



WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

WASCH CENTER FOR RETIRED FACULTY

Newsletter Vol. 8, No. 2

Spring 2017

WESLEYAN RETIRED RECALL FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH WESLEYAN

In the last issue there was a call for brief accounts of retired faculty members' initial encounters with Wesleyan. We announced "if we get enough of these contributions, we can include them in the next issue . . ." In fact, we received more than enough, an even dozen.

Creeger, was looking for such an instructor for the Fall of 1962. Having returned from a recent stint as Fulbright Professor at Würzburg University where he had worked closely with the Ordinarius for English, Wolfgang Iser, he turned to the latter and asked for one of his lecturers to teach the intensive course at Wesleyan. Iser responded that he could

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Herb Arnold – A Circuitous Route

All roads lead to Wesleyan, apparently. Some by circuitous routes. Back in the early, formative years of the College of Letters, a student going



abroad in the sophomore year received some intensive language training at Wesleyan before being turned loose on an unsuspecting Europe. Thus the then Director of the COL, George

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not spare any of his regular faculty members but might have an advanced student to recommend. That student, knowing nothing about this prehistory, since he had been in England during George Creeger's stay at Würzburg, sauntered into the university one bright Spring morning just as Iser exited the building. "Oh, Herr Arnold, haven't you been to the United States before?" "Yes," I answered, "as an AFS exchange student in high school." "Would you like to go again? If so, talk to the secretary about the details." I did, she detailed the assignment, and I said, I'd need an opportunity to ask my wife Annemie." I thought a few months between my Staatsexamen and starting my first job with the Bavarian Ministry of Higher Education might not be a bad idea. And so, Wesleyan acquired a temporary instructor of German.

Wesleyan was a small, all male school then and my accommodations were in North College, a suite with sitting room, workspace and bedroom, overlooking the football field, and a bathroom down the hall, on the floor that now houses the offices of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The entire building was a dorm, except for the Dean's and Registrar's offices on the ground floor. For meals one went to Downey House for coffee and the morning mail and, if lucky, a seat at the famous round table where, as Ned Williamson of Romance Languages famously remarked, one would quickly establish or ruin one's reputation as an intellectual fit to teach at Wesleyan. Lunch, in my case, was available at Psi Upsilon, which then had one of the better chefs on campus and the incomparable Willy Kerr as faculty advisor and raconteur. For dinner you were on your own with few options on Main Street beyond the German restaurant called Krenz's. It was a small compass that contained the Wesleyan universe then. It has grown quite a bit over the years.

I drove up for my interview from New York, in a Checker station wagon borrowed from my mother.



Allan Berlind - Route 66: a Shattered Image

After getting my PhD, I went out to Berkeley on a post-doctoral fellowship. The person I was working with was a bit removed from neurobiology, the field I would be qualified to teach in, so he wasn't directly in the loop of knowing about available jobs. I knew I wanted to get a job east of the Hudson River, so kept my eyes open for such possibilities. Somehow, the very appropriate job listing at Wesleyan escaped my attention.

But it was noticed by the administrative assistant in the Zoology Department at Berkeley, who knew my interests and said "Allan, you have to apply for this one." It turns out she was the sister of Jason Wolfe and had heard about the opening from him. So Jason's sister is entirely responsible for my being here.

My first physical encounter with Middletown is also firmly embedded in my memory. I had the appealing image of a quaint and pastoral New England village before I came. I drove up for my interview from New York, in a Checker station wagon borrowed from my mother. As I drove along route 66 my image was shattered, and I got more and more discouraged the closer I got to town. I'm glad that I didn't give in to my temptation to abort then and there, but continued on to the interview.

Peter Frenzel - A Rescued Letter

Back in 1966 I was teaching German at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, trying to complete my dissertation, and looking for a job. I had already been talking with Syracuse and

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First Encounters with Wesleyan continued from page 2.

Oregon and had been invited to their campuses for interviews. One day our department head, Clarence Pott, asked me to stop by his office and showed me a letter from a former UM graduate, Arthur Wensinger, who was looking for, as he put it, the best of the best to fill a slot at Wesleyan, someone who could teach humanities as well as intro courses, in Wesleyan's COL and a Freshman Humanities Program. "Is that in Ohio?" I questioned? "Not sure," he replied, "but it is said to be very good. Why don't I give you the letter and you can do with it what you will." So I took it home, tossed it in the wastebasket, and thought

"Is that in Ohio?"... "No," he corrected me. It's in Connecticut and has the best college math department in the country.

no more about it—until that evening, when Laurie and I attended the wedding of a fellow graduate student (Bob Bazucha). The man sitting next to me at the reception introduced himself and we fell into conversation. It came to light that he was the chair of the math department at Oberlin. At some point he asked me what my situation was. I told him I was looking for an academic teaching job and had already had two invitations to visit to be interviewed on campus. "And," I added, "a letter came 'round today from a Wesleyan University." "You mean the Wesleyan?" I stuttered around a bit. "Well . . . I guess so; I think it's in Ohio or . . . maybe Connecticut." "No," he corrected me. It's in Connecticut and has the best college math department in the country. I have lectured there a number of times and can assure you that its faculty is a most distinguished one. He spent the next half hour or so expounding the glories liberal arts colleges in general and of Wesleyan in particular. I went home, fished the letter out of the wastepaper basket, and

postponed my visits to Syracuse and Oregon. And that was that.

Stew Gillmor – Chicken on Route 17

In the spring of 1966, soon after I passed my PhD qualifiers, my Princeton advisors Charles Gillispie and Thomas Kuhn suggested (ordered) that my dissertation topic should be a study of the life and career of the noted French physicist and engineer Charles Augustin Coulomb (1736-1806). Gillispie told me that Wesleyan was looking for a junior level historian of science. Given that I was heading to France for a year, Wesleyan asked me to come up for an early interview, in May. I went to Wes, and talked with all of the History Department senior people, and saw faculty from six of the science departments. Since my BS was in Electrical Engineering/Physics and I had some graduate work in astro/geophysics, I guess I got along very well with the physical scientists. I had an unusual lunch at Downey house, with Geologist Joe Peoples, Mathematician Walter Gottschalk and Historian Gene Golob. Peoples was delighted that I was a member of the American Geophysical Union and had published in their journals, Golob was generally puzzled, and Gottschalk quizzed me on how many blind mathematicians I knew and whether I had studied REAL math or just physics math. I replied that the great Leonard Euler wrote 283 papers after he became blind and that I had read some of them, and that the Dane, Tycho Brahe, had a sterling silver nose due to a student sword dual. Provost Bob Rosenbaum told me that Wes didn't pay for car tolls, and that there would be no cocktail reception for me, but that there was a Colonel Sanders' chicken place on south Route 17.



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We had left Princeton at 5 am in my '56 beat-up Jeep wagon and returned to Princeton by 10pm that same day. Wesleyan's cost for my trip: gas mileage and a Downey House lunch.

While in Paris, Kuhn notified me that the U. Michigan job had evaporated due to Governor "Soapy" Williams issuing only paper scrip to faculty during a financial crisis, and U. Hawaii told me that they didn't think I fit for a job teaching intro. physical science/ history of science to prospective elementary school teachers. In February 1967, Gillispie wrote to me in Paris that the Wes. job was a good one, and why hadn't I accepted the offer. I had not received any letter. Dick Ohmann, assistant provost, had heard that I was traveling in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and wouldn't get the letter, so Wes. hadn't sent it. In the end, Professor Gillispie told Wes. to send me the letter. I got it and accepted the job and arrived in late summer 1967.

Vera Grant – A Surreptitious Interview

Scene I – November, 1964 The Winter semester begins at the University of Freiburg in the Black Forest. Among the usual crowd of students traveling by streetcar from the dormitory to their classes is a brown skinned American with an engaging smile, He was dressed in a rather unusual jacket: beige fake leather sleeves, red jacket with black capital letters W E S L E Y A N. The owner/wearer of this strange fashion item had just graduated with a BA in biology. I found out that Robert Grant had also studied German at Wesleyan with Professors Dunham, Schultz, and Taraba. Supported by Professor Gemeinhardt, the then Fulbright advisor, Robert Grant, received a DAAD Dankstipendium, a special scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service.

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Scene II – Spring, 1967 The poster from the Amerikahaus in Freiburg announces a lecture about Stokely Carmichael. What intrigued me was the fine print, introducing the presenter/ speaker, Edgar Beckham, from Wesleyan University and University of Erlangen. I thought: he must be black, he is probably Robert's teacher. After the lecture I had a brief chance to greet Mr. Beckham. I asked him: "Do you happen to know Robert Grant?" "Of course I know Bobby Grant. Are you the woman he always talks about?" "Maybe", I replied.

Scene III – Next Day at the Freiburg Station I am about to step onto a train to my hometown of Stuttgart when I see Mr. Beckham walk along the platform and board farther down. After depositing my luggage in a not too crowded compartment I decide to find Robert's friend and discover him alone in a fancier section of the train. We had a very pleasant conversation, interrupted suddenly by the conductor who was annoyed that I was traveling in first class with a second-class ticket. In perfect German, with great calm and charm, Mr. Beckham paid the surcharge. I kept the stub for many years. We continued our chat until my travel companion had to transfer to another train and I could I rejoin my suitcase in second class. What I had not realized was that Edgar Beckham without my knowledge was informally interviewing me for a possible position as a native speaker in Wesleyan's German Department. A few months later the job offer arrived and my ship sailed in June 1968. In August I began my 40-year teaching career at Wesleyan University as an instructor in the summer Intensive Language Program, founded and directed by Edgar Beckham, who thereafter was my creative

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mentor, advisor, colleague, and friend for many years. I can still hear his voice.

Note: The Wesleyan jacket was donated to the Wesleyan Archives c/o Suzy Taraba

Alex Dupuy: Turn left off Route 66

Before I came to Wesleyan in 1982, I was teaching at Southeastern Massachusetts University in North Dartmouth, MA (renamed the University of Massachusetts at North Dartmouth in 1991). I was not happy there because the heavy teaching load made it difficult to pursue my scholarship. My in-laws lived in West Redding, CT. When my wife, Wanda, and I drove from New Bedford to visit them, we took a route that brought us through Middletown on Route 66. I would frequently comment while passing by Wesleyan that it looked like a nice college. On one such trip, on impulse, I made the left turn at the light onto High Street and we drove around the campus. I was impressed with what I saw, and I said to Wanda, "I wonder what it's like to teach here?" Wanda was not attached to New Bedford and was always on the

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lookout for another job for me. When she saw an ad in the American Sociological Association job bulletin for a joint position in the Sociology Department and the African American Studies Program at Wesleyan, she encouraged me to apply. I remember telling her that I probably would not be considered because "they wouldn't want someone like me with a PhD from a state university." But she persuaded me that I had nothing to lose by applying. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Applying for the position here was the best career decision I ever made, thanks to Wanda. By the way,

neither of us ever looked for another job for me after we got here.

Mike Lovell – A Distinctive Limp

I first heard about Wesleyan from a fellow economics graduate student, Bob Brown, Wes '55. Years later Burt Hallowell, Wes '36 told me that Bob had been Wesleyan's first streaker! He emerged stark naked except for a mask over his face from Fayerwether Hall at halftime and ran around the track. But Burt said that everyone knew it was Bob because he had a distinctive limp.

P.S. Burt hired me as a moonlighter in 1960 to teach a calculus-based intro econ course in the College of Quantitative Studies.



Joyce Lowrie - Tenure Almost Impossible

Having turned in my PhD dissertation in 1965, I was graduated from Yale in '66. We were living at the time in a tiny apartment on Wall Street in New Haven, above the student restaurant George & Harry's. As a teaching assistant at Yale in French, I had never heard of Wesleyan University until Steve Crites, who had been my teacher at the Yale Divinity School, told me he had gotten a job in the Religion Department at Wesleyan. I took courses at the Div School for a year before moving "downtown" to the Graduate School. "Where is that? Is it a Methodist school?" I asked Steve, being totally ignorant and naïve about the place. When I started looking for an academic job, two possibilities became available: a position at Southern CT in New Haven, and, lo and behold, one at Wesleyan. I made phone calls to both. Carl Viggiani,

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Chair of the Dept. of Romance Languages & Literatures Department at Wesleyan, invited me to apply. I was interviewed by Carl, Morton Briggs, George Creeger, and that Egyptian of sartorial splendor, Ihab Hassan. He was wearing a white linen suit the day of my interview. By the way, Briggs was sporting, as he always did, an elegant bow tie. My first impression of Carl, on the phone, was that he must be an elegant “New Englander” who lived in a grand New England house. I remember hearing a dog bark in the background. Carl turned out to be a gentle man who was small, dark, handsome, and of Italian extraction. He did live in a lovely New England house. He also told me that it was almost impossible to get tenure at Wesleyan. What to do? Apply for a job at Southern, where tenure was possible, or try my chances at Wesleyan. The choice was made. Wes it was, that all male school where I had little chance of ever getting tenure. I came, I saw, and was lucky enough to be the first woman to rise through the ranks at that impossible place with the “unknown” name.

Paula Paige - Where have you gone, Sigma Chi?

Wesleyan first swam into my ken on a fall evening in the late Fifties. I was a freshman at Mount Holyoke, and the occasion was a mixer with a group of Wesleyan students. Back in those quaint days, mixers were about the only way for students at single-sex colleges to meet one another. So I was thrilled when a tall, good-looking young man came up to me in the hallway of my dorm. His

name was Bob, and he was a Sigma Chi. I was told that he was the son of Rollo May, which didn't mean much to me at the time.

And so I began to take the bus to Middletown on a number of weekends. I remember that I stayed in the Victorian house at the corner of Washington and High Streets (now gray but then brown), which was where Bob's fraternity brothers stashed their dates. I remember little of what we did on those weekends, except for attending parties at Sigma Chi and a football game or two (since I had grown up in Ann Arbor, MI, I wasn't very impressed by Little-Three football). This went on, I think, until the following spring when I realized that I didn't have that much in common with Bob—I began to find him a bit dull. We didn't talk about books! And, I wasn't elected Sigma Chi Sweetheart! Why this was important to me, since I didn't particularly like the fraternity, isn't clear to me now.

In 1968 I returned to Middletown from New York City, when my husband lost his job in publishing and found one at Middlesex Community College. We drove in along Newfield Street, and I remember a sinking feeling as I clutched my small son. How was I going to live here, in this provincial place, when I didn't even drive?

Eventually, I did learn to drive, met people, and got a job at Wesleyan. From time to time I wonder where the Sigma Chi house used to be. Where are the snows of yesteryear?

The choice was made. Wes it was, that all male school where I had little chance of ever getting tenure. I came, I saw, and was lucky enough to be the first woman to rise through the ranks at that impossible place with the “unknown” name.



Yoshiko Samuel - A Warm Welcome

When I was still trying to finish up my dissertation, my advisor let me know of an opening in Japanese Literature at Wesleyan University. "It's an excellent school, and it's all liberal education," he said. The next thing I knew, I was interviewed by Krishna Winston and Tony Chambers at the MLA convention of 1978. Following that, I was invited here for campus interviews.

Soon after I had settled in the guest house next door to what I later learned was Downey House, the telephone in the corner of my room rang. It was from WAIG, Wesleyan Asian Interest Group. Braving a deep snow and late hour, its members came to pick me up, to welcome me to their interest house. After a wonderful Asian dinner they had cooked for me, we had a long discussion. I learned much about this school little known to me until then. The next day, they served as my campus guide, taking me from one interview to the next. I could tell that they were bright students with inquisitive as well as critical minds. They made me want to come to Wesleyan to work with them and, together with them, to reach out to other students.

Nat Greene, Larry Olson, and the four music professors from Japan who interviewed me, too, made me warmly welcome and want to become a member of this community. I was very happy to be able to feel the weight of history, and the nearness of the ocean and the hills. I had missed them very much, living as I did in the Midwest for decades.

On the last day here, as I sat on the front step of Fisk Hall, waiting for my ride back to Bradley, I leafed through once again Wesleyan's course book. The depth and breadth of the curriculum spelled out in the course book so impressed me

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and delighted me that I was certain that I would return, should I obtain a position here.

For all those happy years at Wesleyan, I owe a debt of gratitude, to my mentor at Indiana University and members of WES, especially Asian/Asian American students and colleagues and friends in Asian Languages and Literatures.

Karl Scheibe - A Terrific First Job

I went to Trinity College in Hartford as an undergraduate, so I had heard quite a bit about Wesleyan. In those days, Trinity would typically beat Wesleyan in football, but Wesleyan would absolutely dominate in track and field, my preferred sport. Wesleyan undergraduates had the reputation of being rather avant garde and intellectual. In 1963, as I was finishing my PhD work at Berkeley, I began, in a desultory way, to look for a teaching job. In those days, academic jobs were plentiful and I was pretty sure I would find work somewhere. In March of my final year, Bob Thompson, then Chair of Psychology at Wesleyan, visited Berkeley. He posted a sign-up sheet to interview for a job opening at Wesleyan. It turned out that the job was in physiological psychology, but I signed up for the interview anyway, even though my field was social psychology

Actually, the job was offered to my graduate student colleague, Dick DeBold. Shortly after he took the job, Bob Thomson had called him from Wesleyan inquiring about someone to fill a new position in social psychology. Dick recommended me, in part because I had just done him a favor with the statistical

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analysis of his thesis data. I promptly got a call from Bob Knapp, who offered me the job over the phone. We negotiated a salary of \$7250 for my first year, which was \$200 less than Dick was to receive—and he was ten years older than I.

When I inquired of friends and former teachers at Trinity about Wesleyan, I was told that I should accept the job for sure—and that, “Wesleyan has more money than they know what to do with.” That turned out to be quite true—but there are worse problems one could encounter.

Our reception at Wesleyan in September, 1963 was cordial and exciting in every way. The campus felt like it was in constant motion—and it became clear that the atmosphere here was considerably more electric than what I remembered from my experience at Trinity. I have been extremely grateful for the happy accident of my being offered a job here—without so much as a campus visit—or ever having met Vic Butterfield. Soon after my arrival, Vic stopped by to see me one evening in my office in Judd Hall. Quite a stunning surprise!

It has been a terrific first job.

Vera Schwarcz - The Shards of Human Dignity

I had heard that there were 150 applicants for the new position in Chinese history in the fall of 1974. By the time I came for the campus interview during winter break in January 1975, the field had narrowed greatly. Imagine inviting a candidate without any students around and only a very small, select group of faculty present. I flew in from Stanford, fresh from a year in Taiwan, no PhD in hand—just a

strong interest in comparative intellectual history and strong belief in the positive accomplishments of the Chinese revolution.

My interview was a heady conversation with the luminaries of History & Theory—Louis Mink and Hayden White being the most vociferous among them. My hosts from the History Department (Nat Greene and Lawrence Olson) were gracious beyond anything I could have imagined in the marijuana-inspired haze that

cemented camaraderie between graduate students and faculty in California. I recall being hired even before I left the campus.

My first surveys in modern Chinese history became a bit of a legend since I concluded each discussion session with a ten-minute “criticism-self-criticism.” Students were asked to comment on the content, benefits and shortcomings of what had transpired. This was almost straight out of Mao Tse-tung’s “Red Book” which I had read and still admired a bit.

Two years later I found myself in Beijing as one out of 7 exchange scholars in the first group to be invited right before the re-establishment of US-China diplomatic relations. I spent the next two years learning how little I really understood about Chinese history, the Chinese revolutions and its atrocities. In China, I began to unlearn my previous “expertise” as I started to interview intellectuals who managed to survive the Mao era.

I returned to Wesleyan in the fall of 1980. No more criticism, self-criticism. Instead, more and more poetry about the shards of human dignity that lingered in the wake of the extended tragedy of Maoism. These shards remain to this day the only glimmer of hope in a materialistic and repressive China.

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The Wesleyan Institute for Lifelong Learning Spring 2017

In the spring semester the Institute will offer eight regular courses plus one all-day program. The courses are listed below together with times, dates, and costs. For more complete descriptions of the courses and the one-day event, cost, and enrollment information, please visit www.wesleyan.edu/will or call the Wasch Center at 860-685-2273.

THE CLOWN AND THE CAMERA: SILENT FILM COMEDY

Marc Longenecker

Saturday, March 25 | 9 A.M.–4 P.M.

Center for Film Studies, Powell Family Cinema | \$115



DANTE: COMMEDIA

Herb Arnold

Five Mondays: March 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24 | 4:30–6 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$120



MYTHMAKER: THE POETRY OF WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Lee Jacobus

Five Mondays: March 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24 | 4:30–6 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$120



ODYSSEUS, THE TRICKSTER HERO

Elizabeth Bobrick

Six Thursdays: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; April 6 | 6:30–8:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$135 | Limited to 16 students



HOW DID BASE BALL BECOME BASEBALL?

Bill Ryczek

Three Thursdays: April 27; May 4, 11 | 6:30–8:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$100



THREE PLACES IN NEW ENGLAND: A TOUR OF 19TH CENTURY ART AND LITERATURE

Richard Friswell

Five Mondays: February 20, 27; March 6, 13, 20 | 5:30–7:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$125

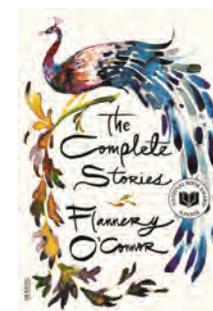


PASSING BY THE DRAGON II: MORE STORIES OF DERACINATION AND RESTORATION BY FLANNERY O'CONNOR

Howard Ira Einsohn

Four Thursdays: April 6, 13, 20, 27 | 4:30–6 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$100



CONNECTICUT HOUSE

Dione Longley, John Giammatteo

Three Tuesdays: April 11, 18, 25 | 4–5:30 P.M.

Wasch Center, Butterfield Room | \$80



Necrology

William Barber



William Barber, Andrews Professor of Economics, Emeritus, died in Cromwell, Connecticut on October 26. Bill was 91. He arrived at Wesleyan in 1957 after receiving his BA from Harvard University and completing a Rhodes Scholarship. He also earned a BA, MA, and DPhil from Oxford. He taught at Wesleyan for 37 years before retiring in 1994. Bill was actively engaged in the leadership of the University throughout his time here. He was a founding member of the College of Social Studies and served as Chair of the Economics Department as well as Secretary of the Faculty. In 1988 the Board of Trustees appointed him Acting President of the University for three months until President Chace assumed the office. Bill was a most productive scholar. After his *A History of Economic Thought* was released in 1967, it became a standard in the field of economics and was translated into seven languages. He published eleven other books as author or editor, and hundreds of articles on economic trends and developments in the United States, Africa, Britain, Europe, India, and other areas of Asia. He was the recipient of many honors and awards throughout his distinguished career, including the George Webb-Medley Prize in Economics from Oxford in 1950 and a Ford Foundation Foreign Area Fellowship for study

in Africa from 1955-57, and he was twice appointed a research associate at Brookings. In 2002 he was honored as a Distinguished Fellow of the History of Economics Society, and in 2005 received an honorary Doctor of Letters from Wesleyan. Bill also served as the American Secretary for the Rhodes Scholarship Trust from 1970 to 1980; during this tenure he was instrumental in opening the Scholarship to women and his service to the Trust was recognized by the British Government through his appointment as an honorary member of the Order of the British Empire. His friend, Richard Miller, said: "Bill was a valued friend and colleague for over half a century. He provided guidance, counsel, and support to me and to many others. The economics department and the University have been immeasurably stronger for his contributions and his leadership." Born a Midwesterner and having survived World War II as an infantryman, Bill found in Wesleyan his intellectual and emotional home. He loved the classroom as well as the intellectual freedom that the University offered. He is survived by his wife, Sheila, who herself has long been an active member of the Wesleyan community, and his sons, Charles, John, and Tom, their wives, and six grandchildren. Memorial contributions in Bill's name may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care at 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457. A memorial service on campus is being planned for Saturday, January 28. For more information about Bill Barber's life, see the *Middletown Press* obituary of November 2, 2016.

Necrology

William Wistar Comfort



William Wistar Comfort, the Edward Burr Van Vleck Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus, died on the 28th of November in Middletown at age 83 following a brief illness. Wis was known to many for his gallantry, dry wit and humility. A formidable runner and racquet sports athlete, he was respected by his colleagues for his sense of fairness. Wis was graduated with a BA from Haverford College in 1954. His father, Howard, had been head of the Classics Department at Haverford and his grandfather, William Wistar Comfort, for whom Wis was named, was a noted Quaker scholar and President of Haverford College from 1917 to 1940. Wis received his doctorate from the University of Washington in 1958. He was a widely published mathematician and scholar. Before coming to Wesleyan he taught at Harvard, Rochester, and UMass Amherst. At Wesleyan he was Chair of the Math Department three times before retiring in 2007. Wis came to Wesleyan in 1967 with his wife, Mary Connie, and their two children, Martha and Howard. Wis worked principally in General Topology, with a specialty in topological groups and cardinal invariants. He enjoyed infinitary combinatorics and their applications to topological structures. He continued to publish mathematical works in the weeks leading up to his death; more will be printed posthumously. He published three

books and nearly 150 mathematics articles in a career that covered over five decades. Wis also held visiting positions at the University of Arkansas, McGill, Heidelberg, Instituto Matematico in Pisa, Athens University, University of São Paulo (1983 and 1999), and the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. His principal post-retirement avocation was Dixieland jazz. He was a fine saxophonist and worked persistently on the music he loved. He played with many bands in Connecticut and Maine, including the RB Hall Band, The Juniper Hill Jumpers, The Stompers and the Corinthian Jazz Band. He was also a loyal member of the Wesleyan Pep Band, playing at home football games. He had a rich, bass singing voice that delighted his audiences. Wis is survived by his sister Laura Comfort Kesel, his son Howard Comfort III and his daughter Martha Wistar Comfort and four grandchildren, Laura Elsbeth Coffin, William Peyton Coffin, Henry Wistar Comfort and Samuel Garrett Comfort. His wife, Mary Connie, died a scant year before he. A Memorial Service will be held at the Wesleyan Chapel at 10:30 on 23rd April 2017. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions can be made to Middletown Friends Meeting c/o Holder, 29 Long Lane Road, Middletown, CT 06457 or to Essex Meadows (Employee Scholarship Fund) c/o Essex Meadows, 30 Bokum Rd, Essex, CT 06426. For a more detailed account, see the obituary of December 1 in the *Hartford Courant*.

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Necrology

Helene Messer Spurrier

Helene (Lane) Spurrier died on November 10, 2016 in New Britain, Connecticut at the age of 92. After her graduation from Mt. Holyoke College, she married William (Bill) Spurrier, longtime chaplain at Wesleyan. She and Bill lived in Middletown 35 years while Bill served as chair of the Religion Department, College Chaplain, and founder and coach of the Wesleyan Hockey Program. As wife of the professor, chaplain, and coach she fed over the years literally thousands of students, trustees, and alums. During the

time she lived in Middletown she co-founded and served as president of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. She was also a president of the Middletown Garden Club. She is survived by her son Anthony and his wife Wendy, her son Robert Spurrier and his wife Paula Jones of Ipswich Massachusetts, four grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Donations in her memory may be made to Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod, 255 Independence Drive, Hyannis, MA 02601. For a more detailed account, see the obituary in the *Middletown Press*, November 19, 2016.

BROWN BAG SEMINARS

Inspired by Mike Lovell's sessions in the PAC some years ago, these are themed lunchtime sessions, meeting bi-weekly. Participants must sign up, attend the seminars, and read a short paper. For more information please call Duffy White at 860-685-3126.

News & Notes

from retired members of the faculty

*We will continue our regular News & Notes column in the next issue. As always, we are seeking short descriptions (150 words or fewer) of retired faculty members' research, scholarly writing, or other activities of interest to our colleagues. The deadline for our next issue is **July 15, 2017**.*

Submissions should be sent to pfrenzel@wesleyan.edu

SPRING 2017 FILM SERIES

The stresses and pitfalls of modern life depicted in films selected by Yoshiko Samuel. Screenings will be on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 3:00 pm.

Tuesday, February 7, 3pm

MODERN TIMES (1936). Directed by Charlie Chaplin. A parody of the highly industrialized modern life that transforms humans into mere assembly lines. Chaplin, Paulette Goddard. 87 minutes.



Tuesday, March 7, 3pm

WALKABOUT (1971). Directed by Nicolas Roeg. Set in the Australian outback, the film illuminates the madness of modern life through a chance encounter between white children (Jenny Agutter and Luc Roeg) and an aboriginal boy (David Gumpilil). 100 minutes.



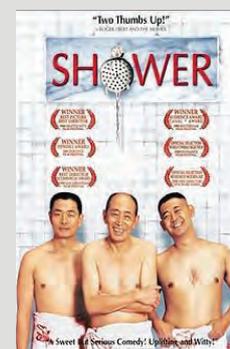
Tuesday, April 4, 3pm

THE WOMAN IN THE DUNES (1962). Directed by Teshigahara Hiroshi. A nameless man (Okada Eiji) from highly modernized Tokyo journeys to a distant sand dune in search of a rare insect so that "his name may appear in an encyclopedia." He is "trapped" in a sand pit occupied by a woman (Kishida Kyoko), also nameless, living a primitive life. In Japanese with English subtitle. 147 minutes.



Tuesday, May 2, 3pm

SHOWER (1999). Directed by Zhang Yang. An elderly father (Zhu Xu) and his mentally challenged son (Jian Wu) have been running a traditional bathhouse in an old section of Beijing. Tension develops when his older son (Pu Cunxin), now a businessman working in a modernized city outside the old capital, returns home for a visit. At the same time, Beijing wants to demolish the district to promote commercial development. In Mandarin Chinese with English subtitle. 94 minutes.



THE FAT LADY SINGS IN MIDDLETOWN

Weary from the daily grind? Searching for Truth and Beauty? Depleted by a daily overdose of pop culture? This might be the time for a soothing immersion in

GRAND OPERA.

Yes, opera right here in Middletown. Many are unaware that the Metro Movies in Downtown Middletown subscribe to the Metropolitan Opera Live in HD Series, meaning that on ten or so Saturday afternoons during the season (Sept. through May) you can enjoy world-class opera in the comfort of a local theater. Why not ease on down to Metro Movies (just off Main Street) and, for 22 Yankee dollars per person, you can experience the world's greatest voices, lavish productions, and stirring choruses.

These Met HD productions are simulcast live in real time from Lincoln Center and are transmitted all over the world. You get bigger-than-life characters on the big screen, close-ups of the stars, their emotions magnified by image and sound.

Here is the schedule for the rest of the season:

February 25 **Rusalka**

Dvořák's fairytale of love and loss

March 11 **La Traviata**

Verdi's tale of love and loss among the demi-monde

March 25 **Idomeneo**

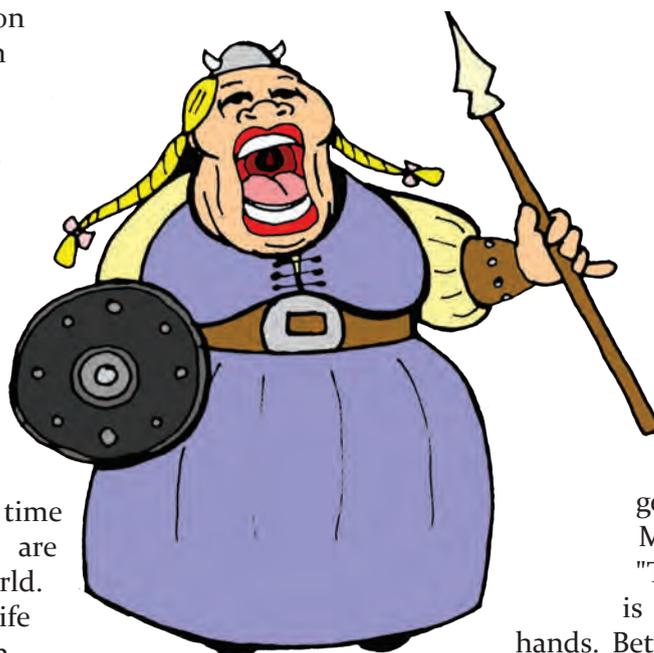
Mozart's tale of loss and love after the Trojan War

April 22 **Eugene Onegin**

Tchaikovsky's reading of Pushkin's tale of love and loss

May 13 **Der Rosenkavalier**

Strauss's tale of love regained, mostly



You don't need to make a reservation, though an early arrival (12:20) for the "popular" operas (*Traviata*, *Onegin* and *Rosenkavalier*) is suggested. A brown bag might be a good idea so you can munch on lunch while waiting for the show to begin. But, as traditional in American movie theaters, the Popcorn Man is available in the outer lobby and most willing to sell you enough popcorn to get you through to the fat lady's aria.

And the long Met intermissions provide time for interviews with the stars, the set designers, and costumers, or for simply watching the dozens of stagehands setting up of the next scene, each of them perfectly choreographed to be in the right place at the right time.

When Metro Movies was still called Destinta, the possibility of introducing the Met's Opera in HD became a reality. Few people, however, attended these early showings. The owners of the theater were discouraged.

Fees were high, and this cultural gem was threatened with cancellation. Marian Katz, a member of TLC, as "The Literary Club" of Middletown is known, took matters into her own hands. Between the years 2012-2014, she went to Destinta, picked up the calendar for programs and viewings, and emailed them to members of The Literary Club. This inspired members to get the word out to friends and families, and Middletown Opera in HD was most likely rescued by these efforts.

And so, TOI, TOI, TOI, as opera singers round the world are wont to say to other cast members before they mount the boards.

Some local luminaries who were seen at recent showings:

Laney & Steve Bank

Al Turco

Joyce & Ernest Lowrie

Anne & Walter Mayo

Hilda Damiata

Karen & Paul Torop

Paula Paige

Marian Katz

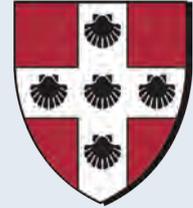
Vera & Robert Grant

Eli & Pete Pringle

Betsy & David Morgan

Laurie & Peter Frenzel

SPRING 2017 LECTURE SERIES



Wednesday, February 1, 4:30pm
Al Turco, Professor of English, Emeritus
“What I have learned from Teaching”

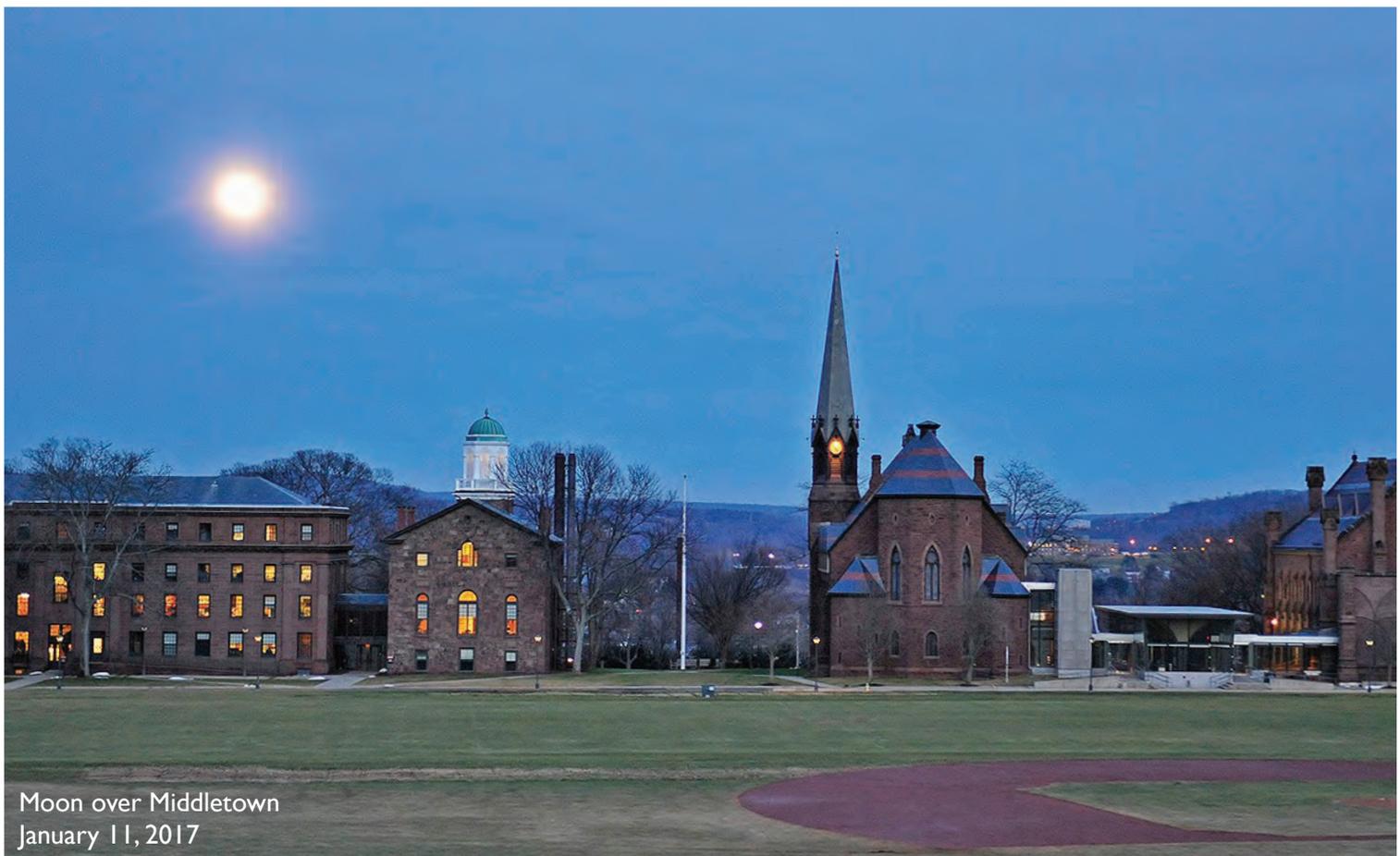
Wednesday, February 15, 4:30pm
Karl Scheibe, Professor of Psychology,
Emeritus
“Some Paradoxes of Wellbeing”

Wednesday, March 1, 4:30pm
Ryan Overbey, Visiting Professor of Religion
“Buddhism and the Body: Desire, Disgust,
and Transcendence”

Thursday, March 30, 4:30pm
Mary Alice Haddad, Professor
of Government
“Environmental Politics in East Asia”

Wednesday, April 12, 4:30pm
Justine Quijada, Assistant Professor of Religion
“Genres of History (Buddhist, Shamanic, and
Soviet) in a Buddhist Ceremony in Inner Asia”

Wednesday, April 26, 4:30pm
Ying Jia Tan, Assistant Professor of History
“The History of Electricity in China”



Moon over Middletown
January 11, 2017

WASCH CENTER ENDOWMENT

Over the dozen years of its existence, the Wasch Center has received gifts from retired faculty members, alums, and others. We are building an endowment that we hope might eventually allow the funding of professional travel and research expenses for retired faculty members, including the maintenance of computers. If you are considering either a bequest to Wesleyan or an annual gift, you might designate such gifts, in full or in part, to be credited to the Wasch Center. One-time contributions in any amount are, of course, always welcome. If you have questions, you can contact Peter Kilby (ext. 2365) at the Wasch Center or Mark Davis (ext. 3660), Director of Planned Giving for the University.



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