories of injustice and violence we have to stand up and act.”

Read more about Wilkens’ experience in Rwanda in his book, "I’m Not Leaving," available through amazon.com by clicking the link below.

Links:
    Wilkens’ Book on Amazon

<- Back to: News
Significant Journey

Alumna writes her memoir

By: Andy Hanson

"That guy is shooting at us!" Judy (Williams) de Chantal ('62) recounts a run-in with the Turkish military over a parking violation in an excerpt from her new book, “Significant Journey.” The book is an autobiography of her one-year journey through Europe and Asia in 1972, chronicling not only her travels, but also a significant spiritual journey as she calls herself a “prodigal daughter.”

Judy’s journey started when she decided to take a year off from her work as a school nurse in the Tacoma, Wash., area to join friends traveling throughout Europe. A Canadian friend, Ilana, invited her to come to Europe with her where they could travel during the summer and then work at a ski resort during the winter. Prior to leaving the U.S., de Chantal visited her parents who sent her on her way with a little Bible with a note inscribed in the front cover: “We will be praying that God will keep you safe on this journey and guide you back home soon.” Even then, de Chantal knew the words, “…and guide you back home soon” had a deeper meaning than simply bringing her back to her parents.

“I wasn’t anti-Christian in any sense,” she explains. “In my mind, my stance was simple enough. I would have to bring my life into alignment with my beliefs, and that seemed overwhelming. I had too much to do and thought I was too busy for that at the time.”

Upon arrival in Europe, de Chantal and Ilana purchased a Volkswagen van which they named "The Belly Button Bomb" and toured through several countries, including Germany, France, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Syria, and Afghanistan, among others.

Of all of her experiences, one above all stands out as making the most impact on de Chantal’s life. “It is the end of October. The Rome Youth Hostel is on the old 1954 Olympic grounds…. 1972, and it is the apex of backpack travelers on the road in Europe,” she recalls. Needing help with traveling expenses to Athens, de Chantal and Ilana cautiously accepted a passenger, “This guy is a ‘hippie’, has very long hair and wears big boots with frayed jeans. He is nice looking, but that isn’t a good criterion for picking up a rider. Would this be a safe thing to do?”

The hippie was none other than Alain de Chantal, whom she married after returning to North America. He has been her faithful traveling companion ever since.

The book continues following de Chantal’s life after her return to the U.S. in 1973. After working in generously funded public school programs and thereby witnessing the relative opulence and apathy in which the American poor lived in comparison to the countries they had visited in Asia, the de Chantals felt they needed to remove themselves from society and spend a couple of years in the wilderness. They settled in Tsuniah Lake, British Columbia, Canada.
While waiting for homesteading papers from the Canadian government to be processed, they spent time at Lake Tsuniah helping out at a cattle ranch managed by her aunt and uncle and acting as caretakers at a fly-in fishing resort during the winter.

de Chantal said that their papers never cleared, but that the experience in Canada was a time to continue to grow in wisdom and experience before finally returning to the U.S. in 1975. de Chantal's book ends at this point in the story, when the couple settles in Port Townsend, Wash.

Since that chapter in her journey ended, de Chantal has had a full and busy life as a full-time mom homeschooling her daughters through high school, supporting them as they attended college, and seeing them married and settled. She has also developed her talent as an artist and has sold oil paintings at art shows around the country. Many of her paintings are on display at the Book and Game Co. on Main Street in Walla Walla, Wash.

After 30 years de Chantal finally made the time to write a book. “Friends and family were always telling me that I had to write a book about it. I planned to write it because I knew that the things that happened to us were not the usual run-of-the-mill travel adventures.”

de Chantal and her husband still live in Port Angeles, Wash., and have two adult daughters, Jacinthe (’00) and Jonquille (’02). Though this is her first book publication, she has written many magazine articles. More information about de Chantal’s life and pictures from her European journey can be found by clicking the link below.

Links:
   de Chantal's Website

<- Back to: News
Gary Curtis designs several famous structures

Gary Curtis’ engineering legacy spans from the top of the Space Needle to the Southern Pole. Curtis graduated from then Walla Walla College in 1959 with a degree in civil engineering, and over the course of his career he has been involved in a number of notable engineering projects. Those projects include the Seattle Space Needle, the Queensway Bridge and the Spruce Goose Dome, among others. In addition, Curtis is one of the three founders of Gossamer Space Frames, a successful civil engineering firm.

Walla Walla University’s influence on his career extended above and beyond learning the fundamentals of civil engineering.

“In order to graduate in engineering you had to work hard,” he says. “Just being smart wasn’t enough. Grades were based on tests and completion of assignments, so being able to produce results was essential.”

During his time at WWU, Curtis worked as the editor of the Mountain Ash, all the while taking 22 credits.

“That experience taught me critical skills in organization, editing, managing a staff and budget, and how to meet deadlines,” he says, “and all of it has been essential to my career.”

His first engineering job after graduating was as a designer for a small engineering firm in Los Angeles, Calif. Shortly after that he took a job with John Minasian, a consulting structural engineer specializing in tall structures, such as television towers. It was at this job that Curtis was tasked to engineer the foundation and top house for the Seattle Space Needle, which made its debut in 1962 for the World’s Fair.

Since that time Curtis has been involved in a number of other notable projects. The Queensway Bridge in Long Beach, Calif., was voted the most beautiful bridge in the country in 1971, and the city’s Roller Coaster Bridge, a 450-foot long pedestrian bridge suspended from "roller coaster" structural frame, has become an icon. Curtis also investigated the structural integrity of the South Pole Dome after it had been sitting for 20 years on 10,000 feet of slow-moving ice.

Curtis’ engineering firm, Gossamer Space Frames, has a patented Coaxial Joint System, which is a framing technology used in building everything from communication towers to roller coasters. The company created a space frame system to support the special mirrors for concentrated solar thermal parabolic troughs, which have been used at solar energy plants in Nevada and Florida, as well as in Spain.
On a personal note, Gary has used his engineering expertise to design and build his own 45-foot steel schooner, the Silver Lining. He drew and then cut out the design on 40 foot by 8 foot steel plates, much like a dress pattern. His first trip in his boat was to Catalina Island. He has since sailed in the Sea of Cortez and from California to Washington. His daughter and her family are currently sailing that boat to New Zealand and Tahiti.

When asked what he would tell aspiring engineers at WWU Curtis said, “Talk to strangers. Be willing to take on any assignment. Read widely. Be curious. Get in a challenging English Comp or journalism class. Being able to prepare a well-written, clear and concise report is more valuable than you might ever dream.”

To learn more about Curtis or Gossamer Space Frames, click the appropriate link below.

Links:
  More About Gary Curtis
  Gossamer Space Frames

<- Back to: News
WWU Ranked Among Top Universities

U.S. News & World Report names the best

By: Becky St. Clair

Walla Walla University is pleased to announce that it once again placed in the top tier of the U.S. News and World Report 2012 Best Colleges report. WWU ranks 39th out of 118 schools in the “Regional Universities – West” category, moving up from 55th place in the 2011 rankings. The Best Colleges rankings are based on a variety of factors, including retention and graduation rates, undergraduate academic reputation, faculty and financial resources, and alumni giving rate, among others.

In addition, WWU was listed as having a top social work program based on the following criteria: In an advanced social work curriculum, students take courses in social welfare policy, human behavior, and ethics, balanced with hands-on experience in clinical settings.

The university is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, in addition to the following:

Adventist Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities
Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
Professional Educator Standards Board of the State of Washington
Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, Inc.
National Association of Schools of Music
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc.
Council on Social Work Education

To view the complete list and rankings of United States colleges and universities, click the link below.

Links:

U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges Rankings

<- Back to: News
Ranking College Football Teams

Nathan Reeves on his senior math project

By: Emily Forshee

Walla Walla University senior Nathan Reeves, engineering, history, and math major was faced with the challenge of choosing a senior project that involved math not covered in any WWU classes. Over Christmas break Reeves had spent a fair amount of time watching football games and decided that football statistics fit in well with his goals for the project.

“I wanted to do something with statistics, and I wanted to do some kind of original research rather than write a summary of what had been done previously,” says Reeves.

Reeves looked at 20 different statistics and rankings from the NCAA including offensive and defensive yardage, points per game, Bowl Championship Series polls, and more. Then Reeves used a statistics tool called Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient to evaluate how closely it predicted the change in a team’s ranking from the week before its bowl game to the week after. Reeves took the weighted average of some of those rankings (not all) to make a new ranking.

“To get the weights on the weighted average, I wrote a computer program that optimizes the Rank Correlation Coefficient to make the new ranking predict the change between weeks as closely as possible,” Reeves explains. “Then, using the new ranking, I can predict the outcome of a bowl game before it happens. If I’d been able to use the ranking I came up with over the past 3 years, I would have a 21 correct to 4 wrong ratio of games I’m able to predict the outcome of.”

Although Reeves’ ranking system is quite accurate in predicting the outcome of games it isn’t completely flawless. Reeves said that the ranking only worked well in the last few weeks of the season, just before the playoffs. Reeves said, working on about 20 of the 120 NCAA teams due to teams having to be ranked in several major poll rankings.

“Honestly, when I started working on it I wasn’t sure if anything would even work at all, and I was pleasantly surprised when the first ranking I tried matched up really well and was able to predict results pretty well too,” says Reeves.

Reeves admits we don’t really need a new system.

“There's about a million ranking systems out there for college football,” he says. “My ranking has a couple of specific goals, though, that make it good for specific things.”

Controversy surrounding BCS ranking has been that better teams are left out in favor of teams with more fans or a better reputation. Reeves wanted to create a ranking that was at least partly based on the actual performance of the teams.

“This way the best teams really do get to play for the championship,” he says. “My ranking does a pretty good job of seeing
through any prejudice and preconceptions that poll voters who create the major rankings might have, because it looks at the performance of the teams as well as the more practical knowledge of the poll voters.”

Reeves has learned quite a bit from the project.

“The biggest thing that this project taught me was actually the lessons I learned presenting it at MathFest in August in Lexington, Kentucky,” says Reeves. “I learned a lot about what it means to be a mathematician and what mathematicians do while I was there, and of course it was an amazing experience to be able to present my research at a national mathematics conference.”

Reeves says that what he’s taken away from this experience is the expertise he’s gained in writing an academic research paper and presenting it. He hopes to have another opportunity to do something similar in a professional capacity.

“Having presented at a professional conference has already been a major selling point for me in a job interview,” says Reeves happily. “The interviewer was impressed that I’d given a talk at the conference and told me that definitely gave me a leg up in the hiring process.”

<- Back to: News
NEW WWU BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCED
By Rosa Jimenez

Walla Walla University welcomes 12 new members to its governing board of trustees.

The new members were elected at the 2011 WWU Constituency Session, held on the university campus September 11.

As a Seventh-day Adventist university, Walla Walla University's board members include conference presidents of the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, as well as church members elected to 5-year terms of service.

New members include the following individuals:

Harold Altamirano is pastor of the Mosaic Adventist Church and associate pastor of the Hillsboro Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church, both located in Hillsboro, Ore. He is a graduate of Southern Adventist University and has a master’s degree from Andrews University.

Dennis Barts is chief executive officer of Valley Hospital in Spokane Valley, Wash. He has an undergraduate degree from Andrews University and graduate degrees from Iowa State University and Bowling Green University.

Andrew O. Carrington is an attorney with a private practice, Carrington Law Offices, P.C., in Seattle, Wash. He is an Oakwood University graduate and has a law degree from Howard University School of Law.

Tanya Huether is a business owner. Her company, Be Graphic, specializes in marketing communications and fundraising. Huether is a WWU graduate.

Monty E. Knittel is president and chief executive officer of Walla Walla General Hospital. Knittel has an undergraduate degree from Pacific Union College and a graduate degree from the University of Montana.

Rhona Kwiram is a partner at Clark Nuber, PS, a Bellevue, Wash., a public accounting firm specializing in not-for-profit organizations. Kwiram is a WWU graduate.

Peter J. McPherson is principal at Gem State Academy in Caldwell, Idaho. He completed both his undergraduate and
graduate degrees at WWU.

Gregory E. Paskell is the assistant public defender for the State of Montana. He is a graduate of Bradley University and has a law degree from Northern Illinois University College of Law.

Kevin Rogers is pastor at Mt. Tahoma Church in Tacoma, Wash., and Open Bible Fellowship in Lakewood, Wash. Rogers is a WWU graduate and has a graduate degree from Andrews University.

Sandy Schnell is a physical therapist at Canyon West Health and Rehabilitation in Caldwell, Idaho. She is a graduate of Loma Linda University.

Linda Sloop is a dietitian and nutrition teacher from Yakima, Wash. Linda attended WWU and graduated from Loma Linda University.

Rodney Wehtje is vice president and treasurer of Adventist Health based in Roseville, Calif. He has an undergraduate degree from Pacific Union College and a graduate degree from the University of Oregon.