

Wasch Center for Retired Faculty

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Edited by Krishna Winston



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Director's Message



Director's Message

Krishna Winston

Marcus L. Taft Professor of German
Language and Literature & Professor,
College of the Environment, emerita

Dear Friends,

This newsletter should have appeared last fall, but unforeseen circumstances intervened. During the summer, Wesleyan's fellowships advisor in the Fries Center for Global Studies announced that she was leaving, and Stephen Angle, the director of the Fries Center, asked whether I would be willing to serve as the interim Fulbright Program Advisor. Having been the advisor for thirty-six years, until 2015, and then once more in 2018, I accepted the assignment. That is how I acquired my latest, and least graceful, title at Wesleyan: "temp backfill," courtesy of Human Resources. In early August Zoom meetings with fellowship applicants began in earnest. As the fall progressed, I assumed responsibility for 6 more major fellowships. The last six-plus months have brought me the pleasure of meeting and working with many wonderful students, and I consider the seven-day weeks and long days time well spent. But fulfilling other obligations has had to be postponed.

Near the end of the summer we received the very sad news of Bill Wasch's passing. As recently as June he had been participating in our Lifelong Learning courses, going along on field trips and even hosting a writing course on his terrace when an outdoor setting was called for. In view of his family's German background, it seemed fitting that Goethe's birthday, August 28, should have been Bill's last day on earth. Bill's children think of him as a *Glückskind*, a person blessed with good fortune. It truly was a blessing that

Bill lived to enjoy his May birthday bash—which had been long in the planning—and died gently while in Maine with members of his family. When his daughter Christina asked whether we could host the calling hours on the lawn behind the Wasch Center, the answer was an immediate and grateful yes. On the appointed day, Bill was there in body as well as in spirit: the funeral director commented that this was the first time he had delivered a casket to outdoor calling hours. He was impressed when he heard about all the Center did for retired faculty members and the community. Holding the event outdoors had the great advantage that the family and their guests felt very safe—the Omicron variant had not yet appeared—and people could linger and have real conversations instead of having to hustle in and out of the confined space of the funeral home.

Since then Christina Wasch, who lives in Middletown, has agreed to take her father's place on the Wasch Center Advisory Board, and to honor Bill and Susie we have decided to rename all of our signature programs. Henceforth the Lifelong Learning Institute will be known as the *Wesleyan Wasch Center Seminars*; our Wednesday lecture series will be the *Wasch Center Lecture Series*; and our other formal contributions to Wesleyan will be the *Wasch Center Oral History Project* and the *Wasch Center Emeritus College*. A number of friends of Bill and his family have directed their memorial donations to the Wasch Center. We

Director's Message



thank them for their generosity, which recognizes the meaning the Wasch Center held for Bill and Susie and the importance the Center has for all who benefit from its office space and gathering places, programs, administrative support, and community outreach.

Much has happened at the Center, in the country, and in the world in the year since this newsletter last appeared in the early winter of 2021. With the advent of the vaccines, we received permission in mid-March to use our offices again, provided we were fully vaccinated and complied with Wesleyan's COVID-19 policies. Spring Lifelong Learning courses that had outdoor components took place partly or wholly in person, and in the fall all the courses but two took place entirely in person, as did the lecture series. In December we even issued a few invitations to a holiday gathering. By then the Omicron variant was wreaking havoc all over the country, and only a few hardy souls gathered in the Creeger Room for wine and light refreshments. By the time the spring Wasch Seminars and the lecture series resumed, Connecticut's positivity rate was almost back to the low levels we enjoyed briefly last summer. I am happy to say that the Commencement-weekend reception celebrating faculty colleagues who retired in 2020, 2021, and 2022 will take place on Saturday, May 21 from 4 to 5:30 under the customary tent.

My request for contributions to this issue of the newsletter has brought a wealth of material, which Paula Paige and I have edited a bit but been reluctant to shorten. Sad to say, the Necrology is long; this year has seen many losses in our ranks.

With all good wishes for health, continued vitality, and buoyant spirits,

Krishna

Bill Wasch—A Personal Take

By A.S. Wensinger

Krishna Winston asked me to compose a brief piece on Bill Wasch for the fall number of the *Wasch Newsletter*. I wrote her back to say, of course I'll do that, and was prompted to add "with pleasure." Then that sounded awkward at first—perhaps even flippant. Yet I pondered the matter, and, given the sudden, unexpected nature of the situation, it turned out to be exactly what I wanted to say. It seemed both a pleasure and an honor to recall a friendship that commenced the moment we, Bill and I, first met in Larry Gemeinhardt's office in Fisk Hall. Larry, the then chair of the German Department, was the man who, with Chad Dunham, had hired me in 1955.

A decade later, 1966, was the year Bill, a celebrated alumnus, returned to Wesleyan after half a decade and more in the wider world, and was soon to be our Mr. Alumni Development. It was also the year I got tenure-ized (sounds like a side of beef) and bought a little old house in Higganum. I had taken off a couple of years, not sure that this was the world I belonged to, but returned to campus anyhow. It was here, then, that Bill and I shook hands and met.

I assume that you have by now read the forthright and informative [obituary](#) that has appeared in the press. I don't know who composed it, but it's succinct and detailed enough for the present. Surely more is under way and there is to be a memorial service in the spring, or so I have been told.



In any case, I don't feel obliged to embroider or duplicate, or anticipate any of that here. Nor do I intend to put together an encomium. I simply want to remember Bill in a few paragraphs and *from my own perspective*. That will inevitably overlap with a few of your recollections and feelings. Naturally there are in my retelling gaps and blocks of plain old ignorance. That is the wages of fragmentary human intercourse. I can offer no more than glimpses into what we observed and experienced of each other. Ships passing, you know—easy and sometimes earnest moments, but no ponderous freighters weighted to the waterline.

Following Bill's years as the man I liked to call Petroleum Wasch, it was his love for Wesleyan that impelled him to return to our campus and take over with verve and sparkle the Wes alumni world and how it impinges on our social and academic doings. And what a fit that turned out to be. Anyone reading these words knows about the Wasch Center and what that singularly grand gift to the school has brought to us through the workings and devotion of the two Karls: W. Karl Wasch and Karl E. Scheibe. Yet there is so much more to recall and detail.

Bill was a master of the rare art of genuine friendship. Much (but never too much) can be made of his open-arms, open-handed, warm—toasty warm—dead-eye direct, humor-laden approach to others; of his and

Remembering Bill Wasch

Susie's instantaneous bred-in-the-bone, compass-true will to enfold, entertain, feed, and succor. I was recipient of a good deal of that over the past half century and more.

I remember in particular (who wouldn't?) an "intimate lunch" at home with Susie, Bill, and myself, a small sandwich-and-soup affair that expanded when Basil Moore and Sibs turned up, just landed from South Africa with a friendly couple in tow, to which soon were added four more hungry mouths to feed from somewhere else, and soon to top that Kätchen Coley plus a boyfriend. Susie's wand was waved, and in today's parlance "no sweat," as if all of us had all been expected from the beginning. It was like that: lavish but no fuss. Native, uncalculated generosity. That is one tiny example.

Bill doted on "events," no matter where they took place. And he was Mr. Town-and-Gown. Ubiquitous and fêted wherever, but—and this was the trick—he was unfailingly modest, unpretentious. His curiosity was expansive (to re-use that word) and genuine and, in the best sense, sponge-like. He truly wanted to know about people and where they came from. He also had a steel-trap memory.

He and I had similar German backgrounds, me southwest Germany and Switzerland and he southeast, specifically Bavarian, more specifically Munich. He liked our similarities, so that we could talk of them and that I had spent some years in and around Munich. We should, he proposed, go there together some time. Sadly, we never managed that—though he did study with informed curiosity my postwar and "reconstruction" photos and my *Erlebnisse* and *Erfahrungen* from 1948 to 1955 and how those places looked a couple of decades later.

He was—from the era of Larry Gemeinhardt and Chad Dunham and Art Schultz onward—partial to our department; he visited us often in Fisk Hall. He came to most of our "events" and parties and German plays,

and of course saw to it (I think so, anyhow) that Billy Jr. (who himself lives now in Munich with family) enrolled in a couple of my courses as a Wes. undergrad. We were fortunate indeed that Bill Sr. possessed a steadfast allegiance to us and that it persisted until we, the old guard—almost all of us—retired. And it endured beyond.

Our Wesleyan colleagues at large will have their own accounts of how solidly he could engage with other departments and their *ménages*. And his involvement with myriad non-Wes. activities are legion and need no detailing from me—except to say he never appeared to spread himself thin. That, too, is a gift. I was often struck by the way he concentrated his attention on whatever person he was with. There was none of that familiar behavior of the hale-fellow-well-met whose darting gaze over one's head seeks greener social pastures and better returns. That is exactly what Bill Wasch was not. He did not work the room.

As for me, I welcomed, and I know he did as well, our frequent and substantial get-togethers at the dinners and meetings of the Middletown Conversational Club—in the beginning, when all hands were steady on deck, down to and beyond the point when, as the years passed and touches of frailty interceded, it became advisable to quickly retreat with our wine glasses from standing around before dinner to more comfortable chairs. There we frequently sat together and chatted.

He was nice about my talks, and I, at his request, helped him put together his contributions when his turn came. Those are good memories... And there were others, different, when latterly Bill and his splendid companion Ken drove down to visit us (me and my indispensable team, Madeline & Joe) in our kitchen in Higganum or later through open car windows.

I said at the outset that this would be a personal "take." I hope that in the winter or spring other friends will compose other recollections.

Bill Wasch

By Priscilla Meyer

In the early 1990s Bill Wasch phoned to say that he and Susan were on their way to Irkutsk, and did I know anyone there. Oh yes, our wonderful friend Sergei Bunaev, who had spent 1988–1989 teaching Russian at Wesleyan, lived there with his wife, Valentina, and their two young sons. When Bill and Susan got to Irkutsk (in Siberia), they phoned them to invite them to dinner, but ended up dining at the Bunaevs'. When Sergei and Valya finally managed to emigrate to Middletown, the friendship continued, with further dinner feasts hosted by the Bunaevs that included Bill and Susan and the Wesleyan Russianists. Bill never missed an opportunity to make new friends, and then to be wonderfully supportive of them.



My Student Bill Wasch

By Gay Smith

Bill attended all three of my Shakespeare WILL courses, housed in the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty, with which he had so generously gifted us. His exuberance in learning about Hamlet, Lear, Cleopatra, and Antony provided our classmates with more than the physical setting—with an infectious curiosity and good will. By his warm smile and affectionate good nature he made us all welcome in his Wasch house. With his passing goes a certain kind of light-heartedness that lit it up.

A Momentous Meeting

By Sergei Bunaev

[Editor's note: Sergei remembers the story of that dinner in Irkutsk a bit differently—a reminder that stories tend to change in the telling.]

As we all know, Susie and Bill were avid world explorers. Priscilla has already mentioned that our friendship with them stems from travels that took them to Siberia. Like almost all events in our life, this one started with a phone call. I was delighted to hear from someone from Wesleyan. My wife, Valya, and the boys, Alex and Victor, were away, so I met with Bill and Susie on my own. The meal in the hotel restaurant was terrible, and Susie was very apologetic about it. She never forgot that dinner, and I think she tried to make up for it every time she had us at her house. Susie and Bill's visit took place in the summer of 1992. At that point we knew already that the Russian Department had invited me to guest-teach, with visa support for my family. When we arrived in Middletown we were introduced to the rest of the wonderful Wasch family. The beauty of our friendship was that we learned so much about our new home country as our American journey began. Bill and Sue epitomized the heart and soul of America. Bill's ability to solve problems with a smile on his face was amazing. Alex loved soccer, so Bill enrolled him in the Middletown soccer program. Alex has lifelong friends from that time. Susie and Bill were very generous people, materially and in spirit. Our road to citizenship wasn't always easy and simple, but Susie and Bill always played an integral and significant part in our support system. When our family finally became proud American citizens, they threw a lovely party for us with all of our friends.

Life is beautiful when we have our friends and family around. Life is cruel when we are left to mourn their loss. But we always feel blessed to have had friends like Susie and Bill.

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A Poem for Our Times

Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664)

Tränen des Vaterlandes

Wir sind doch nunmehr ganz, ja mehr denn ganz verheeret!
Der frecher Völker Schar, die rasende Posaun,
Das vom Blut fette Schwert, die donnernde Karthaun
Hat aller Schweiß und Fleiß und Vorrat aufgezehret.

Die Türme stehn in Glut, die Kirch ist umgekehret,
Das Rathaus liegt im Graus, die Starken sind zerhaun,
Die Jungfraun sind geschänd't, und wo wir hin nur schau'n,
Ist Feuer, Pest und Tod, der Herz und Geist durchfähret.

Hier durch die Schanz und Stadt rinnt allzeit frisches Blut.
Dreimal sind's schon sechs Jahr, als unsrer Ströme Flut,
Von Leichen fast verstopft, sich langsam fortgedrungen.

Doch schweig' ich noch von dem, was ärger als der Tod,
Was grimmer denn die Pest und Glut und Hungersnot:
Daß auch der Seelen Schatz so vielen abgezwungen.

Tears of the Fatherland

Full now—yea, more than full—behold our devastation:
The frantic drum beat, and the brazen horde,
The thundering siege gun, and the blood-slick sword
Devour all diligence, and sweat, and careful preparation.

The church is overthrown; our mighty men are slain;
The town hall lies in dust; our towers burn;
Virgins are raped; and everywhere we turn
Are fire, plague, and death to pierce us—heart and brain.

Down walls and through the town runs always fresh-spilled blood
For eighteen summers now, our river's yearly flood
Near-choked with corpses has pushed slowly, slowly on.

But nothing will I say of one thing—worse, I know,
Than death, more grim than plague, or fire, or hunger's woe:
Those pillaged souls from whom even hope of heaven is gone.

—Translated by Lane Jennings

[Editor's note: I have used this translation because Jennings has quite adroitly captured not only the iambic hexameter but also the rhyme scheme of the original, a sonnet whose strict form attempts both to convey and to contain the chaos and desperation of the Thirty-Years War. Interpretations of the last line vary, but I understand it to say this: worse than the destruction of all the institutions and worse than the physical suffering is the fact that so many contemporaries have had their greatest treasure—their soul—ripped from them.]



Ákos Östör *Locked down in Italy*

Arrival

My academic career at Alma Mater Studiorum (the oldest university in Europe) is over before it begins: what happened? My application didn't arrive? Was not cast in the proper form? A wrinkle of the legendary Italian bureaucracy? A legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy? The Papal States? Or just a local product? I cast around, nobody knows anything; ergo, I don't have a university affiliation.

No matter, I start an informal study anyway, first in our neighborhood near the University, then in other parts of the ancient city.

Bureaucracy

Securing Lina's visa and permit to work was complicated enough: a gatekeeper at the consulate keeps seekers of asylum or work visas from entering the EU. Lina gets caught in the net; I am of no interest, my dual citizenship makes me European, free to come and go.

But in Bologna a new set of offices, a new set of demands await us: unfamiliar documentation, endless lines, full waiting rooms, repeated visits and consultations. The staff of the Brown program provides guidance, but we have to do the legwork.

We start at the Commune, the Town Hall, an ornate palace with 16th-century frescoed ceilings and walls. We are redirected to La Questura, headquarters of the Police of the State, in Bologna a vast grey palace, fortress-like but with ease of access through an imposing main entrance. We are sent to a small side door to line up with many asylum- or other permit seekers, most from outside Europe. Inside,



a waiting room, and finally a great hall under high vaulted ceilings divided by plexiglass-separated cubicles where the hopeful face stern female officials.

Lina has already collected a lot of papers with impressive stamps and signatures, but not enough—we need more. But there is always a saving grace in Italy: officials check with each other, they discuss our case, consult hefty volumes, then make a phone call, inevitably to a male official, and they decide that she needs more documents from another office of the Commune, near one of the medieval portals in the wall encircling the ancient city.

After more discussions, securing more documents, and another decisive phone call comes the verdict: she doesn't really need anything more. But I, to extend my residence permit, have to either show that I have the wherewithal to provide for myself or secure a work permit.

After I produce what is required, it turns out I don't really need either for now. Finally we are free, and bundled up in our winter gear we take a leisurely cappuccino outside a café, under the high vaulted arcades.

Piazza Verdi

If there is a center to university life, it is the Piazza Verdi, facing, on two sides, the 18th-century theater and the 16th-century



complex of St. Giacomo, whose bells we hear beat out the hours all day. The rest is lined by book shops, a student cafeteria, bar-cafés. Streets run into the square, lined with Mediterranean and South Asian fast-food eateries, trattorias, 7-11-style convenience stores, barbers, and butcher shops, all conforming to 16th-century measurements, under the arcades. Bookstores are everywhere, new and used, antiquarian and specialty, well patronized, and well stocked. It is cold for January, damp wintry weather, yet students sit outside bundled up, sipping coffee, spritzers, or wine, lighting up a reefer on the square.

West African vendors hang out at one corner, vaguely surreptitious, hawking a variety of uppers, downers, and smokes. Surrounded by a haze of smoke, no need to light up here. I often stop to chat; after a brief introduction they're at first suspicious, but soon get used to me, then greetings and fleeting banter. Local and metropolitan policemen and women walk by and don't bother anyone.

It's different when squads of the nearby Carabinieri (the national gendarmerie, a militarized state police force) pull up in the square, after bigger fish—shipments, suppliers—also to manage public disturbances; they don't bother with the students either.

Le Sardine (The sardines)

In November 2019 Bologna university students organized flash mobs against the attempt by Salvini (of the rightwing Lega party) to wrest power from the province's traditionally leftist government in the upcoming January elections. A week

after we arrive, they rally en masse in Piazza Verdi, showing the justification for their new eponymous name for the movement. Against expectations,

Bologna and the province of Emilia-Romagna remain in the left camp. The spectacular success of the movement continues after the elections, and when COVID restrictions are lifted, the committed students continue to mobilize, this time also in support of the homeless, the indigent, and the people who suffered most during the COVID lockdown.

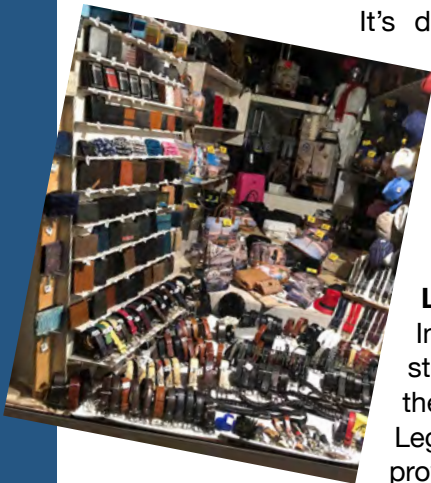


Bologna

Bologna La Grossa (the Fat), Rossa (the Red), Docta (the Learned): on all our travels we haven't met a city that erects more monuments to artists, writers, scientists, scholars, physicians, saints, and mystics than to kings, warriors, and statesmen.

We do not miss our cars, are happy to walk—everything is available within a radius of half a mile along the major arteries that cross the historical center, unchanged since late medieval times but now accommodating busy one-way traffic of buses and cars. Pedestrians walk under the arches lining the street on both sides, the high vaulted porticos painted a uniform shade of red.

We live on the 6th floor of a spare modernist prewar apartment building, its trim twin blocks facing each other across a path and garden near Piazza Verdi. Soon we meet most of the tenants, some of whom become friends. The retired schoolteacher we meet in Re Vallone restaurant the first day and who tells us *È obbligatorio mangiare bene a Bologna* (it's obligatory to eat well in Bologna) lives in our building. Another neighbor owns an upscale restaurant, yet another is a social worker, yet others, less visible, run hostels for students and for immigrants.





With Lina fully occupied with the students, my improvised fieldwork continues with our concierge, a man of many parts, well-informed, knowledgeable. As so often in Italy, the standard American question What do you do? elicits a brief prosaic answer that does not reveal any real concerns and range of pursuits. Every conversation yields further revelations.

Farther along at the Piazza Aldrovandi we are delighted to find Bangladeshi vegetable sellers, and address them, to their astonishment, in Bengali; we become fast friends. On to Albanian convenience stores, Syrian food stalls, Pakistani and Bangladeshi liquor stores, grocery stores, and halal butcher shops. Not to speak of the more upscale Italian restaurants, gelaterias, wine stores, barber shops, clothing boutiques, and more.

Slowly we come to understand how the city around us works. The knowhow people are willing to share ranges from food, of course, to politics, religion, local customs and history, family relations, how people organize their lives. The multifarious tasks they carry out in often chaotic situations, their resourcefulness and skills, reveal why Italians are so apt to survive hard times.



The Plague

Then comes the plague, at first like distant thunder from Lombardia across the river Po, then more forcefully, soon in all its fury, its spread terrifying; Milan runs out of hospital beds, small towns like Brescia are overwhelmed, there is panic and fear, and in the end the dead are accommodated in refrigerated vans.

The authorities act quickly, and a full lockdown is imposed, the response to COVID coordinated

by public health officials. Politics is put aside, the science is followed by all parties left to right, not a murmur from the far right. Students are sent home, institutions close down, churches, bars, restaurants, the streets empty, masks are compulsory. We need a paper from the police to show where we go every time we leave the house. Our concierge provides us with daily news and official forms to fill out.



Lina's program folds for the year, the students have to return home, most under protest, but she has to stay to help sort out the reams of paperwork left in their wake.

We decide to stay, cannot travel during the lockdown, and hope to return to ongoing research in the neighboring states of Liguria and Tuscany, where we have been working on an ambitious digital publication occasioned by our latest film, *In My Mother's House*. Using extensive historical and social research in Italy and Eritrea, we want to situate Lina's multi-ethnic family in Carrara and Asmara in the wider European and African worlds.

The cost to the economy is enormous, yet everyone falls in line. Even more astonishing, the small food stores dotting the cityscape are kept fully supplied, all essential items are available throughout the lockdown, from fresh fruits and vegetables to milk, mineral water, and paper products.

With the streets empty we walk several miles a day, past architectural wonders, historic palaces, churches, museums. The police are used to us and let us roam. All silent now, as is the entire city.

Carrara

Home to the marble mines of the Romans, to Michelangelo, and now to pulverized destruction by large corporations for quick profit in the sodium bicarbonate trade. Home also to syndicalist anarchism, still active, but a shadow of its storied past.

We head back when COVID restrictions are up and travel becomes easier. For two months we continue our fieldwork here and in hilltop towns of Tuscany and Liguria.

Carrara has achieved the rare feat of not profiting from its history, culture, and marble. Towns farther away fare better, holding festivals, sponsoring exhibitions, inviting sculptors and artisans, and promoting tourism. Not Carrara: due to inept city politics, rival factions, and bad deals, she has fallen on evil days.

The young leave, the elderly don't, many businesses are boarded up, and tourists stay away. A few families and corporations control the economy, yet the citizenry continues, true to its roots, defiant and resisting, proud of the city, it carries on and perseveres.

For me, the anarcho-syndicalist past holds special meaning. My decisive political formation was the short-lived Hungarian Revolution of 1956, defying the mighty Soviet Union. It was organized along syndicalist lines, its early success achieved by an alliance of students, writers, workers, and farmers, recently set free from compulsory collectivization.

Refusing to form political parties, they set up groups all over the country and sent delegates to the capital to elect the governing council.

To be continued...



Richard J. Friswell *On My Bucket List*

If it's September, it's *réttir*, or sheep-round-up time, in Iceland. Some 800,000 of the Norwegian-Icelandic variety (short-legged and densely coated) are let out to pasture in late spring to freely roam, untended and unfenced, over the pastures and hillsides of the verdant Icelandic landscape. There they graze for months on an abundant diet of sheep's sorel, mountain aven, blueberries, and broadleaf grasses. Nurturing, freshwater mountain streams crisscross virtually every open field. Sure-footed and affable, they can be seen, clustered in small groups—almost always a ram and 3–5 ewes—beside the country's roadways or spotted in the distance as minuscule white dots high on the sloping mountain ranges. A motorist is more likely to encounter a sheep crossing the highway than any kind of wildlife. Such unwarranted encounters are rare, though, because in the vast, open landscape, highway visibility can extend for miles.

Despite Iceland's almost exclusive reliance on geothermal power for homes and manufacturing (only 9% of its megawatts are generated by oil—and that appropriated by heavy industry), the country has indeed had issues with environmental damage. In decades past the number of sheep totaled over two million—more than six times the human population. Grazing patterns over the course of many months each year resulted in soil erosion and loss of vital farmland and open fields. For these reasons, efforts to limit herds today require more active control of numbers—hence the annual *réttir*.





With the arrival of the autumn equinox, dimming daylight and cooler weather (average daytime temperature in September, 50°F), rural Icelandic communities turn out in droves to saddle up their Icelandic ponies, fire up their ATVs and 4-wheel-drive vehicles, release the border collies, and enlist the help of tourists—those who are willing and able—to herd these designer sweaters on the hoof into holding areas scattered across the countryside. After months in the field, the sheep are no longer recognizable to their owners, who have to depend on the ear tags to determine whose animals are whose and shepherd them into owners’ pens arranged in large wagon-wheel-shaped configurations. Once assembled, the herd is carefully culled: some for slaughter, most for shearing, and some for breeding. The lucky ones will live on in large barns through the relentless winter months. And with that stretch of looming darkness and howling arctic winds due to arrive soon, substantial shelter is essential for survival, even for this hearty breed.

For reasons I can’t fully explain, I am strangely attracted to regions of the world such as this, where the land lies blanketed under layers of snow and ice for a good portion of each year. While not widely traveled to earth’s remotest frozen realms, I can attest to a brisk New Year’s Day visit to Niagara Falls, where the very first parking spot, just steps from this otherwise seasonably mobbed destination, was mine, *all mine!* I’ve ventured into the chilled wind-swept streets of Old Quebec City and Old Montreal when temperatures hovered around -17°F, not including the wind chill. Navigating Canada’s remote highways in blinding snow or traveling the winding roads of New York’s Adirondack Range in near-whiteout conditions seems to suit me fine. Don’t get me wrong: I’m not opposed to swaying palm trees and turquoise waters



lapping at my ankles; but give me the remote reaches of the Arctic Circle over the crowded beaches of the Caribbean any day!

With that confession now out in the open, the fact that the rough-and-tumble nation of Iceland has lingered on my bucket list for nearly a decade may begin to make sense. Now, I admit to booking my flight on Icelandair (why not be in Iceland while still at JFK?) to take advantage of the short summer season, not because I feared the country’s harsh winter conditions, but rather because the duration of Iceland’s brumous state is nearly six months of the year. As an artist and photographer, I needed light to fully appreciate my surroundings and be able to tell my story. Of course I packed the requisite snow suit (“*be prepared for sudden changes in weather*” the brochures excitedly advised). After all, why would a cryophilic like me be vacationing without several protective thermal layers, certain to make it a true holiday?

The nation of Iceland is about the size of Kentucky, perched atop a cauldron of red-hot magma and boiling water. Its population of 370,000 souls is separated from impending disaster by a thin crust of volcanic debris fields and isolated stretches of arable land. Steam vents regularly erupt from the

typical landscape setting, sending plumes of hot water billowing into the air. Mountain ranges are dotted with high-altitude ice fields, some larger than Manhattan by a factor of ten. Iceland has been called the “land of fire and ice,” with an active fissure regularly erupting at the time of my visit (this latest tourist attraction, Fagradalsfjall, is *not* a volcano, as it is often referred to, but an “igneous dyke” or ground-level magma-spewing split in the earth’s crust, common in the country’s eons of geological history, that has “coned up” around its primary site).



Iceland is a country heavily dependent on tourism. Its short growing season dictates that little can be produced by its land-rich, far-flung farms other than hay to feed the livestock. Two-thirds of the population is clustered in the urbane capital city of Reykjavik, on the southwest coast. There luxury cars and designer retail brands, high-powered business lunches and vital commerce abound. The city's roadways consist of numerous roundabouts feeding into ever-narrowing, labyrinthine streets. Brightly-colored houses are packed in, row upon row, contributing to a festive atmosphere for its urban residents, who appear to be enjoying to the fullest the few short months of sun and outdoor activity.

Drive just a few miles outside the city, however, and one enters the vast primordial landscape the country is best known for. To see as much of the country as possible in the days available, I was advised to rely on the Ring Road, a looping, 820-mile long, two-lane highway circling this island nation. The maximum speed limit on this road is strictly imposed at 90 kilometers/hour, or about 56 mph. The perilous design of the Ring Road, with its absence of guard rails and precipitous drops into field and stream adds a hair-raising element to this modest rate of travel. As all good Icelandic drivers do, I readily complied with this speed restriction in



this generally well-ordered and law-abiding society—mostly because I feared for my well-being on this often rain-slick and wind-swept thoroughfare.

Beyond Reykjavik's city lights and tourist shops, Iceland is a

land of vast fields of brilliant green, in all imaginable shades and hues. This is a nation of rivers and waterfalls (*fossar*), volumes of water cascading over rocky precipices, tumbling from heights exceeding

that of my beloved Niagara. Under the effects of a temperate summer sun, lacey threads of melting winter snow trail down the crevasses and gullies of the surrounding mountains, only to cross open fields to join other streams, becoming another dramatic foss, unexpectedly appearing at the next bend in the highway. It is a country that also presents mile upon mile of otherworldly, stone-riddled hills and valleys (the '70s Apollo astronauts trained in eastern Iceland in such a setting), only to reveal a brilliant, sunlit valley replete with farms and grazing Icelandic horses at the next turn. And the country's black sand beaches, washed by the North Atlantic's startling blue waters, are almost always just a few turns of the wheel away.

And what is a travel log without a passing reference to local food? I can report that a "standard" Icelandic restaurant menu includes few surprises. For the most part, offerings of pizza and cheeseburgers, excellently prepared, find their way to almost every popular tourist-destination menu in the country. One can do no wrong by ordering seafood, however. It is plentiful and affordable. If you choose to eat like an American, that's when it becomes pricey (note the two ubiquitous offerings above). But it's the notoriously quirky native fare that garners the headlines and attention of incredulous visitors: horse sausage or fermented shark as a luncheon special is commonly found on local menus. But lamb is the staple on every Icelandic table. The meat is used for everything from traditional meat soup (a predictable offering at most tourist stops and roadside pubs), lamb chops and hot dogs, to Icelandic specialties such as *slátur* (liver sausage) and *svið* (singled sheep's head). Fish stew thickened with local cheese was a regular go-to for me, as well as that flavorful meat (mutton) soup, *kjötsúpa*...a steaming bowl prepared with stored root vegetables, served with heaps of rye "pot" bread, a brown-bread-like side, steamed to crusty goodness in boiling volcanic sands for twenty-four hours. That piping-hot combination was enough to warm the cockles of this ice-bound traveler's heart.

PAULA PAIGE
MATT TYRNAUER

Matt Tyrnauer, class of 1991, was one of my most memorable students. He is now a well-known film director and producer of documentaries, but at one time he was taking Italian 102 with me and not doing well. The second semester of Italian covers thorny matters like the imperfect subjunctive, which is daunting for many students. So Matt decided to drop the course.



“But I’d like to audit,” he said. “Can I do that?”
“Sure,” I said, confident that he would disappear in a week or two, as most auditors do.

But he didn’t. Freed of the specter of grades, Matt continued to sit in the back corner of the classroom, smiling at my jokes, frowning, taking notes, just as he had before. He was more animated than most of the students who were taking the course for credit.

Some years later I understood why Matt had wanted to learn Italian. His film *Valentino: The Last Emperor*, which came out in 2009, won two Best Documentary awards. This was followed some years later by *Studio 54* (2018), then *Citizen Jane: A Battle for New York City* (2019), a film about Jane Jacobs and her fight to prevent Robert Moses from demolishing poorer neighborhoods and putting a street through Washington Square. In 2020 Matt made “*Where’s My Roy Cohn?*”, in which he lampoons the unscrupulous lawyer who helped both Joseph McCarthy and Donald Trump. All of his films—and there are others—have been nominated for various awards.

It was at the premier of “*Where’s My Roy Cohn?*” at the Film Forum in New York City that I saw Matt again. There was a sort of reception for him after the showing and I went up to shake his hand. “Ah, Professoressa Paige!” he exclaimed. “Come sta?”

I replied that I was fine, retired, and writing. He wanted to know what I was writing. When I said, “Fiction,” he said something to the effect that he knew people at *Tin House*, one of the top literary magazines, and that he would be in touch. In fact, he ended up submitting a story for me. *Tin House* didn’t accept it, but another magazine did. I was pleased at his wanting to be so helpful.

I should add that Matt is also a journalist who writes regularly for *Vanity Fair* and other magazines. And he is a director and producer of TV shows, such as the four-part *The Reagans* for Showtime in 2020. Having grown up in Southern California, Matt remembered Reagan’s years as governor and tried to show how he and Nancy had created an image for themselves that did not always correspond to reality.





JERRY WENSINGER JOHN CHIVERS, IN MEMORIAM

Though I knew him from the beginning of my stint at Wesleyan and though I taught and knew many more students in German, Freshman Humanities, and the College of Letters over those 40 years, there is no one more re-collectable for me than John Chivers '56. He preceded me in the corridors of Fisk Hall. I had been hired and began teaching in fall 1955. As a relatively young bachelor instructor, I was housed in a former German teacher's home, "The Faculty Club," one building south of the Alsop House on High, and quickly fitted for my harness: classes 8 AM, six days a week, teaching "load" 4/4+, "office" (more likely broom closet) top floor of Fisk, shared with Edson ("Ted") Chick.

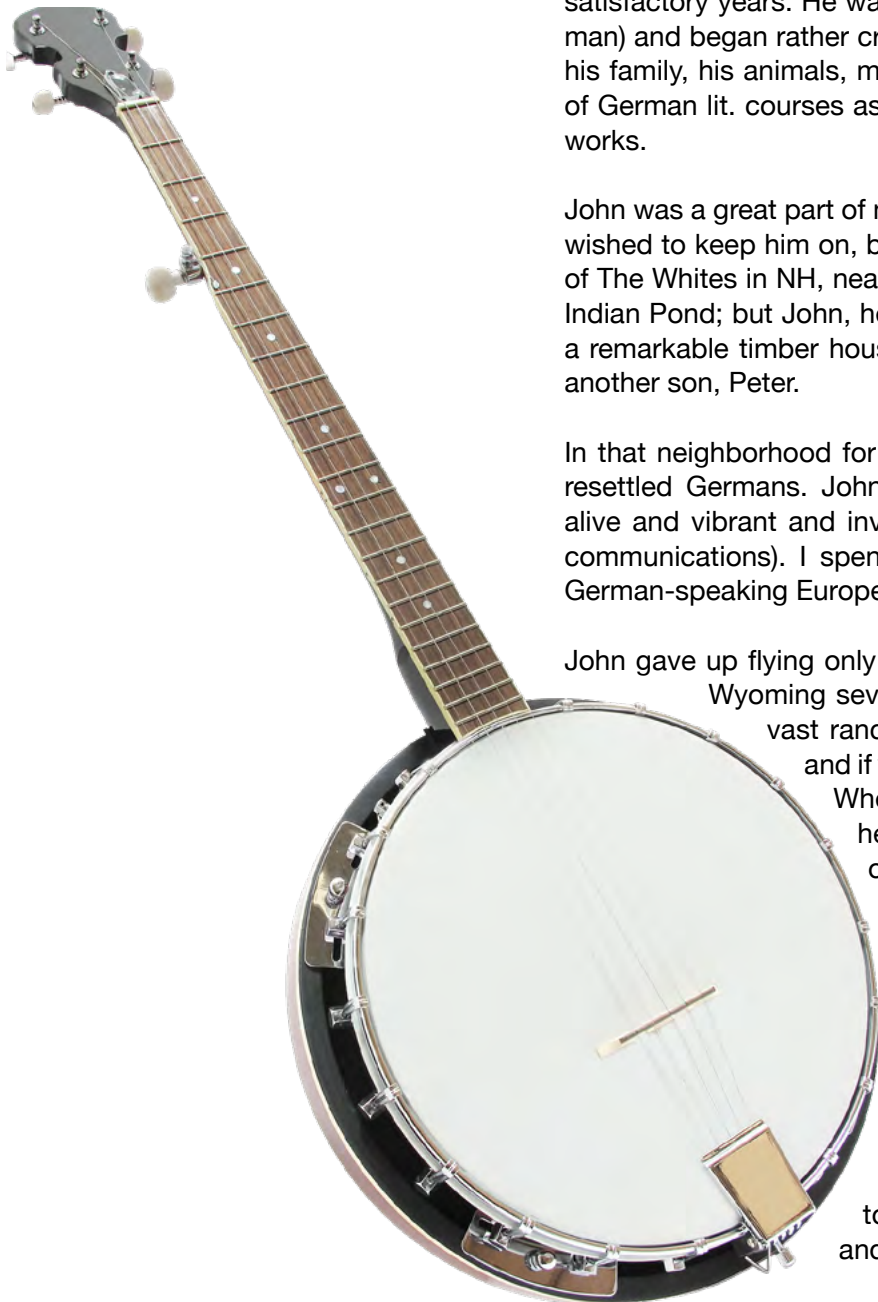
It was clearly stipulated that I'd be teaching three, or was it four, sections of the first-year language course and something else for the nonce. Those were still the years of a two-year+ language requirement. (Shed a bitter tear over its demise? Yes, I do.) But in that second semester I had the chance to take over a weekly Wednesday evening reading/discussion class for our sprinkling of majors (we grandly called it a group tutorial).

There was John Chivers, a senior. He had come to Wesleyan three years earlier from the Lawrenceville School, just down the road from Princeton, where his father was dean. I don't remember asking John why he (they) chose Wesleyan. Our good luck. Gemeinhardt, Schultz, Dunham, and Blankenagel all found him "special." Besides lots of sports and the "usual," he was determined to study German. Why? He said because it "clicked." He must have learned it there at L'ville. Aside from our actually brief class together there was something else between him and me that clicked.

John was not at all what we generally mean by "scholar." He could perform well whatever his classes wanted; he wrote well, was immensely "personal, popular, vast good humor"—all that. His sense of humor did shine. But he could be contemplative, moody, silent. His group sports were "American," principally hockey; he was an outstanding man on the ice. And it only began with that. Alone or with one other he was a stupendous fisherman, canoeist, hunter in the woods. And he was a pilot: for all the years I knew him he owned a number of small aircraft for short hops or ambitious flights, mostly to the West.

After a couple of post-Wes years at Middlebury doing an M.A. in German, John got a faculty job at the Brooks School in North Andover, Mass. but was soon discovered to be wearing boots too small for his qualifications. I don't know how, but Andover found him (it had been my school, but I had nothing to do with the switch-over)—and there he taught for forty





satisfactory years. He was married right after college to Anne Thurston (I was his best man) and began rather crazily rearing a family of five. I visited up there now and again, his family, his animals, my beautiful old boarding school. He taught a rich assortment of German lit. courses as well as classes in writing and speaking, acting, games—the works.

John was a great part of not only German at Andover; they and his German world there wished to keep him on, but no. He had bought a large property high up in the foothills of The Whites in NH, near where his parents had long before fixed up an old house on Indian Pond; but John, he went higher and built what he had envisioned years before: a remarkable timber house of his own with Mary, his second wife, and mother of yet another son, Peter.

In that neighborhood for whatever reason there were several retired and some long-resettled Germans. John joined in, kept his remarkable command of the language alive and vibrant and inventive (he and I spoke a special home-grown version in all communications). I spent hours and days with them. John and Mary also went to German-speaking Europe with some frequency.

John gave up flying only under great protest; before that the two of them flew out to Wyoming several times, where Mary and her numerous brothers owned a vast ranch along their border with Yellowstone. This was near Cody, and if you think that's too far afield for German speakers, think again. Wherever John went, *dort spricht man Deutsch*. He loved it. And he loved his music, lots of it in German. It was no minor gift of John's. Any stringed instrument was putty in his hands; he truly had the musical gene. Guitar, of course, and instruments from the ukulele up and down the scale, but with his near-professional groups he was on the banjo most of the time.

Enough. I run the risk of eulogizing, very non-John. He was a quiet man, an astonishing friend, good to so many, a beloved teacher. Slowly, over his last years, terrible emphysema got him. He had smoked too many damned cigarettes. He died a couple of years ago. Mary, a poet-gardener and glorious wife to John, sold that wondrous house and has gone back to family and friends in Cody, where I'm bidden to visit. Me, now? *Na, ja.*

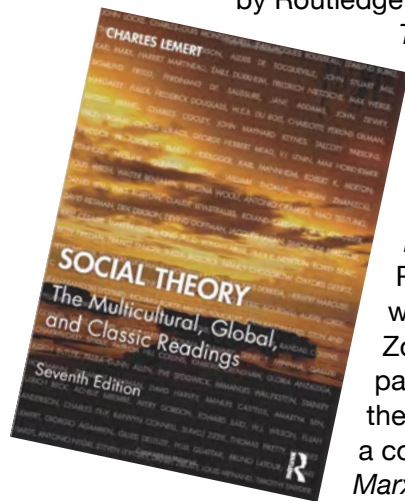
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Charles Lemert

Personally, the special event of the year was a memorial service at the Wasch Center for my son Noah ('96), held just shy of two years after his death. So many thanks to Krishna Winston for arranging the event, and to Karl Scheibe, who spoke warmly of Noah, as did many of Noah's friends and loved ones. The gathering was special to me because it took place across the street from the Wesleyan Play School where Anna spent two wonderful years, and not far from Butterfield C where Noah suffered through his first year before getting on track, and above the tunnels where Matthew as a boy would play with friends many nights, often to the irritation of Public Safety. These are among the memories of our school that go back years yet warm my heart years later.

As for my writing life (all the books will be published by Routledge US):



The seventh edition of *Social Theory: The Multicultural, Global, and Classic Readings* appeared this year past, as did the second edition of *Contemporary Social Theory* (with Anthony Elliott). As for new books: *Capitalism and Its Uncertain Future* (with Kristin Plys) was published early 2022. It was the subject of an international Zoom seminar in which several of the panelists urged us to do another of the kind—and so we are, having signed a contract for a sequel, ironically titled: *Marxism and its Certain Future*.

Americans Thinking America has slowly made its way toward conclusion and will be finished early 2023 at the latest. *Silence and Society*, a collection of previously published essays will be sent off to the publishers just after this. Finally, Kathy Wallerstein and I have begun *Beyond A Systematic World: Immanuel*

Wallerstein and The World's Future—an edited work of essays by an international group of authors on the future of World-Systems Theory.

There have been a number of shorter writings, including: “Henry David Thoreau, The Beginnings of Fast Capitalism” appeared in *Fast Capitalism*, as will (later this year) “Margaret Fuller, The First American Feminist of Fractured Identities.” I have been asked to contribute an earlier essay, “The Contemporary Goffman,” to a Russian edition of Goffman’s *Stigma*. My revised contribution to the Oxford University Press Bibliographies in Sociology on *Charlotte Perkins Gilman* will soon be revised and published. I have been asked to contribute to a collection of essays on the musician David Amram (who has performed at Wesleyan), and will try to write something on his book, *Vibrations*.

Leo Lensing

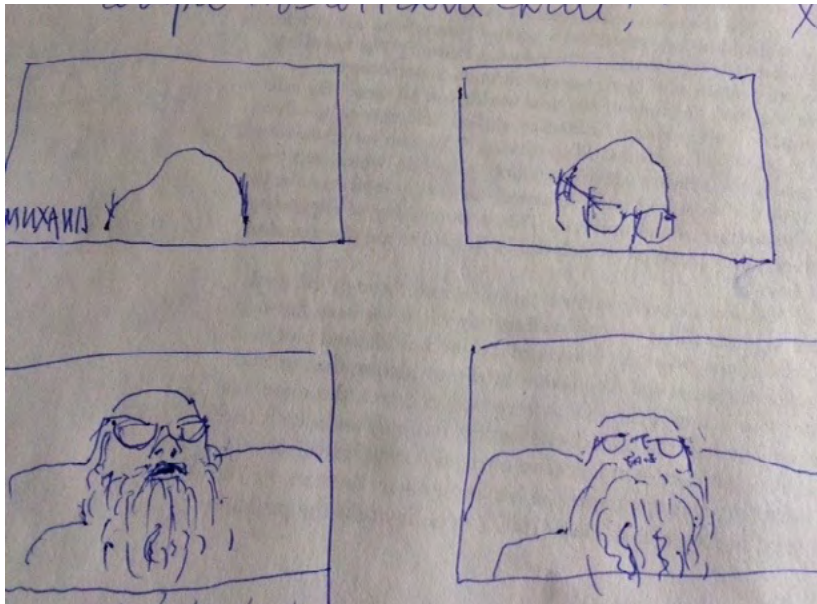
Two reviews appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 2021: one an essay that treats the *New York Review Books* reissue of *The Kindness of Strangers*, the memoirs of Salka Viertel, the Austrian-American actor and screenwriter best known for her work on Greta Garbo films, as well as a biography of Viertel; another that examines *Billy Wilder on Assignment* (Princeton UP, ed. Noah Isenberg), a lightweight anthology of Wilder’s early journalism from Vienna and Berlin. An article on the unpublished correspondence between the Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann and Henry Kissinger appeared in December in *andererseits*, the *Yearbook of Transatlantic German Studies*.

News & Notes:

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Priscilla Meyer Summer fun

Every July, the Nabokov museum in Petersburg organizes the “Nabokov Readings,” where scholars from several countries give papers on Nabokov’s work. This year the gathering was conducted on Zoom. The director, Tatyana Ponomaryova (who spoke at the Nabokov symposium at Wesleyan in 2018), arranged a roundtable devoted to the Russian translation of my 2018 book *Nabokov and Indeterminacy: the Case of The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, which was published by Academic Studies Press in 2020. Tatyana asked me whom I would like to participate; I named the leading, unusually bi-cultural, Nabokov scholar Alexander Dolinin, and another who had translated *Sebastian Knight* from English into Russian, Mikhail Meilakh. After I presented a brief summary of my book’s premise, and Dolinin gave a provocative talk, Meilakh began by announcing that he hadn’t read the book—odd for a participant in a discussion dedicated to it. At a later panel we got to watch him slowly fall asleep on screen (see below), so I wasn’t the least miffed by his strange lapsus.



Vera Schwarcz

I am enjoying retirement in Jerusalem very much. Still affiliated with the Truman Center for Peace Studies at the Hebrew University. Doing a bit less China work and hiking more. The desert mountains, all aflower these wintry days, draw my soul and my soles. I have begun a new writing project documenting the history and daily contribution of *Or Meir v'Bracha*—an organization dedicated to helping victims of terror and their families. It started with my volunteering to pack food baskets on Thursday mornings, and evolved into more. We writers keep on seeking the words that find us. Warm good wishes to all.

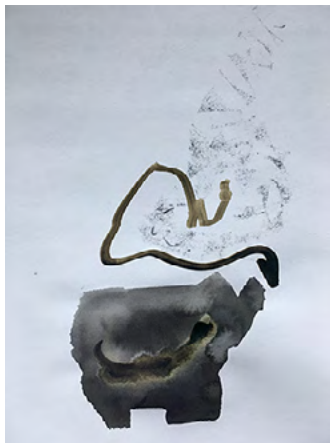


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Mark Slobin

Recently I posted markslobin.com, a multi-themed website helpfully created by my former Wes student Matthew Stein, a fine musician who ran a variety of ensembles on campus and was hired by Google directly upon graduation. The site has my materials from my fieldwork and research in poor Afghanistan, when it was a promising, independent country. The former site, afghanistan.wesleyan.edu was discontinued by Wesleyan for tech reasons, and this historic data needed to be saved. I also posted a “Writings” section with some of my scattered work under topic headings, and, finally, a portfolio of the ink-brush drawings I’ve been doing as a retirement hobby.



Gay Smith

Here’s a little update on my doings out in Hamilton, Montana:



A full production of my play based on two novels by the Montana writer Ivan Doig will open the Bozeman Actors Theatre’s season in September. Meanwhile I’ve started work on a new play based on the friendship between Julia Child and Avis DeVoto, set in the Fifties at the time of the McCarthy hearings, with Avis’s husband—the historian, conservationist, and advisor to Adlai Stevenson—Bernard DeVoto a major character. My work on a biography of the three (de)Bonnevilles continues. More on them at a later date.

Joop Varekamp

Joining the Wesleyan Retirement Crowd

After teaching for 39 years at Wesleyan in E&ES and CoE, I retired to a historic abode in East Haddam, next to Gillette Castle. I was hired in 1983, coming from a postdoctoral position at Arizona State University, where I had been studying mercury for use in geothermal exploration and in active volcanoes, after an education in geology in my native country (the Netherlands) at Utrecht University. E&ES had 5 faculty members, and I was hired to reinforce research in pollution science. Over the years, I had many senior thesis students working on active volcanoes in Indonesia, the Mediterranean, and Patagonia, as well as on the US west coast. I also diversified into local research, such as sea-level rise studies in the coastal salt marshes of New England and water-quality issues in Long Island Sound, with lots of mercury pollution work. I advised sixty+ undergraduate and graduate thesis students, which made my life so much more interesting.



In the early years at E&ES

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Many of these students have carved out their own scientific careers: one is now an emeritus professor at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute and one a professor at UC Davis, while others work with the US Geological Survey, and one works at a Costa Rican university's volcano observatory. Visitors from large research schools often asked, "Why do you stay at such a small, predominantly undergraduate place where it is so much harder to get significant research



2013 fieldtrip with Lauren Camfield (MA) and Ellen Alexander (BA), now a postdoc at Univ. of CO, Boulder. "Our" active Volcan Copahue (Argentina) is steaming in the back, and the big blue lake has a pH of ~2.5

done, without PhD students?" The answer is that I like to work with bright young beginning students, and see them grow and flourish and make something of themselves. In a large research school I would get bogged down in administration of large grants and become more remote from my primary interest: solving interesting environmental and geological problems, spending weeks every year in the Andes, and paddling through warm, acidic volcanic lakes, after climbing 10,000+ foot volcanoes, or going on a 3-month research cruise in the backwaters of Indonesia.

Ellen Thomas and I started to share my endowed E&ES chair in 2015, at which time we signed off on a retirement age of 70/71. Is my life now suddenly empty? Not really; quieter, yes, but I am writing several more papers developed from recent student work, possibly a textbook based on my class "Living in a Polluted World," and keeping a 110-lb. hairy dog happy with walks on the many nature trails out here.

Hope to see many of you in the upcoming years during Wasch Center activities.

A.S. Wensinger

At first I scratched my head and came up with question marks and mostly reports of my inoculations: nothing much doing, I concluded. It struck me, however, that the languid creeping of time these days and my equally halting writing, in retrospect, was blanketing over a few things I have had a hand in accomplishing over the year past. Yes, I speak here of Norman Douglas. Inevitably and frankly speaking, I'm farther, and comfortably, in the background there and the co-general editing of the "Selected Correspondence," published so far in eleven beautiful volumes, progresses amain under the adroit command of the now real editor, Michael Allan of Cologne, by now a close friend of 20 years. I put in my comments, suggestions, encouragement when needed and am a gung-ho proof reader and now sidekick.

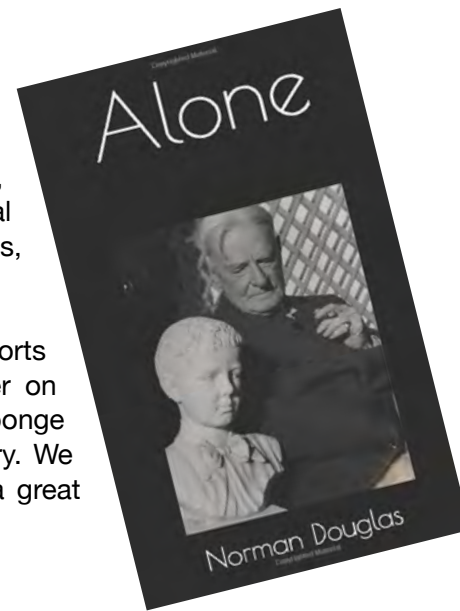
Here a pause. The director of the Douglas collections and doings at the Vorarlberger Landesbibliothek, Dr. Wilhelm Meusburger, the *fons et origo* and publisher of all this, has run up against the walls of mandatory retirement, and this being Austria, there are no exceptions—though he was granted an extension. There is a new director in the works, but the walls are closing in on a central-European snarl. What to

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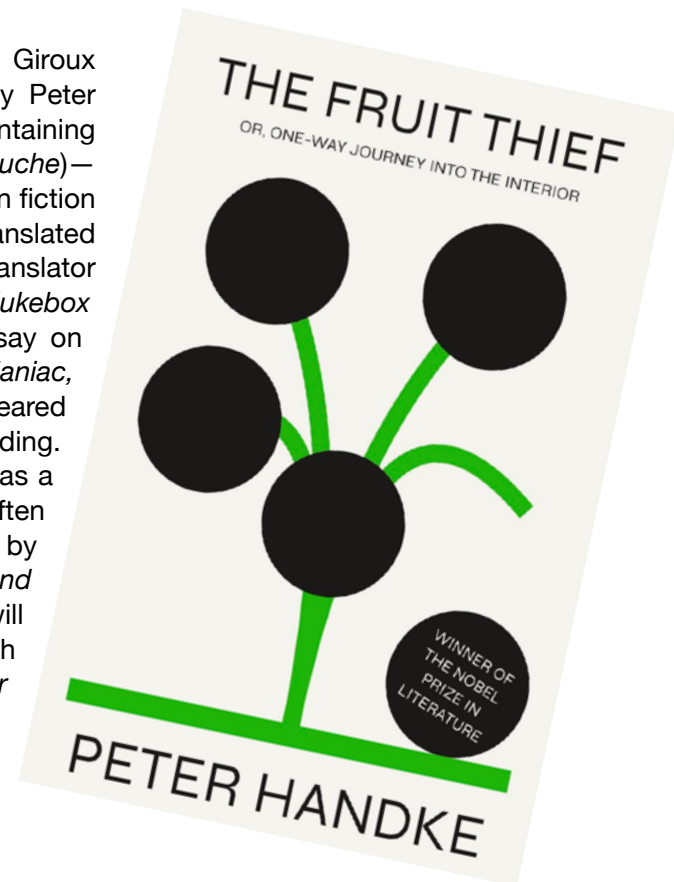
do? We're all working on that. Meantime the biannual symposium was to be held in Bregenz this fall, but then Covid intervened So: there was no 2021 meeting, but some of us are planning an unofficial meeting in fall '22 in Capri. Capri = Douglas, as do Florence and other spots.

I have written of late two symposium reports and have written/read/published a paper on Douglas's superb book *Alone*. That sponge is still far from having been squeezed dry. We seem to keep him to ourselves. ND is a great man, a great writer.



Krishna Winston *Pandemic Productions*

On March 15 of this year Farrar, Straus & Giroux published my translation of a new novel by Peter Handke, *The Fruit Thief*, along with a volume containing the five works that Handke calls essays (*Versuche*)—experiments in storytelling that dance between fiction and autobiography. Two of the essays were translated by Ralph Manheim, Handke's principal translator until I took over that role. The *Essay on the Jukebox* I originally translated in 1994, while the *Essay on Quiet Places* and the *Essay on a Mushroom Maniac*, though written some time ago, have not appeared in English before. Both make for engaging reading. *The Mushroom Maniac* shows that Handke has a delightful sense of humor, something not often associated with him and missed entirely by the reviewers. A new short novel, *The Second Sword*, also translated during the lockdown, will come out in 2024, published in one volume with Handke's latest novella, *My Day in the Other Country*, which I have just agreed to translate. Although Handke's style is often maddeningly difficult, working on these texts actually helped keep me sane during the lockdown.



Wasch Center Programs

The Wednesday Lecture Series

Fall 2021

Wednesday, September 15:

Bruce Masters

“Afghanistan and Iraq: How the US Wars to Remake the Middle East Broke the Region.”

Tuesday, October 12 3:

“The Lives of Students from Abroad at Wesleyan: Duffy White Interviews Sasha Gerber and Tim White from Moscow”

Wednesday, November 10:

Stephen Devoto

“Middletown Land Use and Community Values: Illustrated by Recent Decisions in Wesleyan’s Neighborhood”

Spring 2022

Wednesday, February 23:

Peter Rutland

“Putin, Russia, and the West”

Thursday, March 10:

Anjua Jain

“Melodrama’s Non-Western Histories and Idioms: The case of Indian Cinema”

Wednesday, March 30:

Duffield White

“How Young Tolstoy Began Writing Prose Fiction”

Wednesday, April 27:

Anna Shusterman and Steven Stemler

“How the College of Education Studies Came to Be”



The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning

FALL 2021:

Three, Two, One: A Journey to the Stars (and Back)

Jonathan Craig & Mark Meredith

Taking a Bow: The Curtain Goes up on Musical Theater

Keely Blaisden Knudsen

Reality, Mortality, Murder, and Madness: Psychological Perspectives on Hamlet

Steve Bank

Art of the Early Italian Renaissance: A Revolution in Politics and Painting

Rhea Higgins

Inventing America: How Art and Literature Shaped American Identity (on Zoom)

Rick Friswell

Human Duplicity: An Examination of Psychological “Doubleness”

Karl Scheibe

How Does Your Garden Grow? Eco-Friendly Solutions for the Home Garden and Landscape

Rachel Lindsay

Writing Flash Non-Fiction: the Micro First-Person Essay

Elizabeth Bobrick

Connecticut’s Jurassic Park: A Natural History of Life on Earth

Peter Drzewiecki

The Connecticut River Valley: Five Hundred Million Years of History

Mark Evans

Art and the American Spirit: A Four-Part Documentary Series (on Zoom)

Michael Maglaras



Wesleyan Wasch Center Seminars

SPRING 2022:

[Editor's note: full descriptions of these courses, with dates and times, information on the instructors, and registration instructions, went "live" on the Wasch Center's Web site on March 7. We encourage you to enroll in one or more. The course on comedy took place on Zoom, but the other courses are meeting in person, in compliance with Wesleyan's COVID-19 protocols.]

Speaking in Colors & Shapes: American modernist painters (Richard Voigt)
ART HISTORY – American painting in pre-WWII years

Song of Roland: A tale of valor, treason, honor, & death (Herb Arnold)
LITERATURE – A knightly tale of bravery

**Companion courses offered in sequence. Register for one or both.*

***Moby-Dick: A whaling yarn, Shakespearian tragedy, or both?** (Mary Kay Bercaw Edwards)
LITERATURE – Melville's timeless high-seas adventure

***Whale, Ho! The 19th-century whaling industry comes to life** (Marc Vakassian)
HISTORY – Encountering "the hidden soul beneath the waves" (classroom & field course)

The Moon, Stars, and Tides: A sailor's guide to the universe (Jonathan Craig)
SCIENCE – Navigation and knowledge of the sea (classroom & field course, on 17th-c. sloop *Onrust*)

Flash Non-Fiction (Elizabeth Bobrick)
WRITING – The brief first-person essay

***Companion courses offered in sequence. Register for one or both.*

****Attacking the Sakoku Zombie: Feudal isolationism and early modern Japan** (Bill Johnston)
HISTORY – A Sakoku ("locked country") revealed

****The Unlikely Origins of Connecticut Impressionist Painting** (Rick Friswell)
ART HISTORY – Visual art revolutionized

daylong

Post-Civil War Reconstruction: A second American founding and its legacies (David Blight, James Shinn)
SOCIAL HISTORY – Democracy's great (failed) experiment and lessons for today

"Funny You Should Say That": It's all about comedy! (on Zoom) (David Misch)
THEATER & FILM – Comedy's many faces

"What beauty is": The 15th c. northern European artistic renaissance (Rhea Higgins)
ART HISTORY – An intense observation of nature

Richard Vann, †Feb. 1, 2022

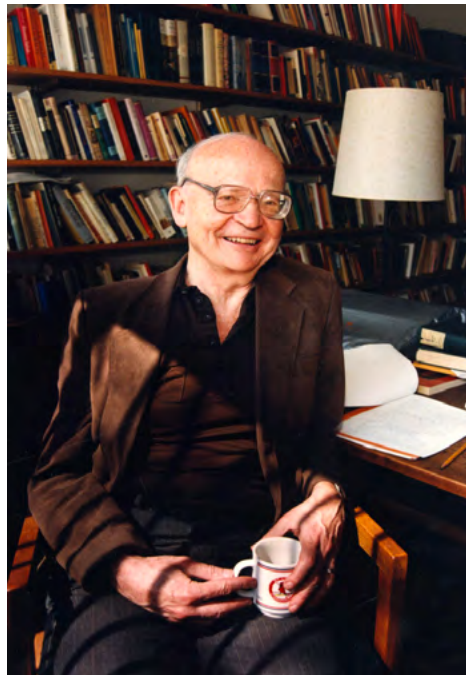
Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Richard T. Vann, Professor of History and Letters, Emeritus, passed away on February 1 at the age of 90.

Dick received bachelor's degrees from Southern Methodist University and Oxford University, and an MA and PhD from Harvard University. He arrived at Wesleyan in 1964 and taught in the College of Letters and History Department until his retirement in 2000.

"Dick was an intellectual force at Wesleyan for decades—a gentle and persistent force for creative, interdisciplinary work across the humanities and social sciences," recalled President Michael Roth. "A gifted teacher, his History and Prophecy seminar was already legendary when I was a student in the 1970s, and his work at the Center for the Humanities and at the journal *History and Theory* exemplified core values of Wesleyan's mission: independence of mind and generosity of spirit. Dick's interests were expansive, and his contributions profound."

Longtime colleague and William Armstrong Professor of History and Professor of Letters, Emerita, Laurie Nussdorfer remembered Dick as "a bold thinker who was always willing to take a fresh and critical look at the status quo, whether it was the 17th-century English monarchy or the required course for the history major. In modeling how to be a member of two very different teaching and collegial cultures, he demonstrated principle, flexibility, kindness, and respect for everyone, whether or not he agreed with them."



"Dick was generous with his time, always curious, and deeply invested in our students," recalled Ethan Kleinberg, Class of 1958 Distinguished Professor and Professor of Letters. "I cherish the time we worked together on *History and Theory*, where his adventurous spirit lives on to this day."

Brian Fay, William Griffin Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus said, "I spent countless hours working closely with Dick Vann as an editor of *History and Theory* and in other capacities, and I never saw him be anything but a generous reader, a kind editor, and a gracious colleague. He was hilariously funny and wore his considerable learning so lightly, and used it so deftly, that it was a pleasure to be with him. My friend Steve Horst of the Philosophy Department wrote to say that Dick Vann was the kind of person who inspired young faculty to say, 'Wow, that's the kind of professor I want to be.' I would add that he inspired me to think, 'That's the kind of human being I want to be.'"

Dick is survived by his wife of 67 years, Patricia Fenn Vann, his daughter, Elizabeth Reneau Vann, and an extended family currently numbering 28 relatives. The family is planning a memorial service in early May, and further information will be forthcoming nearer the time.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

David Morgan †Jan. 20, 2022

Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that David W. Morgan, Professor of History, Emeritus, passed away on January 20 at the age of 83.

David received his BA from Haverford College and his Dphil from Oxford University. He arrived at Wesleyan in 1966 and taught history for 37 years until his retirement in 2003. During those years he served numerous terms as the chair of History and chair of the College of Social Studies (CSS), and he served one term as Dean of the Social Sciences.



“My first memories of David Morgan are of classical music and opera pouring out of his office, with the door open, much of the time,” recalled Professor of History Cecilia Miller. “In the midst of these daily concerts, David was able to read with a single-minded concentration that I have never seen rivaled. David was a mainstay of the CSS, and often CSS co-chair. Indeed, David made teaching and administration look so easy that it was only after I became CSS co-chair that I realized how superb he was at both. Although never effusive, it was absolutely clear how much David loved his wife, Betsy, and their children.”

“David was the moral compass of our department and a figure who embodied what is best in higher education,” remarked Ethan Kleinberg, chair of history. “Beyond this he was a wonderful and caring man.”

Ron Schatz, Professor of History, remembers David as “a wonderful colleague. Soft-spoken, considerate of others, always seeking consensus, he was the keel who kept our ship from tilting far off course.”

One of David’s former students, Stephen Engel ’98, Professor of Politics at Bates College, wrote: “He was a tremendous instructor. I credit him with really teaching me how to think critically, process materials quickly, and write daringly. Without his encouraging critique that spurred me to take risks in my writing, his lessons on how to write nimbly and quickly, and his guidance on how to skim (rather than just throw in the towel when facing down 1,000 pages of history to be read over three days), I don’t think I would have been able to develop into the writer and teacher I’ve become.”

David is survived by his wife, Betsy; his children, Susannah and Ian; his brothers, Scott and Alan; his grandchildren, Syl, Rhys, Frey, and Dzintra; and many nieces and nephews and cousins. The family is planning a memorial service to be held on campus in April. Memorial contributions in David’s name may be made to the Greater Middletown Chorale, P.O. Box 527, Middletown CT 06457.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

Gertrude Hughes †Jan. 5, 2022

Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Gertrude Hughes, Professor of English, Emerita, passed away on January 5 at the age of 85.

Gertrude received her BA from Mount Holyoke College, her MAT from Wesleyan University, and her PhD from Yale University. She returned to Wesleyan as an assistant professor of English in 1976 and remained until her retirement in 2006.

“Gertrude was a remarkable woman, a valued colleague, and a treasured friend,” recalled Bill Stowe, Benjamin Waite Professor of the English Language, Emeritus. “She began her academic career later than most, completing her Yale PhD under the formidable Harold Bloom while raising four children. Her book on Ralph Waldo Emerson was followed by another on Rudolf Steiner; an essay on Steiner and feminist thought; and essays on American poets, including Emily Dickinson, Gwendolyn Brooks, H.D., and Adrienne Rich. She was a founder and early chair of Women’s Studies (now Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies). She was for many years a joyful presence in the lives of students and colleagues.”

Gay Smith, Professor of Theater, Emerita, said: “Born in Amsterdam in the Thirties, Gertrude felt a physical resemblance and kinship with Anne Frank, though Gertrude’s parents were able to get her and her two sisters



out of the Netherlands before 1940 when the Nazis took over and forced Frank’s family into hiding. Educated in the Waldorf schools in Manhattan, Gertrude became deeply committed to anthroposophy and the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, which addressed her own need to reconcile scientific thinking with spiritual beliefs.”

“One of the most remarkable aspects of visiting Gertrude over the years,” recalled Professor of English Stephanie Weiner, “was to see that though her memory was fading, her spirit seemed to shine through with all the greater force. It was as though I was coming to see her essence: filled with wonder, curiosity, kindness, and cheer. Almost always, her bed was covered from end to end with books and articles. In our final meeting, when her ability to express herself in words was almost entirely gone, I showed her a photograph of one of her old Wesleyan colleagues. She smiled, raised her hand with effort, and pointed at the picture. ‘Yes!’ she exclaimed joyfully. She would not want us to think of her as truly gone.”

Gertrude is survived by two sisters, two sons and daughters-in-law, a daughter and son-in-law, a niece, three nephews, and 14 grandchildren. The family is planning a memorial gathering at a later date, likely on or around her birthday in April (pandemic permitting). Donations in Gertrude’s memory may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association (www.alz.org) or the Anthroposophical Society of America (www.anthroposophy.org).

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

Alvin Lucier † Dec. 1, 2021

Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Alvin Lucier, John Spencer Camp Professor of Music, Emeritus, passed away on December 1 at the age of 90.

Alvin received his BA from Yale University and his MFA from Brandeis University. He joined the Wesleyan faculty as a visiting professor in 1968 and as an associate professor in 1972. He taught here for 43 years before retiring in 2011.

A pioneering composer, Alvin was at the forefront of American avant-garde music. He lectured and performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. In 1994 Wesleyan celebrated his career with a five-day multimedia festival, *Alvin Lucier: Collaborations*, which included new work by Alvin and collaboration with Sol LeWitt, among many others. Daniel Wolf is quoted in the program book: “In preference to words or musical notation, he chooses images of sounds, that is, sounds isolated as much as possible from both linguistic and musical syntax and returned to the immediacy of perception.”

“Alvin Lucier came to Wesleyan as a groundbreaking composer of iconic works,” said Mark Slobin, Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music, Emeritus. “His geniality, expert mentoring, and decades-long anchoring of experimental music gave the department worldwide visibility. His all-encompassing interests, from literature and the visual arts to scientific inquiry, made him a unique figure and



strengthened both the depth and breadth of a department dedicated to the widest possible understanding of ‘music’ and the importance of collaborative work.”

President Michael Roth said: “Alvin Lucier recognized that by paying attention otherwise we could alter—even expand—our relations with the world. He was an exemplary Wesleyan teacher and artist.”

Professor of Music Ron Kuivila, a former student of Alvin’s, remarked: “His keen ear and profound understanding of performance enabled him to create pieces whose form and substance drew on brain waves; the echolocation of bats; whale song’s ability to traverse enormous distances; the resonances of rooms, of small objects, of long wires; and the physical spatiality of sound. These pieces have ingenuity, wit, and verve and they always allow the attentive listener to make a discovery. It is no surprise that the same can be said of his teaching, where his deep knowledge of music, great sense of humor, and singular ability to tell a story always created a sense of discovery.”

Alvin is survived by his wife, Wendy Stokes, and his daughter, Amanda Lucier. In lieu of flowers, please direct donations to the Foundation for Contemporary Arts in honor of Alvin Lucier: <https://www.foundationforcontemporaryarts.org/grants/>. A memorial concert and celebration will be held in the future.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

Richard Ohmann †Oct. 8, 2021

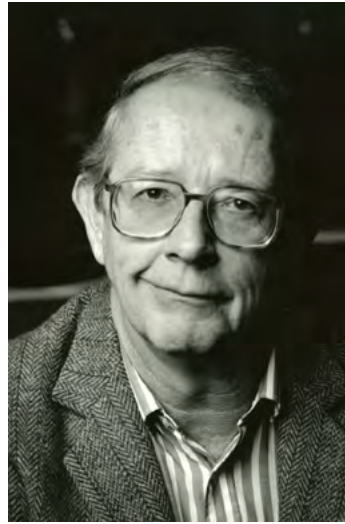
Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Richard Ohmann, Benjamin Waite Professor of the English Language, Emeritus, passed away on October 8 at the age of 90.

Dick received his BA from Oberlin College and his MA and PhD from Harvard University. He arrived at Wesleyan in 1961 and, until his retirement in 1996, served in many roles and helped to shape the future of our institution.

Joel Pfister, Olin Professor of English, sketched Dick's trajectory: "He was promoted rapidly to full professor; was appointed Vice President and Provost; protested on national TV against the Vietnam War; was elected vice president of the Modern Language Association (MLA) on an antiwar platform; founded with some other lefty luminaries the fabulous journal *Radical Teacher*; completely freaked out English departments everywhere with his powerful and hugely influential Marxist critique of the reigning constructions of the field in *English in America* (1976); and went on to write several more field-changing books (one with his friend Noam Chomsky), including *Politics of Letters* (1987) and *Selling Culture* (1996)." Henry Abelove, Willbur Fisk Osborne Professor of English, Emeritus, commented: "No one did more than he to guide Wesleyan in absorbing the best of the lessons of the social movements of the 1960s."

"Dick was a master at making the effortful look effortless," remarked Professor of Anthropology Elizabeth Traube. "As director of the Center for the Humanities, he was always pursuing special projects such as assembling a planning group to incorporate cultural studies into the curriculum, hitting up Coca Cola to fund a faculty seminar on *Making and Selling Culture*, and then making sure that



we produced a volume out of it. He had a wicked sense of humor and a steady moral compass."

"It is very hard to briefly describe what Dick Ohmann meant to my generation of academics, and to the development of American universities more generally," said Richard Slotkin, Olin Professor of English, Emeritus. "In the late 1970s he taught a class for American Studies called *Towards a Socialist America*—a radical innovation then, an inescapable subject now. He was a leader in the movement that transformed university life and culture, by making both faculties and student bodies, and college curricula, more inclusive by race, ethnicity,

class, gender and sexuality. His books and articles analyzed the connections between postwar university development, corporate capitalism, and the Cold War. What was most remarkable and characteristic of his work was the way he integrated theory and practice, scholarly analysis with political action. His personal example gave courage and focus to generations of younger colleagues, and he will be sorely missed."

The English department has renamed the English Lecture Series as The Ohmann-Crosby English Lecture Series in honor of Dick Ohmann and his mentee, Christina Crosby.

Dick is survived by his daughter, Sarah Ohmann; his daughter-in-law, Nicole Polier; and his granddaughter-in-law, Alison Polier. Memorial contributions may be made in Dick's name to resist.org, [Planned Parenthood](http://Planned Parenthood.org), or trainingforchange.org.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

William K. Wasch † Aug. 28, 2021

Dear Friends,

You may have heard the news that our dear friend and former colleague Bill Wasch, '52, P'84, '84, '92, a 20-year veteran of Wesleyan's Office of Advancement, passed away on August 28. He was 90 years old. Bill and his wife Susie founded the Susan B. and William K. Wasch Center for Retired Faculty at Wesleyan in 2004.

"Bill's personal and professional lives were marked by a clarity and consistency of purpose, combined with gusto for life and a luminous kindness, generosity, and optimism," said Marcus L. Taft Professor of German Language and Literature, Emerita, Krishna Winston, director of the Wasch Center.

The son of German immigrants, William (Bill) Karl Wasch Sr., was born in Mt. Vernon, NY. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Wesleyan in 1952 and earned his MBA at Columbia University. He served as an officer in the Navy and worked on the finance side of the oil business before returning to Wesleyan to oversee the annual fund in 1964. In 1967, he was named Director of Development and Alumni Relations. "Bill made it his mission to help alumni of all ages maintain meaningful connections to their and his alma mater," said Professor Winston.

After retiring from Wesleyan in 1985, Bill embarked on a third career as a consultant and advocate for healthy



aging. He authored a book and hosted two documentary series on Connecticut Public Television to guide seniors in living their best lives. Bill believed deeply in community connections and lifelong learning. In 2012, he was awarded the Baldwin Medal for extraordinary service to Wesleyan.

Professor Winston reflected on the creation of the Wasch Center. "Almost two decades ago, when Professor of Psychology Karl Scheibe broached to Bill and Susie the idea of creating a center for retired faculty, Bill immediately recognized the mutual benefit to the University community and retired faculty members of preserving ties formed over many years," she said. "Fostering vital human connections from youth to old age: Bill devoted his life to this endeavor, and it was a life well lived."

Donations in Bill's memory can be made to the Memorial Fund of The Church of the Holy Trinity (381 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457) or the Wasch Center for Retired Faculty at Wesleyan University (Wesleyan University, Office of Advancement, 291 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457).

Bill was predeceased by his wife Susie in 2016. He is survived by his children, Christina E. Wasch of Middletown, CT, William K. Wasch Jr. (Natalia Vovk) of Munich, Heidi H. Wasch (Robert O. Leversee) of Seattle, and Frederick C. Wasch (Elizabeth Wasch) of Pennington, NJ; and his grandchildren Sophia, Maya, Emily, Marc, Samuel and Eleanor; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Roth, *President*

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Frantz Williams, *Vice President for Advancement*

NECROLOGY

Peter Kostacopoulos †March 25, 2021

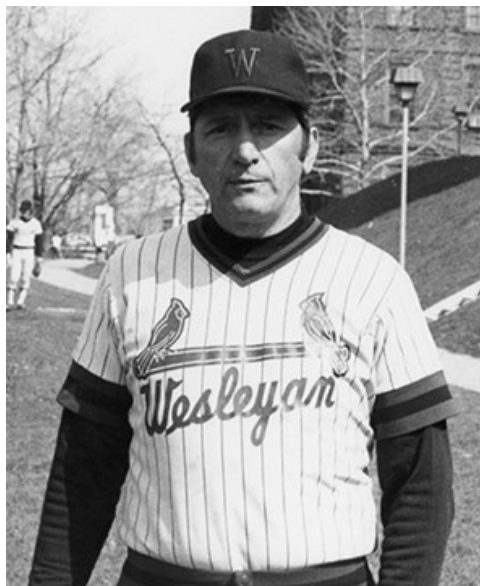
Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Peter “Kosty” Kostacopoulos, Adjunct Professor of Physical Education, Emeritus, and former Head Baseball Coach and Assistant Football Coach, passed away on March 25 at the age of 86.

Kosty earned his BS from the University of Maine, where he lettered in football, basketball, and baseball, and made the All-Maine Conference in football and basketball. After coaching at Bowdoin for nine years, he arrived at Wesleyan in 1968. He served as Head Baseball Coach for 28 years, taking over after Norm Daniels retired. He was also an Assistant Football Coach for 19 years and Head Squash Coach for several years.

Kosty led the Cardinals to 11 Little Three titles. Twice named NCAA Coach of the Year, he won over 400 games and had 24 winning seasons in his time at Wesleyan. In 1994 Kosty led the team to the NCAA College World Series and was chosen as a coach for the Division III All-Star game at Fenway Park in Boston. “Coach Kosty had the ability to challenge his players and get them to perform at their best in the most important games,” recalled Mike Whalen, the Frank V. Sica Director of Athletics and Chair, Physical Education. “For many, he was a great coach, mentor, and friend, and he will be missed.”

In addition to being Wesleyan’s winningest coach, Kosty was also known as an active recruiter. “From the honor of being recruited by him, to playing under his guidance, he



gave us the transformational experience of our lives,” said Mark Woodworth ’94, Head Baseball Coach. “Coach Kosty was larger than life and the embodiment of what a coach should be. His legacy lives on and is firmly embedded in the Wesleyan Baseball program, but is found even more in the hearts and minds of those of us fortunate enough to have been able to call him Coach.”

Known as a mentor and an enduring friend to his students, Kosty was inducted into the Wesleyan University Athletics Hall of Fame in 2016. John Raba, Head Coach of Men’s Lacrosse, said: “Peter Kostacopoulos was one of the finest individuals to ever have coached at Wesleyan. His championship record, innovation, teaching, and influence in the lives and careers of players and coaches are unsurpassed. Peter will be deeply missed by many of us in the athletic community at Wesleyan.”

Kosty is survived by his wife Joann Hanson Kostacopoulos and his sons John Kostacopoulos, Peter Kostacopoulos, Jr., and Paul Kostacopoulos. The family is planning a celebration of Kosty’s life this summer, to be announced online.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

Ann Wightman †March 11, 2021

Dear friends,

I am sorry to inform you that Ann M. Wightman, Professor of History, Emerita, passed away on March 11 at the age of 70.

Ann was born in South Euclid, Ohio. She earned her BA from Duke University and her MPhil and PhD from Yale. First arriving at Wesleyan as a visiting instructor in 1979, she remained here for 36 years until her retirement in 2015. Ann was an accomplished scholar with a focus on Latin America. She felt that she found a “second home” doing research in the Andes, and she sought to capture the history of that region in her first book, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Foresteros of Cuzco, 1570-1720* (Duke University Press, 1990), which received the Herbert E. Bolton Memorial Prize for “the best English language book on any aspect of Latin American history.”

She was a mentor to many faculty and students, and a popular teacher. “Ann Wightman was an extraordinary and effective University colleague,” said Nathanael Greene, Professor of History. “As scholar, she won praise and prize; her teaching was uncommonly demanding but absolutely inspirational, and she was among the early recipients of the Binswanger Prize.” Robert “Bo” Conn, Professor of Spanish, said: “For decades students flocked to Ann’s courses. Walking around campus at reunion time with ‘Wightman,’ as students affectionately knew and even called her, was like walking around with a legend. They all had memories and stories of a dedicated and charismatic teacher who made Latin America come alive



in the classroom with her brilliant lectures on colonialism, state formation, and cultural resistance, and who helped them to develop as critical thinkers and people.”

Ann had a lasting impact on Wesleyan. She was instrumental in founding Wesleyan’s Center for the Americas, which brought the Latin American Studies and American Studies programs together as part of a common enterprise with shared, team-taught introductory courses. Professor of American Studies, Emerita, Patricia Hill recalled: “Ann was one of my best friends, and as colleagues we worked together on creating the Center for the Americas.

Ann was not only an admired colleague and teacher, but a dear and best friend to many. She was devoted to the people of Wesleyan.”

Ann is survived by her beloved husband, Mal Bochner. Memorial contributions may be made to the Ann Wightman Scholarship Fund, c/o Wesleyan University Advancement, 291 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457, Attn: Jennifer Opalacz.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*

Christina Crosby †Jan. 5, 2021

[Editor's note: Christina Crosby died not long before she would have joined the ranks of the emeriti/ae. This memorial notice was inadvertently omitted from last year's newsletter. Christina's friends have established a Web site, where you can find photos, remembrances, videos, and information on Christina's writings]



Dear friends,

It is with deep sadness that I write to inform you that our dear friend and colleague, Christina Crosby, Professor of English and FGSS, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 67.

Christina arrived at Wesleyan in 1982 after receiving her AB from Swarthmore College and PhD from Brown University. She was a respected Victorianist, feminist, and theorist who was widely published, including two books, *The Ends of History: Victorians* and “The Woman Question” (Routledge, 1990) and *A Body, Undone: Living on After Great Pain* (NYU Press, 2016). She received Wesleyan’s Binswanger Prize for Excellence in Teaching in 1994.

“Christina was a brilliant scholar-teacher,” recalled Natasha Korda, Professor of English, “and an uncommonly generous colleague and mentor. Suddenly bereft of her presence, many of us are reeling, and at a loss for words, wishing that we could channel her eloquence to convey fully the contours of her extraordinary life and achievements. Our only solace is that Christina is now beyond the ‘great pain’ through which she lived on after her bicycling accident, and about which she wrote so beautifully in her recent book, *A Body Undone*. She was, as one colleague put it, the ‘heart and soul’ of the FGSS program over many years.”

Former students, Assistant Professors Abigail Boggs (Sociology) and Laura Grappo (American Studies), said: “Christina was a legend; an incomparable mentor and colleague. Our campus and my life will not be the same without her brilliance, eloquence, and kindness, and simply her presence;” and “(her) passing is heartbreaking and a devastating loss for the Wesleyan Community.”

“With Christina’s death we have lost a dear friend and valued colleague,” remarked Benjamin Waite Professor of the English Language, Emeritus, William Stowe. “She was a rigorous but popular teacher and mentor, a vigorous intellectual interlocutor, a skilled department leader, and a great baker of pies. After her devastating accident she deployed prodigious grit and courage to regain her independence, return to teaching, and write *A Body, Undone*, a moving, probing memoir that became a founding text in the new field of disability studies.”

President Michael Roth said: “Christina Crosby’s death is a profound loss for the Wesleyan community. After her accident, she wrote that “If I am to continue living, I must be open to being swept away.” Not only did she stay open, she found ways to open her students, colleagues and friends to being swept away by literature, by activism, and by passionate engagement with art and with the world.”

The Center for the Humanities will host a memorial for her this spring, details to follow. Memorial contributions in her name can be made to the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program at Wesleyan (give.wesleyan.edu), to Soujourner House (sojournerri.org), or Metropolitan Playhouse (metropolitanplayhouse.org).

Christina is survived by Beth Crosby, Kirsten Crosby Blose, Colin Crosby, Matt Blose, Andrea Crosby-Molina, Justin Blose, Alexander Blose, Annalia Crosby-Molina, Santiago Crosby-Molina, and her partner, Janet Jakobsen. Please join me in sending our heartfelt sympathies to Janet and the rest of Christina’s family.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stanton, *Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Dance*





*In memoriam, Susie and Bill Wasch (with
Christina, Bill, Jr., Fred, and Heidi), July 2016*

Photo courtesy of the Wasch Family

**Wasch Center for
Retired Faculty
51 Lawn Avenue
Middletown, CT
06459
860.685.3005**

**[www.wesleyan.edu/
waschcenter/](http://www.wesleyan.edu/waschcenter/)**

Designed by
Mariah E. Reisner '00, MA '04
Samari Studios, LLC

**Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of
The Wasch Center Newsletter.**

**We welcome news and notes (and features too!)
for our next issue, planned for the start of the
fall semester.**

**Please submit contributions to Krishna Winston
at kwinston@wesleyan.edu.**