

Promoting Pullman!

The Pullmanic

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Crossing Guards outside of Jefferson Elementary School, Military Hill. Photograph taken Spring 2019 by Anonymous Contributor.

Boom Headshot! Photography

Meet Eric of Boom Headshot! Photography: Pullman Resident, Navy Veteran, Web Developer, Softball and Volleyball Champion, and Your Local Hometown Photographer Specializing in Boudoir

A *Pullman Business Profile* Interview by Andreas Gross

Photographs provided for use in this article by ***Boom Headshot! Photography***

Today's Date: October 26, 2020

Eric! Thank you for giving us this wonderful opportunity to get to know you better today through this *Pullman Business Profile* interview for the 3rd Edition of *The Pullmanic – Promoting Pullman!*, the semi-annual newsletter associated with *The City of Pullman Portal* website (www.cityofpullmanportal.com). This interview is also published on the website *Biz Opp Empire – promoting ideas, inspiration, and opportunity within the realm of small business, freelance, and entrepreneurship!* (www.bizoppempire.com). The newsletter and both websites were founded by and are still currently owned and operated by *Andreas Philip Gross Enterprises* (www.apg-enterprises.com) as of the time of this publication.

Military Veteran *Eric* of Pullman, Washington, USA-based
Boom Headshot! Photography, Sole Proprietorship



It's small hometown businesses like yours that truly bring Pullman to life and make it sparkle and glow. Let's go ahead and fire this interview up, shall we, Eric? Ladies and gentlemen, introducing Eric of *Boom Headshot! Photography*, a photography outfit right here in Pullman, Washington! Eric, let's start off with a little about you – you know, your life and background, that kind of stuff. Tell us about who you are and where you're coming from, please.

Hi Andreas! Thanks for getting in touch with me. I'm happy to be doing this interview today. Let's see...a bit about my background: I grew up in California, enlisted in the military, and served for six years. I was stationed in Hawaii and then San Diego. After my enlistment was over I stayed in California and worked in San Jose and San Francisco before ending up in Pullman. Since being here, I try my best to stay active in the community and to do my part to keep Pullman amazing. I've been here for over 11 years now and I love it! The community is very unique and I have no plans on leaving. A few years ago I even bought my first house, which to my surprise, turned out to have been John Elway's home when he lived in Pullman!

I'm very active in sports, growing up playing baseball and volleyball. Now I play volleyball and run Pullman's volleyball open gym for Parks and Rec which I also started. I also play softball in various city leagues and tournaments.



I've been a web developer since getting out of the military in 2006 and have worked on all types of sites – from sites for small businesses to large corporations – including *Via Family Chiropractic*, *Amy E's Bakery*, *Ferrari*, *San Disk*, *Denon*, *Okuma Fishing*, *Aroma*, *Sundance Theaters*, and I'm now currently the lead developer for a product line for *Intel*.

Wow! Quite the life you've lived so far, Eric! And, of course, coming to Pullman has only made it all that much better, right?!

Right!

So, your web development business aside, now you shoot for *Boom Headshot! Photography* - ha, ha! I love it – love the name! We can see on your website that the name is a reference to the old Internet meme of the early 2000s when people would get extremely excited about shooting people in

the head in computer games. Ha, ha, ha! And I'm laughing right now because I remember those days all too well myself. I remember many evenings in early Internet cafes packed with *Counterstrike* players hearing "Boom! Headshot!" echoing off the walls! "Boom!!! Headshot!" Now you've got me saying it again!

Ha, ha; yeah! That's exactly what the name of the business is a reference too. I'm glad you see the humor in it and appreciate it, too!

Boom Headshot! is a photography business based out of Pullman specializing in boudoir, graduations, engagements, portraits, and more. I target (pun intended ☺) the general population and have done shoots for just about every genre except newborns. I do a lot of graduation shoots for WSU, U of I, Pullman HS, and Moscow HS, along with a lot of engagements and portraits. The boudoir side of my photography is WSU Boudoir, and targets women and men of all ages and sizes 18+.

Good deal, Eric. And when exactly did you officially start *Boom Headshot!*?

Boom Headshot! officially started in August of 2018, but photography has always been in my blood. My dad was a sports photographer for the 49ers and my younger sister was a portrait photographer. She still does portraits, actually, and even weddings, but her main focus these days is operating her own tub and sink refurbishing business. I've always been around cameras and have owned a few over the years. In 2018 I bought another camera and decided that I would stop fighting the photography urge and go all in. I didn't start the business to necessarily fill a specific need or niche, however it has definitely done so over the last several years. I haven't been in business that long, but I have done over 400 shoots during that time so I like to think I have gained good experience and a great following.

Wow! The son of a professional 49ers photographer! Dang! It is in your blood! Well, your shots are certainly top-notch, Eric; and with over 400 shoots in just the last few years you certainly seem off to a good start here in Pullman with your photography. Would you mind telling us how *Boom Headshot!* is set up business-wise? This question is for our hardcore entrepreneur readers.

I'm currently set up as a sole proprietorship. For my needs it was the cheapest and easiest solution.

Good stuff! And why is *Boom Headshot! Photography* so cool? Com'on, don't be shy here!

There are several reasons I think *Boom Headshot!* outshoots the competition. Especially with photography, I don't believe people should pay more than I would pay or get less than I would expect. My shoot prices are very straight forward: I don't charge per photo (unless doing mini shoots), all photos come edited and non-watermarked, and – most importantly – my clients own the rights to the photos they paid for – I don't restrict them from downloading, sharing, selling, printing, or even editing. I also provide photoshoots that no one else in this area offers, namely silhouettes, water beads, and custom boudoir photoshoots. When it comes down to it, all of my shoots are fun, laid back, professional, and everyone has a great experience. If I'm not having fun, my clients aren't having fun, and if we aren't having fun and having a good experience, then it's not worth it to me!

Well I'm certainly sold! There you have it, Pullman! Looking for a professional photographer here on the Palouse that offers something unique in the area? Look no further than *Boom Headshot! Photography!*

Now, Eric, as I mentioned, we have some hardcore entrepreneurs who will be reading this interview. Can you give any kind of constructive advice specifically about setting up a business in Pullman, Washington, or small-town USA in general?

My biggest piece of advice would be to know your target audience, find something that makes you stand out against the competition, start small, and don't be afraid to think outside the box. Also, hiring me to do your website, SEO, and social is a great start 😊!



As a small business owner in Pullman, Washington, and as an individual, what kinds of people are you looking to network with?

I like networking with other small businesses especially for supporting, advice, recommendations/promoting, and bartering services. I also love giving deals to other small local business with my photography and web development services.

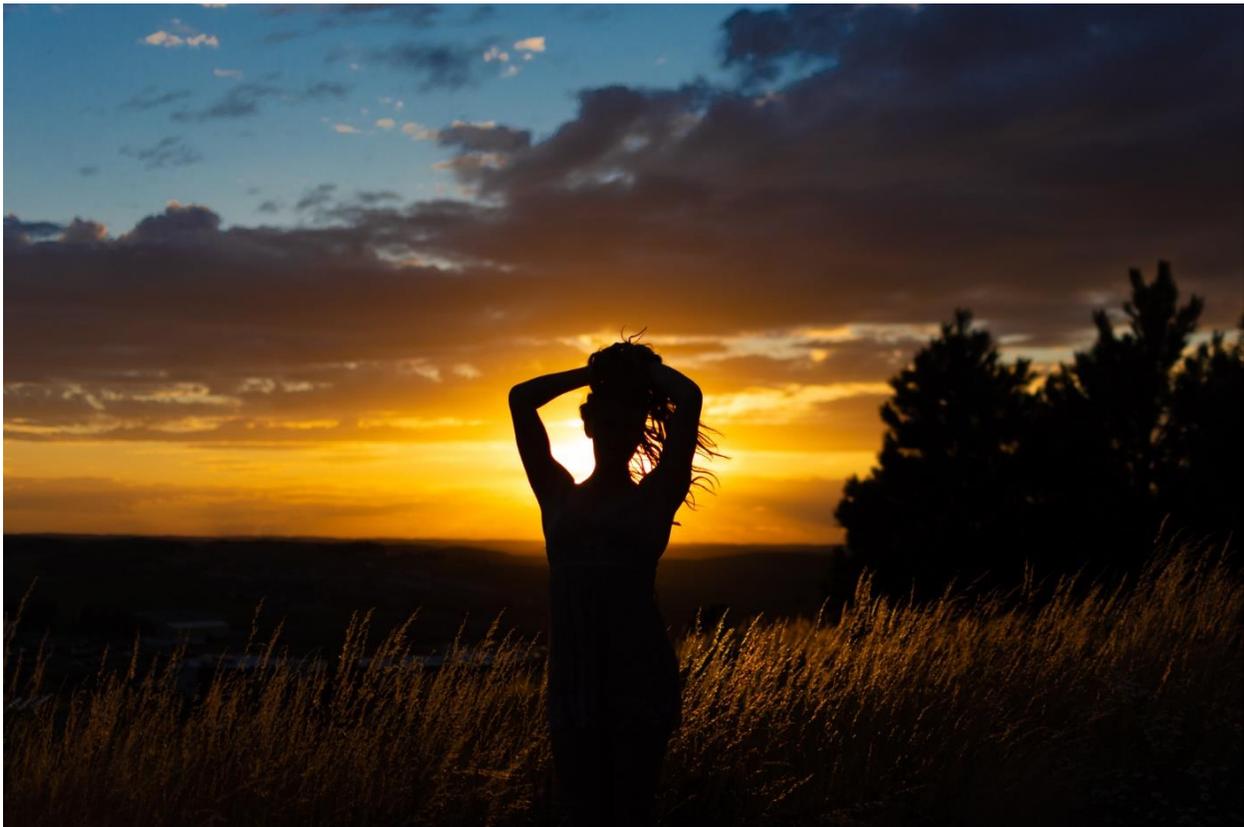
That's great, Eric! Like you said: doing your part to keep Pullman awesome!

Let's talk a little bit about the challenges, shall we? What aspects of running *Boom Headshot!* present the greatest challenges to you?

The biggest challenge for me has mainly been finding the time to edit photos and getting the images to the clients as fast as possible. It takes a lot of time, but thankfully my clients are very patient and understanding. I'm lucky to also be a web developer so I was able to do my own websites and SEO, which definitely helps put me in an advantage when it comes to being found online by new potential customers.

Good deal! And what about joy and rewards? You've already alluded to this a bit. What aspects of running *Boom Headshot!* give you the greatest personal rewards?

I love being able to provide photos and experiences to clients that they will remember for a long time. This is why I love doing boudoir the most, it's very personal and rewarding for my clients, more so than any other genre. I've had many clients cry from their photos because of how amazing and beautiful it made them feel when they didn't think it was possible. I've never had anyone cry from other genres, including engagements, kids, or weddings. So I suppose you can say that my greatest joy from taking photos is making people cry – tears of joy, of course!



Tears of joy, Eric; tears of joy! Along those same lines of happiness, rewards, and people crying tears of joy, how does running *Boom Headshot!* help you find your focus and channel your “Zen Space” in life?

Photography (and web development) are things that I love to do. I’m pretty sane in general and used to working long hours in front of a computer, so fortunately it’s not something I need to escape from. As a freelancer working on my own, I am lucky to be able to step away and take a break as often as I like or for as long as I like. I do feel that photography has helped me grow my confidence with my camera and also talking to people. I’m very introverted and shy in general, but after a few years of having to talk with clients and guide them into a lot of posing, I’m definitely a lot more confident now.

Would you be willing to share any words of wisdom or other advice for others looking to go down this same track or get into something photography related?

For anyone interested in getting into photography (or any service-based business), I recommend building your portfolio and experience by doing free work until you are able to get enough to start



charging. A lot of “photographers” in the area buy a nice camera and then start charging \$100 an hour but have no idea how to actually use the camera and their portfolio is awful. Start small and build your skills. Pullman is pretty unique with photography because Pullman and Moscow are both college towns, so you do you have a lot of graduation/senior photo opportunities, but you also have a lot of competition in that genre. Knowing your target audience and general population will be helpful to knowing what genres have the most competition and what opportunities there are. For example, Pullman has a lot of graduation photographers, but there are only a handful that are actually good. Knowing your skillset and what you offer versus the competition is a good way to gauge your pricing.

Boudoir in Pullman is tricky, there are a lot of potential clients since it’s a college town, but most don’t have money. In bigger cities like L.A. or S.F. or Seattle, you can charge \$1,000-\$5,000+ for a boudoir photoshoot and be booked for months (if you are good enough), but you can go months without a client if you

are charging the same prices in this area [Pullman]. Personally I would rather shoot more and get paid less because it helps build my portfolio and my experience.

Weddings are another example. In larger cities people can pay \$5,000-10,000 for a wedding shoot. Most people in Pullman I've talked to don't want to spend \$500 for a wedding photoshoot. So to summarize... know your audience, know your competition, and do something unique to set you apart.

Thank you very much Eric – that sounds like some solid advice right there. We're getting close to the end of our time together today, but before we sign off completely, let's talk a little bit about life in Pullman.

Do you have any noteworthy stories you'd care to share about living in Pullman?

The craziest thing – in a good way – about Pullman I like to tell people is how little crime there is here. Reading the police blotter is pretty hilarious, especially when you see things like the police getting dispatched to save a squirrel stuck in a peanut butter jar. Imagine someone calling the police for that in L.A.! They would probably hang up on you and send the police to charge you for wasting their time!

Ha, ha, yeah, probably! What are some of your favorite things about Pullman, Washington?

I've lived in several states and have been all over the country. I love living in Pullman because the community really supports each other and lives by the *Cougs Helping Cougs* mantra. The city is small, but not too small, and it really has everything you need. If you need to buy anything else, there is always Amazon, and Spokane is not too far away. There are also a lot of things to do in the area especially if you are open to getting outside in nature.



Very true, Eric; very true! Pullman is an outdoor recreation wonderland for those who choose to take advantage of it!

Well, now we are at the end of our time for today. Thank you very much for opening up to us, Eric. As we wrap things up here, how can people interested in learning more about your enterprises contact you?

Thank you very much for reaching out to me for this interview, Andreas. It's been a pleasure. I can be contacted through my website at <https://boomheadshot.pro> or Instagram @boomheadshot.pro. My web development website is <https://53mp.com>.

Ladies and gentlemen, Eric of Pullman, Washington, USA-based *Boom Headshot! Photography* – a proud Pullman resident, US Navy Veteran, web developer, softball and volleyball champion, and your local hometown photographer specializing in boudoir! Eric, the Pullman community is indeed very lucky to have you living here!



Diane Stone

Meet Dr. Diane Stone, DVM: Veterinary Professor and Pullman native who has been all over and now spends her time mostly in Pullman!

A Pullman Resident Interview by Andreas Gross
Photographs provided for use in this article by Dr. Diane Stone

Date of Interview: February 11, 2021

Hi Diane! How wonderful that you could make yourself available for this Pullman Resident Profile interview today for the 3rd Edition of *The Pullmanic – Promoting Pullman!*, the semi-annual newsletter associated with *The City of Pullman Portal* website (www.cityofpullmanportal.com), founded by and still currently owned and operated by *Andreas Philip Gross Enterprises* (www.apg-enterprises.com) as of the time of this publication.

Now, you and I know each, as our families have been long-time multi-generational family friends; and, in fact, your younger sister was my WSU advisor back in Undergraduate School...the point is, I know the depth and wealth of your story, but there might be some Pullmanites who don't – maybe. I know you know a lot of people in this town, and a lot of people know you!

Ha, ha, Andreas. Very funny.

But it's true!

Well, you do get to know quite a number of people in a town like Pullman when you've been connected to it your whole life.

Exactly – that's why I say: "It's true!" Tell us your backstory, will you please, Diane? You know, tell us about growing up on the Palouse, going to school, your interests and hobbies, your career; how you became a Professor of Veterinary Medicine at WSU's Veterinary College.

Certainly, Andreas. And thank you for contacting me to participate in this interview. My parents met at WSU in the 1930s. Both my older sister and younger sister were born in Colfax because Pullman did not have a hospital in the early 1940s. I was born in Boston only because my mother was residing at a US naval base waiting for my dad to return from being on a destroyer in the Atlantic during WWII. I attended kindergarten at the Pullman Grey Stone Church, grade school at the Edison School and Jr./Sr. high school at what is now called the Gladish Center. Life in Pullman at that time, I suspect, was a very good place to raise kids. Our parents did not lock house doors and kids just ran all over the town in relative safety.... Except we did run behind the DDT truck for fun as it fogged the town to kill mosquitos. In retrospect that was not good. Also, our drinking water did not contain fluoride because that was

considered by many to be a communist plot. Thus, those of us growing up in Pullman at that time all got our fair share of tooth cavities.

Between 1952-1962 my father was Dean at the College of Veterinary Medicine at WSU. In 1962 he accepted a 4 year WSU/USAID appointment in what was then called West Pakistan (now called simply 'Pakistan' due to 'East Pakistan' having become the independent country of Bangladesh). I spent a year and a half in West Pakistan and then attended the American University of Beirut for a year of college, followed by finishing my BS degree at WSU. After college I joined the Peace Corps and spent 2 years in Thailand. That experience fostered my interest in public health, and so I pursued a master in public health at UC Berkeley School of Public Health. After a few years working in human public health I wanted to combine a medical degree with my public health interest. But not just any medical degree. Due to my family background in veterinary medicine and my interest in animals, I explored the option of veterinary public health. I didn't even know if there was such a thing. There is! But back in the 1970s there was little interest in it. Now, of course, with COVID-19 and other viruses transmitted from animals to humans, we are all aware of at least these links between animals and human health. There are many other links as well. Now, Veterinary Public Health is a major focus (all those aspects of animal health that impact human health) and an excellent career path for veterinarians.

I have loved my career in academic veterinary medicine. I attended veterinary school at UC Davis and later did my post DVM training at WSU. I was on the faculty at WSU for about 15 years and then accepted a position at the School of Veterinary Medicine at St. George's University (SGU) in Grenada, West Indies, where I spent the next 15 years. I retired from SGU in July 2020, but still function as a visiting professor at SGU doing online instruction. That's not nearly as much fun as face-to-face instruction...or as spending the winter months in the Caribbean!

See, Diane, you are living proof of the “internationality” of our Pullman community. This little collegiate oasis here on the Palouse has people from all over, and people who have been all over! But you always keep coming back to Pullman! Could you tell us some more about your time with the College of Veterinary Medicine here in Pullman?

Sure! As I mentioned, I was on the faculty at WSU's College of Veterinary Medicine for about 15 years. I taught the required class in Veterinary Public Health and did research on Bovine Leukemia Virus and the bacterium *Rhodococcus equi*. I learned a lot from both my students and fellow faculty members and very much appreciated the excellent foundation I acquired in teaching and research. I felt prepared to take my skills to another vet school outside the US where I faced a steep learning curve within a new system. Again, I learned a lot from my students and new colleagues and got to enjoy the culture and climate of Grenada, a place I do miss. One of my research focuses in Grenada was on bats and whether or not they became infected with the mosquito-transmitted Dengue, Zika, and Chikungunya viruses circulating in Grenada at the time. We found evidence of exposure and infection of bats with all 3 of these important human pathogens. Grenada has over 13 different species of bats, including not only insectivorous bats, but also fruit bats, nectar bats, and even fish-eating bats. Truly amazing animals!

Very cool stuff, Diane. Ah, yes! And I hear you loud and clear on that one! As I think you may know about me, bats have been an all-time favorite member of the animal kingdom of mine since childhood.

What can you tell us about Pullman – the town, the place?

I spent all my early years in Pullman and the fact that I returned to Pullman for part of my career and now for my retirement speaks to the strength of those early connections, both to the place and the people. I'm a little tired of winter right now, but the summers and fall are so nice in Pullman. I love the small town/big university aspects of this place. It provides so much. And I still have friends that date back to pre-kindergarten times. During the pandemic, a few of us have been meeting for 7 AM outdoor coffee at the new *Cups and Pups* location on Main Street, even when it is well below freezing. Builds character, I've been told.

Ha, ha! I was just going to ask if you'd care to share any favorite places around town or any notable stories, and there's one right there! Do you have any other "Pullman Stories" on your mind?

An event that I always look forward to is my Pullman High School reunion. Although I'm sure I did many good and memorable things while in high school, the only thing I seem to be remembered for is the August night (midnight, 1961) I got arrested for dragging Main Street with a classmate of mine. I was in my dad's V8 Buick, so I would have won if that *one cop* had not been on a side street. Back then Pullman in August was totally dead and Main Street was a two-way street. However, I guess at least one cop *had* to be on duty that night just in case something happened, ha, ha!

I use to love going to Moro Café, but then it closed recently. Now, as I've mentioned, I've started going to *Cups and Pups* even though I don't have a dog. I love walking on the WSU campus and in the WSU and U of I arboretums... and I love the view from the golf course. No, I don't golf.

Great stuff, Diane! Thank you so much for participating in this interview today. As we wrap things up, how can people interested in learning more about you contact you?

Email is best: dstone@wsu.edu.

Thanks again, Diane! Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Diane Stone: Veterinary Professor and Pullman native who has been all over and now spends her time mostly in Pullman! Here are some pictures (see next page) to cap off Diane's story....

Grenada



←

Dr. Diane Stone and her secretary Cindy Edwards. “We called her ‘Dean Cindy,’” Diane recalls, “because she really knew how to get things done at the University!”

←

Here are some shots of the bat research team in action that Dr. Stone was involved with in Grenada. →

↓



Training Caribbean nationals on
↓ rabies diagnostics. ↓



Beautiful Caribbean views from Dr. Stone's apartment in Grenada...



Music is important in Grenada.....and the chocolate rum is "AMAZ-IN"



Pullman

**Dr. Stone's COVID Lockdown "Emotional Support" kitten:
Adopted at 2 pounds in June of 2020...was 9 pounds by December.**



←
Early morning coffee
when **Cups and Pups**
opened their new
location. Only outside
seating was allowed at
that time.
←

Stargazing on the Palouse

A Look at WSU's Jewett Observatory

(Among Other Things)

Story by: Andreas Gross

Photography by: Anonymous Contributor



Washington State University's *James Richard Jewett Observatory*

Photograph taken January 2021 by Anonymous Contributor

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Nestled on the outskirts of the Washington State University (WSU) campus lies the *James Richard Jewett Observatory*. Other than the fact that this lone outlier building¹ on the University campus makes for beautiful Palouse pictures, some would give it a passing glance and think nothing more of it than: 'Oh, that's the University's observatory, just like many universities around the world have.' Of course, as we know with most old original Pullman structures², there is more to it than that! The WSU Jewett Observatory definitely has an interesting back story of its own to tell.

Let's start our story today with James Jewett: who was he and why is the WSU Observatory named after him, as he wasn't a professor of astronomy, and he didn't even make his career at WSU!? He was actually a Professor of Arabic and Ancient Languages at Harvard, but described as a "friend of astronomy for many years" as it is quoted in the Guy Worthy piece on the Jewett Observatory web page, a key text covering the Observatory's history (see "End Notes and Further Reading" below)³. James Jewett's son, George F. Jewett Sr., lived in Spokane. It was donations from George and his wife in the late 1940s and early 50s that made the WSU Observatory project possible in the end of the day.

Let's step back in time a few more years to get a better picture of what drove the University to build the Jewett Observatory – the current operational observatory at the University – in the first place. In 1929, Washington State College's Professor Harry H. Irwin built a telescope with a 12-inch mirror that was placed on the roof of what is now Carpenter Hall. This telescope was used for many years up until World War II, when it fell into disrepair. Several years after the war, in the Spring of 1948, three Department of Architecture and Engineering students – Walter N. Brown, Thomas Grenfell, and Chester Lindsey – made designs and models for a joint observatory-planetarium super-complex. By December of the same year, Sidney G. Hacker of the Mathematics Department⁴, in want of a functional professional-grade telescope on campus, officially made a formal proposal of the idea to WSC President Wilson Compton. A combined observatory-planetarium complex at WSC never became a reality, however, due to lack of funding; but, as the story goes on to imply, the 'bug was put in Compton's ear,' if you will, and he *did* put out active feelers for the funding of a proper observatory at Washington State College⁵.

Now enter the Jewetts into our story: George F. Jewett Sr. had plenty of money, but no direct connection to Washington State College, other than a friendship with President Compton. George was the former president of Potlatch Lumber Company. Compton put out an initial funding appeal to George Jewett and his wife that apparently fell on deaf ears; however, a contact of Professor Hacker's, a certain Leon Campbell of Harvard, entered the scene and made it known that a 12-inch achromatic lens was available for the project – and not just any 12-inch lens: an achromatic refractory lens made by the famed and acclaimed Alvan Clark & Sons optical company⁶ back when it was the leading telescope manufacturer in the United States, possibly even the world. The lens had apparently been made for an amateur astronomer who died just after it had successfully passed essential optical testing in 1889. The lens spent its years since rotting away in the vault of a bank in Boston. In the late 1940s, ownership of the lens changed hands, and the new owners were looking to sell it at a price of \$2,400.00, which was considered a rock-bottom deal for such a lens even at the time! As you can probably guess by now: yes, this is the lens that still resides in the telescope at WSU's Jewett Observatory to this day*.

Now, here is where George Jewett's father's love of astronomy paid off! As alluded to earlier, Harvard Professor James Richard Jewett had been a keen amateur astronomer during his lifetime, and, as it turns out, had been a long-time friend of Leon Campbell! George Jewett remembered these facts dearly of his father and decided to donate \$24,000 towards the WSU Observatory Project as the result!

Securing funding for the project was only the first hurdle, as the parties involved would soon find out. By the middle of the 20th Century, The Alvan Clark & Sons Company was no longer a thriving institution. The limited budget for the project seemed to mean that the telescope would be a rooftop job, which no one was too keen on – it would look tacky, you know! No company seemed to show interest in a steel-and-aluminum structure, which made getting a bid on the dome difficult. Funding came dangerously close to running out. And, to cap it all off, Leon Campbell, the project's principal liaison with The Alvan Clark Company, and President Compton, both left the scene in 1951 – Campbell as the result of his own sudden death and Compton through his abrupt resignation from the Office of WSC President!

Washington State University's *James Richard Jewett Observatory*

Photograph taken January 2021 by Anonymous Contributor

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Thankfully, a retired Alvan Clark Company technician was located who knew how to find the necessary parts in the clutter of old machinery strewn about the company workshop to complete the mount for the lens. The campus was scoured for a suitable location where a true observatory dome could be constructed but costs could still be kept down (in a concerted effort to take the dreaded idea of rooftop installation on an existing building off the table). Eventually, a no-frills stand-alone structure was chosen on the perimeter of campus to house the telescope – the present site. Timber Structures, Incorporated, of Portland, Oregon, finally took interest in – and took on – the dome project, viewing it as a “challenging research project,” as it is quoted in the Guy Worthy article, offering to build it out of a wooden framework sheathed by molded plywood at a very modest cost. George Jewett increased his funding to a gift of \$35,000.00 when it was realized that the original \$24,000.00 would be insufficient. Walter Locke, Harvard Observatory’s head instrument maker, stepped in to fill Campbell’s shoes with his passing, and the telescope was completed in early 1952. It arrived to a finished observatory building in Pullman in June of 1952. As an interesting bit of trivia and happenstance, it is further noted in the Worthy piece that famous American Cosmologist Professor H.P. Robertson was in Pullman, Washington, on a personal visit during the Summer of 1952 and observed the installation of the telescope into the recently finished observatory dome as one of a number of curious onlookers that day in June.

The official dedication ceremony of the Jewett Observatory was held in Todd Hall Auditorium on May 14, 1953, with Mr. and Mrs. Jewett and President French in attendance. Since then, the famous Alvan Clark & Sons 12-inch refractor of the Jewett Observatory has served – and continues to serve – its mission well as an important component of the Washington State College (now University) Astronomy Program as well as acting as a gateway to the heavens for the local amateur stargazing community.

It wasn’t until August of 2003 – the 50-year anniversary of its official dedication – that the University Observatory was *really* put ‘on the map and in the limelight!’ The Mars Close Approach to Earth Event of August 27, 2003, was one of – if not *the* – biggest event in the observatory’s history; and definitely the biggest event by numbers in the observatory’s life in the 21st Century life up until that point so far. During the end of August 2003, Mars swept closer to Earth in its orbit than usual, making it brighter than any star in the night sky and large in angular size so that telescopes could get a better view of more surface features than usual at that point in time. Jewett Observatory committed to opening every night Monday through Saturday the last full week of August 2003, with Wednesday, August 27th (“*the day*”), falling within this window. This week also corresponded to the first week of Fall 2003 classes at WSU.

Various news agencies played upon the fact that, according to numerical orbit computations, Mars had not been this close to Earth in 59,540 years! Of course, this brought widespread exposure and “hype” to the close approach event. Jewett Observatory, now under the leadership of the WSU Department of Physics and Astronomy, advertised as it usually would for any major celestial event that the Observatory would be open for, distributing letter-sized posters to all campus buildings. Under “normal” conditions, open-night star gazing events at Jewett had usually brought in between 10 to 50 people prior to this event.

A misprint in a front-page *Spokesman-Review* article on Saturday, August 23rd, erroneously stated that Jewett’s first open-night that week would be the night of Sunday the 24th, causing some to show up to a closed observatory Sunday night. Monday night was clear and a crowd of about 300 people turned up. The crew at Jewett sent out a “help” message to *The Palouse Astronomical Society*, the 1-year-old local amateur astronomy club, asking them to please ‘send in the reinforcements!’ – i.e. to bring some portable auxiliary telescopes and manpower! Tuesday drew only about 75 people, as the sky was cloudy and Mars was initially invisible after dark; although conditions did improve as the night wore on.

WSU’s student newspaper, *The Daily Evergreen*, ran an article on Wednesday morning – “the day” – with a big picture of Mars along with information about the Observatory. Wednesday night saw an estimated 1,000 show up to Jewett, with lines stretching about 800 feet from the Observatory, down the hill, through the Observatory parking lot, and on down Observatory Drive. The campus police showed up, eventually blocking Observatory Drive altogether and directing cars to park in more distant lots. The Observatory crew estimated that about 800 people got to look through the eye piece of ‘the big gun’ (the famous 12-incher) that night. Jewett stayed opened from the night of Wednesday the 27th until 3:00 in the morning of Thursday the 28th.

As a Sophomore myself at WSU at the time just coming back to school after Summer Break, I remember going out to the Observatory with my Dad, Aunt, and Uncle and standing in that long line that would eventually snake down Observatory Drive. Thankfully, we showed up early enough so the line that had formed was only down the hill into the Observatory parking lot by the time we got there. By the time we left, however, the line was starting to stretch down the street. I was one of those 800 people that Wednesday night who got to look through the Alvan Clark lens of the big telescope. I still have clear and beautiful memories of seeing the polar ice caps of *The Red Planet* that August night – beautiful images that are forever etched in my mind’s eye.

In addition to putting Jewett Observatory ‘on the maps,’ the Mars Close Approach Event of August 2003 pushed the *Palouse Astronomical Society* on to center stage as well. While there have been amateur astronomers who have enjoyed the ‘big sky’ that the Palouse country has to offer for decades and decades – probably centuries, actually – as both individuals and groups, the *Palouse Astronomical Society* – *THE* amateur astronomy society on the Palouse – was only formally established as an official astronomy club in 2002. Only a year old, the *Palouse Astronomical Society* played a big role as co-host of the 2003 Mars Close Approach Event at Jewett. Both before and after that, the society has hosted – and continues to regularly host – star party events at Jewett as well as other locations around the Palouse. Membership fees are currently posted on their website as \$25.00 a year. You can visit the society’s website through the link in the “End Notes and Further Reading” section below for more information about membership and events. Please note that COVID restrictions have affected the society’s in-person events and gatherings as of recently⁷.



*Spokane Street Entrance to
Washington State University's Sloan Hall*
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To cap off our story, WSU never got its observatory-planetarium super-complex, but 9 years after the official opening of the Jewett Observatory, in March of 1962, a 24-foot diameter plastic-laminated glass-fiber dome was installed in Sloan Hall and the dream of a *WSU Planetarium* – albeit, a separate structure from the Observatory altogether – was finally born!



Washington State University's Sloan Hall
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The Planetarium now features a digital fulldome projection system which came about as the result of tweaks, updates, and upgrades to the original 1962 system which happened in 1968, 2014, and most recently in the Summer of 2016 with an upgrade to 4k resolution.

The Planetarium is used for WSU astronomy classes, school groups, and other group events, as well as open-to-the-general-public fee shows. Most shows cost between \$5-10. You can

check out the exact prices on the Planetarium’s web page linked to in the “End Notes and Further Reading” section below. Free hour long “sky tours” can be arranged with advanced notice for groups of 12 or more through Dr. Guy Worthey (gworthey@wsu.edu)*. Please note that COVID restrictions have affected recent shows and tours⁸.

I have only ever been to one event in the WSU Planetarium with my daughter’s Girl Scout troop, and that was after the 2016 4k resolution upgrade. While not a gigantic mind-blowing set-up like the world’s largest planetariums, the WSU Planetarium is a neat, clean, professional planetarium that holds its own; is fully worthy of fame; and is worth visiting for sure! The sound and projection quality definitely do hold up to WSU world-class standards.

The rolling hills of the Palouse grassland and the low levels of extraneous light pollution on the outskirts and outside of towns make the Palouse an ideal setting for star gazing. You have a professional-grade planetarium for rainy nights and indoor events, miles upon miles of open sky, a university Astronomy Department⁹, a local amateur astronomy club, and a professional 12-inch lens refractor telescope at your service with an interesting history behind it to boot, all at your fingertips. Whether you are a professional astronomer studying the heavens for your next groundbreaking research paper, or an amateur with a backpack telescope, you are in the right place on the Palouse for looking up at the night sky!

End Notes and Further Reading:

**This information was true and accurate at the time this article was published based on information retrieved by the author of this piece from publicly available sources during the first week of March 2021.*

¹ Just to be clear, the *James Richard Jewett Observatory* is one of a number of University outlier buildings scattered around the periphery of the Washington State University campus and across the hills of the Palouse. The Observatory is certainly not *the* one and only outlier building situated away from the central area of campus.

²In the grand scheme of things, WSU’s Jewett Observatory – officially dedicated in May of 1953 – is really one of the newer ‘old original Pullman buildings,’ with the oldest of the ‘old Pullman buildings’ having pre-1900 origins.

³*Jewett Observatory History*, an article by Guy Worthey, with copious reference to *Origins of the J. R. Jewett Observatory and of the WSU Planetarium* by Sidney G. Hacker, 1980, Mathematics Notes, Vol 23, No. 23. Retrieved from: *Jewett Observatory History* page of *WSU’s Department of Physics and Astronomy* departmental pages on the *Washington State University* website: https://physics.wsu.edu/about/observatory/observatory_history/. Date last visited: March 3, 2021.

For more on the James Richard Jewett Observatory at Washington State University, see also:

Jewett Observatory page of *WSU’s Department of Physics and Astronomy* departmental pages on the *Washington State University* website. Retrieved from: <https://physics.wsu.edu/about/observatory/>. Date last visited: October 26, 2020. This is the main *Jewett Observatory* page. “Star Party” Dates are listed here.

Jewett Observatory – Mars Close Approach 2003, Huge Crowds Swamp Jewett Observatory; Mars Event page of *WSU’s Department of Physics and Astronomy* departmental pages on the *Washington State University* website. <https://physics.wsu.edu/about/observatory/mars-watching/>. Date last visited: October 26, 2020.

⁴At that point in time, WSU Astronomy was organized under the *Department of Mathematics*. Today WSU Astronomy falls under the *Department of Physics and Astronomy*.

⁵As described in the Guy Worthy article posted on the Jewett Observatory web page and cited here in these end notes above, the sequence of events in the third paragraph describes Hacker’s proposal to President Compton as happening in December of 1948, and then the very next sentence goes on to talk about Department of Architecture and Engineering students designing models of such structures in the Spring of 1948. This, however, does not make sense sequentially, as December of 1948 would have been followed by the Spring of 1949. Hence, either 1) the Architecture and Engineering students made the designs of a joint observatory-planetarium structure *first* (in the Spring of 1948) and *then* Hacker formally proposed the idea to the College President later that same year in December, *or* 2) Hacker proposed the idea to the President in December of 1948 and *then* the Architecture and Engineering students made designs for the structure in the Spring of 1949. If this second scenario (i.e. #2) is true, then that would mean that the date of Spring 1948 is wrong in the Worthy article. For the purposes of this article here in *The Pullmanic*, **I have assumed** that the dates in the Worthy article are correct, just presented sequentially out of order. With this assumption in mind, I have rearranged them here in this *Pullmanic* article to read that the Department of Architecture and Engineering students **first** made designs for a joint observatory-planetarium structure in the Spring of 1948, and **then** Hacker proposed the idea to the College President in December of that same year.

Either way, whether or not the sequence of events happened from the Spring of 1948 through to December of 1948, or from December of 1948 through to the Spring of 1949, the fact of the matter remains that this proposed astronomy super-structure never received the necessary funding to get it off the ground.

⁶The Alvan Clark & Sons Company was a US-based world-renown telescope optical company of the later part of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century. The company’s big claim to world-wide fame to this day is that they were the makers of the famous 40-inch refractor lenses inside the *Yerkes Observatory* refractor telescope in Williams Bay, Wisconsin – still the largest lens-based refractor telescope in the world today. For further reading on the Alvan Clark & Sons optical company, see:

1) ALVAN CLARK (1804-1887), GEORGE BASSETT CLARK (1827-1891) AND ALVAN GRAHAM CLARK (1832-1897), AMERICAN MAKERS OF TELESCOPE OPTICS, by Pedro Ré. Retrieved from: http://www.astrosurf.com/re/alvan_clark.pdf?iframe=true&width=80%&height=80%. Date last visited: February 23, 2021.

2) *The Legacy of Yerkes Observatory* page on *The Yerkes Observatory* website. Retrieved from: <https://www.yerkesobservatory.org/our-legacy/>. Date last visited: February 23, 2021

⁷*Palouse Astronomical Society* homepage: <http://www.palouseastro.org/>. Date last visited: February 27, 2021. Or you can go straight to their *Events* page here: <http://www.palouseastro.org/events.html>. Date last visited: October 26, 2020. The *Palouse Astronomical Society* co-sponsors many of the open-to-the-general-public “Star Party” events held at *WSU’s Jewett Observatory*, as well as hosts their own star gazing and other astronomy-related events. Please be mindful that the pandemic has had an effect on in-person meetings. Please visit their official website yourself for the most up-to-date information.

⁸*WSU Planetarium* page of *WSU’s Department of Physics and Astronomy* departmental pages on the Washington State University website. Retrieved from: <https://physics.wsu.edu/about/planetarium/>. Date last visited: October 26, 2020. This is the main *WSU Planetarium* web page. Events open-to-the-general-public are listed here. Most events cost between US\$ 5-10. Specific prices for currently scheduled shows are listed on the page. Please note that the pandemic has had an effect on scheduled shows. Please visit their official website yourself for the most up-to-date information.

⁹Two university Astronomy Departments, to be fair. The University of Idaho (U of I) in Moscow, Idaho, also has its own Astronomy Department (which is also technically organized under the U of I’s *Department of Physics*). The U of I has its own observatory as well, located by the University Golf Course accessible from the Old Pullman-Moscow Road.



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The Pullmanic Promoting Pullman!

Spring/Summer 2021, 3rd Edition



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The Pullmanic

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This is a one-man-show and I've been trying my best! Did I fumble? Yikes! I am only human! Yes, you did read that right! If you can believe it, yes, the year is 2021 and there is actually a real human being behind this newsletter! Did you notice an error or something that needs double-checking? It is not my intent to spread inaccurate information, misinform, or break the law in any way. If you see something that needs deleting, modifying, tweaking, changing, or otherwise looking into for any reason, please let me know so I can make the necessary changes right away.

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