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M.D., F.A.C.S.

The Montlake Cut

Winter 2017

A View From Puget Sound

The ideas our Department celebrates most warmly is “our UW family” and their contributions to science, medicine and education. Our family extends far beyond the genetic definition of family. We include our students, residents, faculty, staff, both past and present. Our graduate and former faculty member Professor Sean Grady, now long Chair at Penn, gives us his true account of his years both in Seattle and Philadelphia, and a lovely story it is. Another true story is one of love itself, devotion, and academic success: On May 20 of this year, longtime department mainstays George and Linda Ojemann will have been married for 50 years. This issue also includes the brief biographies of our four spectacular neurosurgical practitioners at UWMC. These successful and talented women all come from diverse backgrounds, but help support a now very busy service at the University. Part of the success of that service belongs to them. Another part belongs to the gifted and inventive Christoph Hofstetter, whose lab is investigating novel methods for the treatment of the devastation of spinal cord trauma. We have included a summary of next year’s planned activities for our current R-7s who will finish in June. Charlie Nussbaum and affiliate faculty member from VM, is the new President of the WNS, and all of the residents should note their opportunity to submit papers and maybe win a free trip to that meeting next September. In case you have somehow missed learning about our enormously gifted Department Director, Jana Pettit, a brief account of her interesting life is also included in this issue.

Last, it is with a heavy heart I must report the death of our long-time department member and for several years the Interim Chairman, Professor William A. Kelly. In the next issue of this newsletter will appear the longer story of this remarkable and generous life.

Richard G. Ellenbogen, MD, FACS
Professor & Chairman
Department of Neurological Surgery

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Introducing the UWMC Nurse Practitioner Team



Olga Lucia Paredes is an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner in the Neurological Surgical Department at the University of Washington Medical Center. She provides pre-op, post-surgical, and follow-up care to patients with pituitary tumors, complex skull base brain tumors, cerebrovascular disorders, micro-vascular decompression syndromes, and neurofibromatosis Types 1 and 2. Lucia is originally from South America (Colombia) where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing with Graduate studies in Epidemiology and Public Health. She finished a Master's degree as Advanced Nurse Practitioner at the University of Nevada, Reno in 2007. Lucia practiced family and internal medicine until 2011 when she joined the Neurological Surgical Team at Harborview Medical Center where she was an enormous asset. Briefly she went to SCCA, and we were all overjoyed when she re-joined the neurosurgical team at UWMC last March.



Christine (Christy) Daly is also a Nurse Practitioner in Neurosurgery at UWMC. Originally from Syracuse, New York, she completed her undergraduate studies at State University of New York, Brockport and then worked as an Intensive Care Unit Nurse for 5 years while she earned a graduate degree at SUNY, Upstate Medical University. In 2014, she graduated with an MSN as a Family Nurse Practitioner with a minor in Nursing Education. Christy is a board certified AANP. A priority in her practice at UWMC is in helping patients and their families make informed medical decisions best suited to their illness and their circumstances. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, traveling, sailing, reading, and spending time with her family.



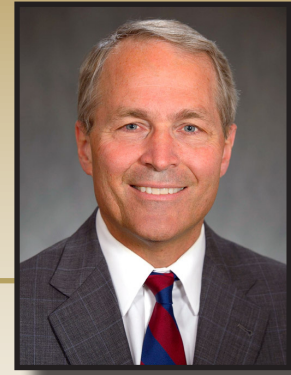
Jennifer Minor grew up nearby in Mount Vernon and graduated from the University of Washington with a B.S. degree. Throughout college she worked as an in-home caregiver. Jennifer's initial direction was into public health, but she soon realized she was most interested in direct patient care. She then attended Seattle University and obtained a Masters in Nursing to become a Nurse Practitioner. In December 2014, she joined the team of practitioners in the Neurosurgery service at the UWMC. She enjoys taking care of patients with the variety in disease processes between the skull base and spine clinics she supports. Her passion is aiding patients in making important decisions about their health. In her personal life, she is engaged to be married next year. Jennifer is a true plaid shirt Pacific Northwestern and spends much of her free time outdoors. She is an avid daily biker [always wearing her helmet] and enjoys running, hiking and camping.



Courtney Weaver was born and raised in a suburb of Seattle. After completing high school, she attended the University of Washington and earned her first undergraduate degree, a Bachelor's of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences, while competing as an intercollegiate rower. She then spent three years living in New York City attending Columbia University, where she completed both a Bachelors and Master's of Science in Nursing become a Family Practice Nurse Practitioner. While at Columbia, she worked as an RN on a unit specializing in Neurology/Neurosurgery, and a designated stroke center. In 2011 Courtney moved back to Seattle, where she was recruited to her current position with the Neurological Surgery Service at UWMC. She is married to Max, a fellow rower she met at UW. Courtney and Max have a 15-month-old German Shorthair puppy name Lenny. Another plaid shirt, she enjoys the outdoors, being on the water, skiing and hiking, and if you ask her husband, she manages one of the most jam-packed social calendars he has ever seen. Courtney's clinical interests are deep brain stimulation and brain tumors. Courtney is a wonderful leader whether in a shell on the water or as lead for our fabulous Nurse Practitioner Group at UWMC.

The Department is fortunate to have four such talented and dedicated daughters of the Pacific Northwest as part of our team.

Sean Grady is Still Chair at U. Penn



It's been 17 years this summer since I left Seattle and took over as chair at the University of Pennsylvania. While we'd lived on the East coast before, it took a while to acclimate both to the weather and the approach to life! Still, this is the longest our family has lived in one place so it's definitely home. Penn allows 6 year terms as chair and I'm on my third one now. By all accounts I'll be continuing for a 4th, which will definitely be enough! What I'll do after that remains to be determined but it is certain that there are fewer years as a surgeon in front of me than behind. I was a director on the ABNS for 6 years and now serve as treasurer of the SNS, in addition to membership on the RRC, so I'm involved with the kinds of professional activities that most interest me, particularly in the area of neurosurgical training. That undoubtedly comes in part from my experience under the leadership of John Jane. John, as many of you know, died this past year of glioblastoma; I and many others miss him dearly.

When I took the job at Penn, the health system reported a \$400M loss over 3 years and had been placed in "receivership" by the Board of Trustees. I'm sure you're thinking, "Why on earth would you leave UW and move to that maelstrom?" I thought the same on occasion in the first several years. One benefit was that during all the chaos the mistakes I made as a leader received little or no attention. The dean who hired me was fired 8 months after my arrival and there were several interim deans until Arthur Rubenstein was appointed--he proved to be exactly what Penn needed. Over 10 years the finances stabilized, we continued to invest in the institution, both people and buildings, and are now setting off on a \$1.5 billion replacement hospital. I have become the senior clinical chair and admit that when others complain about how tight fisted the administration is, I remind them of what it was like in 2000-2001 to have take 20% out of your budget, mostly by firing people. We now have 19 neurosurgeons, 6 PhD investigators and 21 residents. By the way Jim Schuster, who trained at UW has been one of my best recruits, is now the program director and chief of neurosurgery at our trauma hospital. I also recruited Tim Lucas, another UW trainee, who is fantastic.

Our six children who were ages 9-19 when we moved to Philadelphia are grown and out of the house. Now 4 are married and we have 4 grandchildren, with a 5th on the way. They are dispersed, with 2 families in southern California, one in Harrisburg, one in Philadelphia, one in DC and our youngest Peace Corps kid in Antofagasta, Chile. No doctors in the family; one of the children said he wanted a job from 9-5, not 5-9, so I guess I wasn't a very good example! Debbie lives on a farm we bought about 40 miles outside of Philadelphia. I join her there when I can because it's too long a commute for regular work. We both turned 60 last year, have good health and are able to be as active as we want. This includes me going on a 60-mile backpacking trip in the Sierras this summer with one of our sons. I do miss Seattle's outdoor activities, but make that up when I can by skiing and backpacking out west.

I suppose retirement looms in the not so distant future but exactly what that looks like I'm not sure. I had a wonderful time during those 12 years in Seattle, both professionally and personally and have many, many fond memories of UW, Harborview and Seattle. Without doubt those years set me on my career path and had a tremendous influence on me.

Hofstetter Lab Working on Novel Approaches to Spinal Cord Trauma



Traumatic spinal cord injury interrupts motor and sensory fibers that connect our brain with our body. The inability to move or feel extremities and the loss of bladder, bowel or sexual function is often permanent. More than 1.5 million Americans currently suffer from the sequelae of spinal cord injury. There are currently no clinically available effective treatment strategies. Dr. Hofstetter's laboratory focuses on the development of novel translational treatment strategies for traumatic spinal cord injuries.

In a recent publication in the *Journal of Neurotrauma*, the Hofstetter lab has demonstrated a concept that might explain the very limited spontaneous functional improvement following spinal cord injury. Minutes after a traumatic injury, the contused rodent spinal cord develops hemorrhage and edema. This leads to enlargement of the cord and a rise of tissue pressure within its dural compartment. This process appears to be very similar to posttraumatic tissue swelling within fascial compartment of injured extremities, syndromes that are routinely treated with surgical decompression. Accordingly, the team developed a microsurgical procedure to decompress the spinal cord following injury and found that decompression resulted in normalization of tissue pressure and partial restoration of blood flow. Most important, reduction of spinal pressure allowed for significantly improved tissue healing, and preliminary results show improved functional recovery. The results suggest that raised tissue pressure following acute SCI is an important contributor to poor spontaneous recovery.

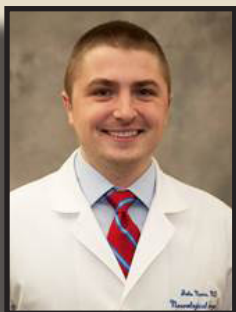
The Hofstetter laboratory is now developing non-invasive monitoring and screening tools to identify patients with increased intra-spinal pressure following spinal cord injury. Eventual translation of these findings into clinical practice might lead to the development of surgical and pharmacological interventions that improve functional recovery following traumatic spinal cord injury.

What's Up with the R-7s?



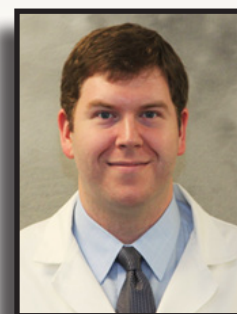
Sean McEvoy, originally from Iowa, is returning to the prairie to do a pediatric neurosurgery fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis this coming year. Peds is a match and the match day was December 12th. Both Amy Lee and Jeff Ojemann, of course, trained there so there are rich connections with our department. Christine MacDonald, Sean's research mentor, also did her PhD there, and our former resident, Josh Osburn, is now a neuro-vascular attending at Wash U. Josh occasionally also does pediatric vascular cases. Their fellowship is well established, and certainly ranks as one the best in the country. The program directors are Drs. T.S. Park and Matt Smyth. Following the yearlong fellowship he'll be looking for an academic job, hopefully someplace where his wife can join him for her residency. Next year, Aubriana will be in Seattle doing her 3rd year rotations around WWAMI land.

Peter Chiarelli worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory throughout college conducting nanophotonics research. He has investigated nanoscale surface dynamics—the ability to manipulate molecules, twist them, and direct them in specified ways—which has application in areas ranging from the chemistry of living cells to the construction of microelectronics. First published at age 19, he was a Rhodes Scholar in 2003 and earned a PhD in England. Peter will be a Fellow in Pediatric Neurosurgery next year in Seattle. He and his wife, Meagan, are expecting their second child.



John Nerva, who came to the west Coast from Minnesota, tells us things “aren’t too bad; could be worse.” But he’s a long way now from Dinky Town in Minneapolis. Currently in Sydney, Australia, Dr. Nerva is doing a cerebrovascular fellowship with Macquarie Neurosurgery. He doesn’t report on how much time he’s had to travel, but we are sure he’s been to Melbourne and the Great Barrier Reef. He will return to HMC to finish his last 6 months on January 9th. In July, he will begin an endovascular fellowship at the University of Florida. John reports that he remains single. The editor doubts that will last much longer.

Believe it or not, **Rob Oxford** was once a young man when he entered residency a decade ago. Many faculty members have tried to remind him that he’s “not that old,” but as Indiana Jones said, “It’s not the years. It’s the mileage.” In addition to the expected wear and tear of two residencies, those miles include helping his incredible wife Molly raise their two children Winn and Harriotte. He is looking forward to practicing on the east coast, which will allow him to routinely dump his children on grandparents while he and his wife contemplate the foreign concept of leisure time.



George and Linda Ojemann Celebrate 50 Years of Marriage

By George Ojemann



We first met when both of us interviewed for our respective faculty jobs on the same day. Linda applied for a position with Dr. Gian Chatrian in EEG with appointments in neurology and neurosurgery, me for a job with Art Ward in neurosurgery. Linda had just finished her training in neurology and EEG in Boston, and I my two years at NIH. It turned out that we had many acquaintances who knew both of us before we knew each other. We were married a little over a year later on May 20, 1967.

Those were the days of strictly enforced nepotism rules for the UW faculty so we had to have a special dispensation to keep our respective jobs after our marriage. Most young couples then were married in their early to mid-twenties, but we were ahead of our time by being in our early thirties, like now. Of course, this meant that we were occasionally the oldest parents in the PTA. Also, we were ahead of our time by maintaining a two-career family. We still live in the same house in which we honeymooned, though it has undergone many major revisions, but then so probably have the two of us.

The pair of Dr. Ojemanns produced enormous benefits to the Department, the School of Medicine, the community, and to medicine in the United States. They also produced two neurosurgeon sons and an Emergency Medicine physician daughter. They have both also deeply influenced every neurological surgery resident since 1960.

The entire Department offers sincere congratulations to George, Linda, and the Ojemann family.



Jana Pettit, MBA: Director of Administration and Finance

When **Jana Pettit** moved from Business Planning in the Dean's Office to Neurological Surgery, first as interim director and then permanently in 2010, things got a lot better for the neurosurgeons. She is a remarkably able person, has taken on progressively more and more responsibility over the past few years, and has been successful at all of it.

After earning her BA from UCSD in Urban Studies and planning with minors in music and biology(!), Jana collected an MBA from UC Irvine with emphasis on healthcare management. Following the birth of her two sons, Cole and Finn, she and her husband moved to Washington State. From 2004-2007 she was the Executive Director of the Wonderland Development Center, a 501 (c) 3 dedicated to serving young children from birth through 6 years old with developmental delay and disability. According to staff at Wonderland, Jana completely reorganized, restructured, and saved them. She has worked similar magic for the Department of Neurological Surgery where she has financial responsibility for a 22 million dollar a year enterprise employing 75 people in several settings.

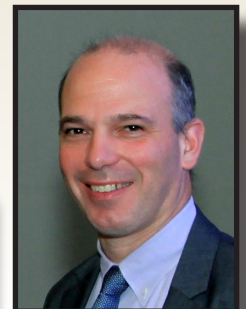
Over the past 6 years, Jana has led the reorganization of the department, increased efficiencies, reduced over-head, and improved satisfaction. At the same time, she has built our financial security and viability to conduct our mission to enviable levels in the SOM. She has led efforts to build working relationships between hospitals, departments, practice plans, and the School of Medicine. These are not simple or easy waters to navigate, but Jana has done just that with savvy, firm but always polite and productive leadership, as well as a keen understanding of both people and systems.

But that's not all. Not satisfied with one fulltime, complex job, she has now been named the Director of three UW Medicine entities. She is the Director of Finance and Administration for the Department of Neurology and for the UW Medicine Neuroscience Institute. Jana Pettit is an enormous asset to all of the departments she now serves, and she has done that while at the same time accumulating a devoted following of happy neurological surgeons, neurologists, research faculty, residents, and staff. Her accomplishments are not only finely reasoned and perfectly implemented, but perhaps more remarkably, they are implemented in a way that is always clear, fair, honest and dedicated to improve the management of the neuroscience team at the University of Washington. We are all very fortunate to have her as our Administrative Director, and indebted to her for her constructive, talented, and always ethical management. - Jana is a star.

Research

Chief Resident **Kelly Collins**, Professor **Jeffrey Ojemann**, et al have published the findings of their "rubber hand" experiments in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. They have shown that "ownership of an artificial hand can be induced via electrical stimulation of the hand somatosensory cortex in synchrony with touches applied to a prosthetic hand in full view. These findings suggest that the human brain can integrate "natural" visual input and direct cortical-somatosensory stimulation to create the multisensory perception that an artificial limb belongs to one's own body."

<http://m.pnas.org/content/early/2016/12/13/1616305114>



The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Western Neurosurgical Society

To be held at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel September 8-11, 2017
Those interested in attending may contact:

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Charlie Nussbaum from Seattle is the new President of the Western.
He hopes to continue the Society's successes.

Charlie has been an important part of the multi-specialty group practice at Virginia Mason for years, and he likes the VM efficiency and the wide range of patients. In addition to his being long-time Chief of Neurological Surgery at VM, he also created spine care cost bundling for a number of the employers that contract with Virginia Mason.

In 1987 while still a resident, Charlie and Debbie met the Western Neurosurgical Society as newlyweds when they ended a week-long Canadian back packing trip in Banff. Things will be a bit different 30 years later as they will preside at our 63rd annual meeting.

During his year as President, Dr. Nussbaum would like to implement the following:

1. A smoother application process.
2. A more user friendly website
3. Greater meeting participation and communication with spouses.
4. Increased involvement of younger surgeons and Canadian colleagues.
5. Consideration of alternate ways to invest reserves to ensure the WNS long-term stability.

There is a resident award for a paper given at the meeting in both clinical and basic science. The award covers transportation, hotel and meeting registration. Abstract submission will start in the spring. Andrew Little is the program chair this year. We would love to get some more UW faculty as members as well. Anyone who is interested can contact Dr. Nussbaum directly.



Dr. Minku Chowdhary

Director, Neurosurgery
Overlake Hospital

Puzzler



Previous Puzzler

Question: This proposed inspiration for Indiana Jones, discovered a city that reportedly is the site of the oldest known product of this type, better known to us today as a product popularized by a partnership between a Bavarian and a Latvian immigrant. What is the old product?

Answer: Junius Bird (proposed inspiration for Indiana Jones) discovered Huaca Prieta, which recently was shown to have the oldest Indigo dyed fabric in the world (~6000 years old). Indigo dye has been popularized in “blue jeans,” patented by Levi Strauss (Bavarian) and Jacob W. Davis (Latvian).

We remain eager to publish stories and photos about all aspects and activities of the Department. Please share your memories, ideas and suggestions for stories and news items that expand our common ground. Please contact us at these email addresses:

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