



WWURA NEWS



February 2010

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Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

Message from WWURA President

Wow, I can't believe it is February already. We have had such a warm winter that I wonder what spring will bring. It's amazing that the cherry trees are blooming already.

The board established a Nominations Committee at our meeting Feb. 2. Larry Richardson is chairman and committee members are Janet Berg and Margaret Loudon. If you would like to join us on the board or have questions about what we do, contact one of the committee members or sign up at the luncheon Friday. Please consider stepping up and joining the board. It doesn't take a lot of time and your input is invaluable to keep WWURA growing and vibrant. Variety is the spice that keeps our association active and forward thinking and we need faculty, staff, and administrator input to keep our association interesting to all WWU retirees.

IT'S PARTY TIME!

See the article inside featuring our next event, the **Cabin Fever Party, February 17th**. I apologize for the short sign up time to attend the dinner but hope we will have many participants. We have done our best to have a variety of items on the menu and still keep the cost reasonable. The Bellwether is a lovely location and even though we had a mild winter it will still be nice to get out and about and enjoy the friendship and camaraderie we share at such events. I look forward to seeing many of you there. **Please call Janet Berg ASAP with your reservation. (Reservation form and details on Page 5)**

- Margaret Loudon

WWURA INTEREST GROUPS

WWURA'S interest groups are open to all. If you would like to become part of a group, call the contact person. If you have an idea for another interest group call Barb Evans, 650-9724.

February's interest group meetings are listed below:

BOOK GROUP - Donna Rochon, 647-2301

Meet at Evelyn Mason's, 914 17th St. 2:30, Feb. 16

February's book is The Space Between Us by Thrity Umrigar

March's book is The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

OPERA GROUP - Evelyn Ames, 734-3184

The Metropolitan Opera's Live in HD broadcast is shown at the Lincoln Theatre in Mount Vernon at 10:00 am. Call Evelyn if you need a ride or can drive.

Feb. 6, *Simon Boccanegra* by Verdi

Mar. 27, *Hamlet*

BRIDGE GROUP - Barb Evans, 650-9724

The bridge group meeting is Feb. 23 at 1:30 at Mary Jo Lewis's, 209 S. Garden Terrace

BIKING - will resume in the spring.

DOWNHILL SKIING - Charlie Way, 734-0649

Call Charlie if you are interested.

INFORMAL DINING - We will start meeting in March. Call Barb Evans, 650-9724 if you would like to be added to the list.

HEALTH NOTES by Evelyn Ames GOT AN ACHE IN THE BACK!

Back pain is common in our society. In a 3-month period, about one-fourth of U.S. adults experience at least one day of back pain. The pain can be a dull, constant ache that “nags” one throughout most of the day. Or, it can be a sudden sharp pain that makes you hurt to move. The pain can start quickly due to, for example, falling or if lifting something heavy in a biomechanically inefficient manner. The pain may come and go but often it lingers and just gets worse.

What Are the Risk Factors for Back Pain? According to the National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Back_Pain/default.asp), anyone can have back pain but a number of factors increase the risk.

Age: The first attack of low back pain typically occurs between the ages of 30 and 40. Back pain does become more common with age.

Fitness level: Back pain is more common among people who are not physically fit. Weak back and abdominal muscles may not properly support the spine. “Weekend warriors”—people who go out and exercise a lot after being inactive all week—are more likely to suffer painful back injuries than people who make moderate physical activity a daily habit. Studies show that low-impact aerobic exercise is good for the disks that cushion the vertebrae.

Mechanical problems: Involves moving in ways that stress the spine (e.g., carrying heavy load on one shoulder such as a purse or backpack, or golf clubs). “Perhaps the most common mechanical cause of back pain is a condition called intervertebral disk degeneration, which simply means that the disks located between the vertebrae of the spine are breaking down with age. As they deteriorate, they lose their cushioning ability.”

Emotional stress: This relates to how the pain may be felt and how long pain lasts. Back muscles can become tense and lead to spasms.

Being overweight or obese. Too much weight can stress the back and cause pain.

Heredity: Some causes of back pain, such as ankylosing spondylitis, a form of arthritis that affects the spine, have a genetic component.

Race: Can be a factor in back problems. African American women are two to three times more likely than white women to develop spondylolisthesis, a condition in which a vertebra of the lumbar (lower) spine slips out of place.

The presence of other diseases: Many diseases can cause or contribute to back pain. These include various forms of arthritis, such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and cancers elsewhere in the body that may spread to the spine.

Occupational risk factors: Having a job that requires heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling, particularly one that involves twisting or vibrating the spine. Sitting at a desk for long periods of time without movement can result in poor posture, especially when sitting in an uncomfortable chair which can lead to back pain. Question: how long do you sit at the computer or when reading a book? Think about moving every half hour or so.

Cigarette smoking: Although smoking may not directly cause back pain, it increases the risk of developing low back pain. Smoking may interfere with the body being able to get enough nutrients to the vertebral disks. Smoker’s cough may also cause back pain. Smoking also increases the risk of osteoporosis, causing weak, porous bones. It also can slow the healing process, prolonging pain for those who have had back injuries, back surgery or broken bones.

The Difference Between Acute and Chronic Pain: Acute pain (the most common type of back pain) comes on quickly and often leaves just as quickly. To be classified as acute, pain should last no longer than 6 weeks. Chronic pain may come on either quickly or slowly and lingers a long time. In general, pain that lasts longer than 3 months is considered chronic.

Comments about treatment (from NIAMS). “Acute back pain usually gets better on its own and without treatment, although you may want to try acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen to help ease the pain. Perhaps the best advice is to go about your usual activities as much as you can with the assurance that the problem will clear up. Getting up and moving around can help ease stiffness, relieve pain, and have you back doing your regular activities sooner.

Exercises or surgery are not usually advisable for acute back pain.” “Treatment for chronic back pain falls into two basic categories: the kind that requires an operation and the kind that does not. In the vast majority of cases, back pain does not require surgery. Doctors will nearly always try nonsurgical treatments before recommending surgery. In a very small percentage of cases—when back pain is caused by a tumor, an infection, or a nerve root problem called cauda equina syndrome, for example—prompt surgery is necessary to ease the pain and prevent further problems. Check the NIH web site (listed above) for greater detail about treatments. It includes information on exercise (flexion, extension, stretching, and aerobic), medications (e.g., analgesics and NSAIDs—nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), traction, corsets and braces, behavioral modification, injections, complementary and alternative treatments, and surgical treatments as well as information about diagnosing back pain, and research.

Two back ailments, included within the term “sciatica,” may require surgery. **Herniated disks:** “the hard outer coating of the disks, which are the circular pieces of connective tissue that cushion the bones of the spine, are damaged, allowing the disks’ jelly-like center to leak, irritating nearby nerves. This causes severe sciatica and nerve pain down the leg. A herniated disk is sometimes called a ruptured disk.” **Spinal stenosis:** “is the narrowing of the spinal canal, through which the spinal cord and spinal nerves run. It is often caused by the overgrowth of bone caused by osteoarthritis of the spine. Compression of the nerves caused by spinal stenosis can lead not only to pain, but also to numbness in the legs and the loss of bladder or bowel control. Patients may have difficulty walking any distance and may have severe pain in their legs along with numbness and tingling.”

Agencies and Organizations to consider researching for further information:

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine National Institutes of Health <http://nccam.nih.gov>

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer <http://www.ahrq.gov>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) <http://www.aaos.org>

North American Spine Society (NASS) <http://www.spine.org>

American College of Rheumatology (ACR) <http://www.rheumatology.org>

Arthritis Foundation <http://www.arthritis.org>

American Chiropractic Association <http://www.amerchiro.org>

American Osteopathic Association <http://www.osteopathic.org>

Question: How many calories might you burn in a day if you were to tap your feet as you sit throughout the day! You would be amazed! According to James A. Levine, M.D., Ph.D., a researcher at the Mayo Clinic, you can burn an additional 100-150 calories per hour by incorporating Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis, or NEAT, into your life. <http://www.kcby.com/news/health/13565082.html>

Positive thinking is good for your health!

- Enjoy the simple things (surround yourself with what you love)!
- Laugh often and loud!
- Make a list of things that make you feel good (look at it often)!
- Tell the people you love how you feel about them!
- Be grateful for all the good and beautiful things in your life!
- Keep learning to exercise your brain!
- Stay connected with others through shared activities and social opportunities!
- Acknowledge your right to feel down but only for a while and then move on!
- Be gentle with yourself by not saying negatives about yourself!
- Eat well and exercise regularly. Good food and good company go together!

Source: Group Health Cooperative, *Vitality*, Winter 2010.

Book and Film Corner –February 2010

Lynne Masland

For February, the month of Valentine's Day, here are some romantic film suggestions to pair with wine and dinner. "Casablanca" (1942) with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman tops all lists with its wistful story of wartime intrigue, thwarted love and an unforgettable music score. "Love Story" (1970) is up on the lists, too, with Ali McGraw and Ryan Neil and "love never means you have to say goodbye." Kleenex please. Richard Gere in full dress uniform is the definitive romantic image as he sweeps town girl Deborah Winger off her feet in "An Officer and A Gentleman (1982);" In "An Affair to Remember" (1957), Nicky (Cary Grant) and Terry (Deborah Kerr) have a shipboard romance and agree to meet a year later at the Empire State building. Terry's accident on their meeting day nearly keeps them apart.

For star-crossed love, nothing compares with Emily's Bronte's gothic *Wuthering Heights*. In the 1992 film adaptation, Juliette Binoche is Cathy Earnshaw, Ralph Fiennes, Heathcliff in this obsessive tale of impossible passion.

News from WWURA's Travel Committee

HIDDEN GEMS OF THE DALMATIAN COAST, 09/08/2010 - 09/26/2020

Join us for a nineteen-day tour of the Balkan area. The initial phase of the trip will be a cruise on a private ship "Artemis" which has a capacity of 50 passengers. We will depart from Athens following a one day tour of the city. During the 10 day cruise we will explore ancient Delphi, visit the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ruins at the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Butrint, Albania, take a walking tour of Kotor, Montenegro, spend a day in Dubrovnik, and end in Split.

The final portion of the trip is overland from Split to the Plitvice Lakes region and on to Zagreb, Croatia.

Cost of the tour is \$5295 for main deck cabin and \$5995 for upper deck cabin. This fare includes roundtrip international airfare from Seattle. For rest and relaxation following the sixteen day Balkan trip, there is a three day extension available to Bled, Slovenia for \$795. Government fees and taxes are, approximately, an additional \$487.20.

If you pay in full, prior to June, there is reduction in the price of the trip.

Contact: Don Rochon at djrochon1@comcast.net

Reservations: call OAT at 1-800-353-6262 and enter option 2. When asked for a service code, give G011246. Our group number is 11246.

IN MEMORY OF

H. William Wilson, Professor Emeritus, Chemistry Department

Eugene Hogan, Professor Emeritus, Political Science Department

William Dermmert, Adjunct Professor, Elementary Education

**Reservation for Cabin Fever Party
Wednesday, February 17
Bellewether - Compass Room**

Meet at 5:30 p.m. for cocktails (no host). Dinner to be served at 6:00 p.m.

MENU

Starter: Baby Brutus Salad with Crisp Hearts of Romaine, Shaved Parmesan, Garlic Infused Dressing & Croutons

Choice of four main dishes:

- 1) *Chichen Breast Piccata, Lightly Breaded and Topped with a Lemon, Parsley, Caper & White Wine Sauce*
- 2) *Fresh King Salmon Fillet, with Lime Dill Beurre Blanc*
- 3) *Mediterranean Marinated Flat Iron Steak with Chili Flakes, Olive Oil, Garlic, Lemon and Oregano*
- 4) *Chef's Choice Vegetarian Upon Request.*

Served with: *Chef's Choice Starch, Seasonal Vegetables, Fresh Rolls & Butter, Freshly Brewed Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee & Assorted Hot Teas.*

Dessert: *Tuxedo Mousse Cake*

Cost will be \$35 per person (includes tax and tip). Wine not included.

Name(s) _____

Telephone Number _____

Meal choice _____

Amount enclosed (*make out check to WWURA*) \$ _____

Reservation Deadline is Tuesday, February 9

**Mail check (or telephone) Janet Berg, 1029 16th St, Bellingham, WA 98225
Telephone 733-4654**

WWURA Calendar

February

- 5) Winter luncheon
- 17 Cabin Fever Party
- 19 Danube Reunion

March

- 2 Board Meeting
- 17)Travelogue

April

- 6 Board Meeting
- 21 Travelogue

May

- 11 Retirement dinner