



# WWURA NEWS



March 2011

www.wwu.edu/~wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

## President's Message

I had a very productive session with WWU president Bruce Shepherd about benefits to retired staff employees.

Here is the information which was provided:

1. Retired staff are eligible for free parking on campus on a day-by-day basis. Day passes may be obtained by contacting Parking Services directly.
2. Regarding borrowing from the WWU's library collections, these privileges are afforded the public.
3. Retired faculty and staff have the same privileges for use of Carver Gym. They are eligible to join the lower weight room for a fee of \$40qtr/\$140yr. They can also use the racquetball courts when they are not scheduled for classes. (They must bring their own racket, ball and eye guards as we don't check out any open recreation equipment.) PEHR also runs two fitness programs that anyone can sign up for: the Mature Adult Weight Training Program and the Adult Fitness Program. All WWU retirees are eligible to purchase memberships at the rate \$105/quarter or \$380/year.

WWURA, in turn will strive to better publicize the availability of privileges through its web page, newsletter and upcoming additions of the membership brochure.

The annual regional meeting of the Pacific Northwest University Retirement Associations will be held in Corvallis, OR, on May 18 through May 20, 2011. Lodgings have been reserved at the Hilton garden Inn and meetings will be held at the OSU campus in the LaSells Steward Center. While each local association is expected to send four delegates for the "official" meetings, all others are also invited to participate in the social and cultural events and the gala final dinner. If you are interested in attending please let me know. These

## WWURA Travelogue

### Exploring Utah's National Parks: Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef, Arches and Canyonlands

Presented by Evelyn Ames with  
Chris Suczek, professor of geology

**Wednesday, March 16, 2011**

Squalicum Yacht Club

6:30 p.m. for socializing, 7:00 p.m. presentation

Join Evelyn Ames for an evening exploring the colorful national parks of southern Utah and learn about the interesting geological formations such as the Colorado Plateau, Escalante and the hoodoos of Bryce that contribute to the spectacular scenery in that area. Together with Jean Rahn and WWURA members Evelyn Wright and Lynne Masland, Professor Ames traveled to the area last April, just as the last snow was melting in Bryce Park.

If your name begins with **A though L** please bring a dessert to share. WWURA provides coffee and tea; some members bring wine. Contact one of the board members if you need a ride.

events are inspirational, informational, entertaining and fattening.

Marilyn and I hosted a WWURA Informing Dining dinner at our home this week. The seven attendees shared a potluck dinner, wine and good conversation. The event was very enjoyable and I urge other members to participate in the informal dining group next year.

Be sure to sign up **NOW** for the Chuckanut Manor Spring Fling on March 23. (see page 5)

Larry S. Richardson, 715 N. Garden,  
#202, Bellingham, WA 98225. Phone (360) 671-4277.

## Health Notes by Evelyn Ames

### Physical Activity Promotes Cognitive Health

In 2006 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued its *Healthy Brain Initiative*, a multifaceted approach to promoting cognitive health (<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain/index.htm>). Citing the “need for a clearly delineated public health role comes at a critical time given the dramatic aging of the U.S. population, scientific advancements in knowledge about risk behaviors (e.g., lack of physical activity, uncontrolled high blood pressure) related to cognitive decline, and the growing awareness of the significant health, social, and economic burdens associated with cognitive decline.”

**What is cognitive health?** A healthy brain is one that can perform all the mental processes that are collectively known as cognition, including the ability to learn new things, intuition, judgment, language, and remembering. (CDC) “The lack of cognitive health—from mild cognitive decline to dementia—can have profound implications for an individual’s health and well-being. Older adults and others experiencing cognitive decline may be unable to care for themselves or conduct necessary activities of daily living, such as meal preparation and money management. Limitations with the ability to effectively manage medications and existing medical conditions are particular concerns when an individual is experiencing cognitive decline or dementia. If cognitive decline can be prevented or better treated, lives of many older adults can be improved.” (CDC)

The Franklin Institute (<http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/exercise.html>) states “Brain chemistry reveals an essential unity of mind and body. Neurons not only contact other neurons, they also connect with skeletal muscles, at a specialized structure called the neuromuscular junction. There the brain uses acetylcholine – its primary chemical neurotransmitter for memory and attention – to communicate with muscles. Another of the brain's key chemical messengers, dopamine, helps regulate fine motor movement.”

The role of these neurotransmitters in regulating movement underscores the intimate relation between body and mind, muscle and memory. “Movement and exercise increase breathing and heart rate so that more blood flows to the brain, enhancing energy production and waste removal. Studies show that in response to exercise, cerebral blood vessels can grow, even in middle-aged sedentary animals.”

**How Does Physical Exercise Affect the Brain?** University of California at San Francisco researchers measured the brain function of nearly 6,000 women during an eight-year period. The results were correlated with the women's normal activity level, including their routine walking and stair-climbing. “In the higher-energy groups, we saw much less cognitive decline,” said neurologist Kristine Yaffe, MD. Of the women who walked the least (a half-mile per week), 24% had significant declines in their test scores, compared to only 17% of the most active women (17 miles per week). “In the higher-energy groups, we saw much less cognitive decline” – a protective effect amounting to as much as 40% – according to Yaffe. “This is an important intervention that all of us can do and it could have huge implications in preventing cognitive decline.”

Psychologist James Blumenthal reported in the July, 2003 issue of the *Harvard Women’s Health Watch* (<http://health.harvard.edu/women>) that “exercise had its beneficial effect in specific areas of cognitive function that are rooted in the frontal and prefrontal regions of the brain.” “The implications are that exercise might be able to offset some of the mental declines that we often associate with the aging process.” Physical exercise has a protective effect on the brain and its mental processes, and may even help prevent Alzheimer's disease. Based on exercise and health data from nearly 5,000 men and women over 65 years of age, those who exercised were less likely to lose their mental abilities or develop dementia, including Alzheimer's. “Running's brain-boosting effects were in the hippocampus, a region of the brain linked to

learning and memory and known to be affected by Alzheimer's disease.” A five-year study at Laval University in Sainte-Foy, Quebec suggests that the more a person exercises the greater the protective benefits for the brain, particularly in women. “Inactive individuals were twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's, compared to those with the highest levels of activity (exercised vigorously at least three times a week). But even light or moderate exercisers cut their risk significantly for Alzheimer's and mental decline” (<http://health.harvard.edu/women>). In another study, “physically fit subjects had less age-related brain-tissue shrinkage than less active subjects. Using magnetic resonance imaging, the researchers saw clear differences in the frontal, temporal, and parietal regions of the brain. The tissues affected are crucial to memory, learning, and cell communication. The researchers also found that exercising less than 30 minutes per session had very little impact on cognitive function.” [http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsweek/Physical\\_exercise\\_sharpens\\_the\\_brain.htm](http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsweek/Physical_exercise_sharpens_the_brain.htm)

Readers may have heard the NPR broadcast on February 21 that reported on aerobic exercise and the brain (focusing on the hippocampus) <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/21/133777018/aerobic-exercise-may-improve-memory-in-seniors>. Some interesting quotes to consider: “The major chemical change in the hippocampus during aerobic exercise is an increase in a brain protein called BDNF, which acts like a fertilizer during the birth of new brain cells by nourishing new connections between neurons.” “Neuroscientist [Peter Snyder](#), a researcher at Brown University's Alpert Medical School and Rhode Island Hospital, says the hippocampus is one of those brain areas that continue to form new cells and make new connections between cells,” and “What we're finding is that of all of these noninvasive ways of intervening, it is exercise that seems to have the most efficacy at this point — more so than nutritional supplements, vitamins and cognitive interventions.”

For those interested in further reading, check Price, et al. study, “Older Adults’ Perceptions of Physical Activity and Cognitive Health: Implications for Health Communication” in the February, 2011 issue of *Health Education & Behavior*, Society for Public Health Education. Also, Perceptions of Cognitive Health Factsheet (a pdf file). Both these publications provide information about population groups views/ perceptions of physical activity.

## Book and Film Corner

Lynne Masland

Writing,” says mystery author Donna Leon, “is just the day job.” Her passion is her opera company, *Il Complesso Barocco*, financed by her best-selling books. Her latest, *Drawing Conclusions* is due out this April. I’ve just finished *Wilful Behavior*, which I enjoyed not only for its complex plot involving art treasures sold to unscrupulous Venetian art dealers during Mussolini’s time by Jewish families and others desperate to escape the Fascist menace but also for the conversations between Commissario Guido Brunetti and his English professor wife, Paola, about the value of art and literature in a corrupt, greedy world.

Evelyn Ames suggests Iain Pears’ mysteries, also set in Italy, with art as their motif. Art historian Jonathan Argyll and Flavia di Stefano of Rome’s Art Theft Squad solve cases involving priceless treasures, including *The Bernini Bust*, *Giotto’s Hand*, *The Raphael Affair*, *The Titian Committee* and *The Last Judgment*.

## WWURA TRAVEL NEWS

### **The Baltic Bash Is On!**

Starting date - August 19, 2011. Return date - September 3, 2011. This does not include a five day pre-trip to Kiev which we are hoping Overseas Adventure Travel will arrange for us.

We start in Vilnius, Lithuania where we will see the KGB Museum and the Old Town, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. While we are in that region we will visit the old medieval Lithuanian capital of Trakai. From there we head to Kaunas and Klaipeda. Klaipeda is a seaport founded by the Teutonic Knights and is Lithuania's oldest Town. Riga, Latvia come next. Again we will walk through the Old Town, visit the German Zeppelin hangars, and visit villages outside Riga. From Riga we head to Tallinn, Estonia. On the way, we will stop at Gauja National Park and have lunch in Cesis, a medieval town. We end with two and a half days in St. Petersburg. We spend three nights in most of the hotels, two nights in Riga, so we do not have to repack each day.

**For a detailed itinerary** visit <http://www.oattravel.com/blt11>

**To hold a place for this trip:** Call Overseas Adventure Travel at 1-800-955-1925, option #2. The Rochon Group service code is G111 246. The deposit is \$350 which is fully refundable for two weeks. This space is being held for our group until April 1, 2011. Note: we do not have much time to reserve space.

If you are interested in the five day pretrip to Kiev, be sure to mention that. Also, please call Don Rochon at 360-647-2301 so he will know who is registered for the trip and how many people will want the pretrip. (We will try a little pressure on OAT for that pretrip.)

Cost: \$4595 from Seattle which includes air fare. Pretrip = \$1095. There will be some additional cost for taxes and trips.

### **Rhine River Holiday Markets Tour of 4 Countries**

**On December 2, 2011 our WWURA and Friends group will fly non-stop from Seattle to Amsterdam**, then board the *AmaCello*, a luxurious 148-passenger river boat. From Amsterdam we will journey along the Rhine visiting important sites and holiday markets in Cologne, Koblenz, Rudesheim, Worms, Speyer, Heidelberg, Strasbourg, Freiburg, Colmar & Basel. Disembarking in Basel after the cruise, we will continue by coach to Lucerne and Zurich for 2 nights each before **flying back to Seattle on December 14, 2011**, in plenty of time to prepare for the holidays at home.

The 7-night all-inclusive river cruise program starts from \$1979 per person. **There is one Category E cabin (the best value)** still available plus assorted cabins in other categories. **Land portion is \$920 pp. Airfare is estimated at \$1100. Port charges are \$133. All shore excursions are included. There is shipboard credit of \$150 pp. Deposit of \$400 pp to reserve; final payment is not due until September 1, 2011.**

Contact Kathy Whitmer, 734-7211 or Joyce D. Wilson, 733-4703 for more information. Fourteen people have reserved so far to join Kathy on her 6th, and most-likely final, holiday markets trip to Europe. Come along and join the fun!

### **Oregon Shakespeare Festival - May 3 - May 6, 2011**

Join us for our 3rd trip to Ashland We will have a chance to see four plays: Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and *Julius Caesar*; Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* and *August: Osage County* by Tract Letts. The cost of the bus is \$212; the tickets are \$15 for the Bowmer Theatre and \$23 for the New Theatre. We will stay at The Bard's Inn again which is convenient to the theaters and to restaurants; the cost depends on your room choice.

The deadline for registration has been expended to March 11, 2011. If you would like more information, please contact Barbara Evans, 360-650-9724 or <[baranadhoward@comcast.net](mailto:baranadhoward@comcast.net)>

## **Spring Fling to Chuckanut Manor**

**March 23, 2011**

5:30 p.m. Social Hour, 6:30 p.m. Dinner

Take a lovely spring drive down Chuckanut Drive and join us for an evening of fun and good food at Chuckanut Manor. We are planning to entertain you with music by "The Affetteoso" during dinner. This group uses ancient instruments and concentrates on a repertoire of medieval music.

### **Menu Selections:**

Vegetable Puff Pastry - \$17.98

Steak and Frites - \$22.45

Halibut & Chips - \$21.70

Dungeness Crab & Clam Chowder - \$22.35

Coffee/tea/soda/ \$3.76

For dessert we have a choice of Key Lime Pie,

Burnt Cream, or Chocolate Mousse for \$8.30 each

Please call Margaret Loudon, 733-6052 by **March 16** for your reservation.

**The time to make reservations is short so, if you wish to attend, please call soon.**

## **WWURA INTEREST GROUPS**

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

### **March's interest group meetings are listed below.**

**BOOK GROUP** - Donna Rochon, 647-2301. Meet at Evelyn Mason's, 914 17th St. 2:30, Tues. Mar. 15, The book is *News from the Village* by David Mason.

**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.  
Mar. 19, *Lucia di Lammermoor*  
Apr. 9, *Le Comte Ory*

**BRIDGE GROUP** - Barb Evans, 650-9724. The bridge group meeting is March 22 at 1:30 p.m. at MaryJo Lewis's house, 209 S. Garden Terrace, 671-6402.

**DOWNHILL SKIING** - Charlie Way, 734-0649. Call Charlie if you are interested.

**INFORMAL DINING** - Dinners are ongoing. Members will be contacted with group information. Call Barb Evans, 650-9724, or Jan Berg if you would like to be added to the list.

**WRITERS GROUP** - Evelyn Wright, 676-0227.

The newly-forming Writers Group will meet to explore interests, Thursday, Mar. 24, 2-4 p.m. at Evelyn Wright's home, 410 N. State St. Anyone interested in working on a project - fiction, non-fiction, or memoirs - is invited.

**BIKING** - Will begin again in the spring

## WWURA Calendar 2011

### March

- 12 Reservations for Ashland
- 16 Travelogue-Exploring Utah's National Parks
- 16 Reservations for Spring Fling

### April

- 6 Board meeting
- 11 Route to the Maya
- 20 Travelogue

### May

- 3 Ashland trip
- 25 Retirement dinner



Zion Park

Western Washington University  
Retirement Association (WWURA)  
Western Washington University  
516 High Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225-9020