



WWURA NEWS



December 2012

www.wwu.edu/wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff



9th Annual Holiday Party Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012, 6-10 pm. Squalicum Yacht Club



Come and get into the holiday spirit with friends, good food and lively music .

- Social hour begins at 6 pm.
- Potluck dinner begins at 6:35, consisting of roast turkey, ham, coffee & tea plus potluck items as assigned below.
- Bring your own wine, if you wish.
- After-dinner music by *What the Chelm*.
- Bring your own plates and silverware.
- Cost is \$10 person.
- Please bring dish (to share) as listed below:
- **A-G** Salad, **H-Q** Dessert, and **R-Z** Side Dish.

Send your reservations and \$10 per person to cover the costs of the hall, music, decorations, ham and turkey to **Karen Perry, 1025 Nevada St., Bellingham, WA 98229. Questions? Phone: 360-389-5152.**

Reservation Form—Return by December 12, 2012

Names _____

Enclosed is a check (to WWURA) for \$_____ for _____ people

Need a ride? Check here _____ and phone number _____

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2012 WWURA Jingle Bell Run/Walk Team: Meeting Place for December 8 at 8:15 am:

The usual place: Espresso stand on Cornwall (1/2 block from parking lot of Bellingham High School).

It's not too late to donate to our WWURA team. Go to website: <http://bellinghamjbrw.kintera.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1027414>



Part of our 2012 team



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings,

Brrr..."Button up your overcoat..."

Now that we've had our first nippy frost, it's time to roll up our sleeves and prepare for the holiday season ahead. And before you get over-scheduled, be sure to put WWURA's Holiday Party on your calendar.

WWURA celebrates the Season with our Annual Holiday Party at the Squalicum Yacht Club on Wednesday, December 19, at 6:00 p.m. with all the trimmings. (See the Holiday Party Invitation in this Newsletter). Music! Music! Music! We'll be entertained by What the Chelm - an old favorite music combo.

To fully enjoy your WWURA membership, consider joining one of our vibrant interest groups: Book Group, Bridge Group, Informal Dining (simply delicious), Opera Group, Skiing—and if you're a gung-ho writer—forming a second Writers' Group (first group is closed because of size limitations).

Kathy Whitmer leads her final departure with WWURA folks on December 2, heading for another glorious Danube Holidays Market Trip. They'll be traveling on the AmaWaterways, reportedly the "Best River Cruise Line" in the travel industry. The highlight feature of this journey is that it marks the 50th anniversary of Kathy's first European Christ-kindmarkt visit. Bon voyage everyone!

Burl and I are looking forward to meeting and greeting old friends at our "Ho-Ho-Ho" Party coming up soon. Until then, be well, stay warm and button up your overcoat.

- Nanette Davis

**Save the Date - January 16th
for the Travelogue featuring China**

To be presented by:
Margaret Loudon, Mary Jo Lewis,
and Gail and Marty Haines

WWURA Travel News

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ASHLAND 2013

WWURA is planning a trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, April 30 - May 3, 2013 if there is enough interest. There is a very good choice of plays at that time. We would have the opportunity to see at least four of the following plays:

King Lear by William Shakespeare - a contemporary staging of Shakespeare's greatest tragedy.

The Taming of the Shrew by Shakespeare..." a surprising love story that dares to ask what roles we play."



My Fair Lady - "Lerner and Loewe's effervescent adaptation of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is one of the most exquisite musicals ever written. This intimate, two-piano version, approved by composer Frederick Loewe, promises to illuminate the story in ways you haven't heard before."

Running by August Wilson - his "searing portrait of African-American life in the '60's tells a complex story of the inner lives of ordinary people at a turning point in American history."

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams - "Southern aristocrat Blanche down on her luck, is reduced to living with her sister Stella and Stella's pugnacious husband, Stanley in a tiny tenement apartment." This scenario sets them up for an epic battle in William's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic.

If you are interested in going to Ashland on this trip, please either call or email Barb Evans, 650-9724 or <barbandhoward@comcast.net> as soon as possible. It should be a great opportunity to see some very good theater.

December 2012 Health Notes by Evelyn Ames Laughter and Your Health!

“Laughter, *n.* An interior convulsion, producing a distortion of the features and accompanied by inarticulate noises. It is infectious and, though intermittent, incurable.” Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary*, 1911.



“Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing at work.”

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034/NSECTIONGROUP=2>

In the past few decades, researchers have investigated (albeit with small groups) the effects of laughter on health. Some short term benefits include enhancement of oxygen-rich air, stimulation of the heart, lungs, and muscles, and increases of endorphins in the brain (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034>). Other short term effects include activation and relief of the stress response and soothing physical symptoms of stress. Long-term effects are thought to be related to an improved immune system (positive thoughts release neuropeptides), an increase in personal satisfaction, and relief of pain. “Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers. Laughter may also break the pain-spasm cycle common to some muscle disorders” <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034>. People in pain or discomfort report a lessening of the discomfort when they laugh!

Cardiologists at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore found “that people with heart disease were 40 percent less likely to laugh in a variety of situations compared to people of the same age without heart disease” (<http://www.umm.edu/features/laughter.htm>. “We don't know yet why laughing protects the heart, but we know that mental stress is associated with impairment of the endothelium, the protective barrier lining our blood vessels. This can cause a series of inflammatory reactions that lead to fat and cholesterol build-up in the coronary arteries and ultimately to a heart attack.” A significant finding was that “people with heart disease responded less humorously to everyday life situations...and they generally laughed less, even in positive situations, and they displayed more anger and hostility” (<http://www.umm.edu/features/laughter.htm#ixzz2CKr5NZWH>).

According to Provine (author of *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*), the “definitive research into the potential health benefits of laughter just hasn't been done yet” (<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/give-your-body-boost-with-laughter>). Studies have been small and the researchers may have had a bias of wanting to prove that laughter has benefits. Provine states that “laughter is social, so any health benefits might really come from being close with friends and family, and not the laughter itself.” “Provine has found that we're thirty times more likely to laugh when we're with other people than when we're alone. People who laugh a lot may just have a strong connection to the people around them. That in itself might have health benefits.”

Further explanation of the physical effects on the body (e.g., blood flow, blood sugar levels, immune response, and relaxation and sleep) can be found at <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/give-your-body-boost-with-laughter>. Check out this site, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-relief/SR00034>, for how to improve or gain a sense of humor:

From *A Cowboy’s Guide to Life* by Texas Bix Bender: “Don’t Squat With Yer Spurs On!”

December Interest Groups

If you are interested in one of the groups please call or email the contact person.

BOOK GROUP--Donna Rochon, 360-647-2301, <djrochon1@comcast.net>

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Barbara Davidson's, 806 17th Street.

We will meet December 18 at Barbara Davidson's, 806 17th Street. We did not meet in November so books have shifted ahead one month.

December's book is *Between the Woods and the Water* by Patrick Leigh Fermor

January's book is *World Without End* by Ken Follett

BRIDGE GROUP--Nicholas Bullat, 360-676-1156, <gnbmaestro@gmail.com>

Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at member's homes. We will not meet in December, but will meet January 22nd at Barb Evans, 622 Everglade Rd.

INFORMAL DINING -- Janet Berg, 360-733-4654, <janetlila@hotmail.com>

Meets in small groups each month at member's homes. We will not meet in December, but expect a call from your host in January.

OPERA GROUP--Evelyn Ames, 360-734-3184, <Evelyn.ames@wwu.edu>.

Call Evelyn if you need a ride.

December 1, Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*

December 8, *Un Ballo in Maschera*

December 15, *Aida*

Information on venues is in the September newsletter.

SKIING - Charlie Way, 360-734-0649, <cbway@aol.com>

Skiing usually starts in January depending on the weather and Mt. Baker

Ski Area is now open!

WRITER'S GROUP - Evelyn Wright, 360-676-0227, <ewright410@comcast.net>

Meets twice a month. The groups are kept small so there is time for reading and critiquing each other's work. The first group is now closed, but if you are interested, please call Evelyn and discuss starting a second group.

Book and Film Corner by Lynne Masland

With *Downton Abbey* beginning its third series in January on KCTS-TV, we'll see how the Abbey's household fares in the aftermath of World War I. Will the spirit of democracy and equality upset the balances between upstairs and downstairs? Above all, will Lady Mary marry Matthew? While waiting to find out, revisit the hilarious world of P.G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster and the inimitable Jeeves. Among the many classics are *The Code of the Woosters*, *Very Good, Jeeves*, *Right Ho, Jeeves*, and *Carry On, Jeeves*. Be ready to laugh.

From my sister-in-law comes a recommendation for books by British humorist/fantasy novelist Tom Holt. Among her favorites, *Expecting Someone Taller* is a humorous sequel of sorts to Wagner's epic opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (or *The Ring of the Nibelung*), but is primarily set in contemporary England. The hapless auction clerk Malcolm Fisher accidentally runs over a badger one night. The badger turns out to be the giant Ingulf and the adventures begin. In Holt's second book, *Who's Afraid of Beowulf*, the discovery of an ancient Viking burial ship filled with a horde of Viking warriors leads to a quest to defeat an evil sorcerer and other enemies including Esso petrol cards and a BBC film crew.

Enjoy your winter reading during the holidays!

Writing Group Corner: Writing Group members are sharing some of their work with newsletter readers. Troy Faith Ward, a retired minister, offers a message of gratitude in keeping with the holiday season.

A Triple Dip of Gratitude Troy Faith Ward

I'm thankful for time, as a retiree, to make long lists of things I'm thankful for. I start with the "biggies:" Assurance of God's love, health, family, friends, food shelter, a warm bed... Those things make my heart swell and the world shine, even when the sun doesn't. As my hand pulls my heart at break-neck speed down the page making sub-lists my mood lightens to downright giddiness. Giggles invite favorite indulgences to shed their heavy cloak of guilt and leap onto the page.

As a new retiree in the fall of 2010 my lists were filled with advantages of life back in Bellingham after an absence of 8.5 years. One evening an old friend and I renewed a cherished experience, attending a reflective prayer service together. Hardly out the church door, an ice cream attack hit me like a cavorting calf. "Let's go to Mallard's. I'm buying."

We made our flavor selections, she of strawberry and I of coconut chocolate chunk with almonds, "in a dish, please." See, I did show some restraint - no matter that the fragrance of freshly made waffle cones was driving me crazy. We chose the only small table available and began our heavenly repast. Ambrosia indeed! The first bite of this real ice cream had begun to paint a scene of comforting nostalgia. Observing our table neighbors brought the scene to life.

Enhancing the all-round good feeling of wholesomeness was the group next to us, two dads with three young children. Marie remarked on the total absorption and skill with which the youngest girl, about four years old, kept control of the creamy mound threatening to escape her tongue.

Marie finished her serving in a respectfully savoring "this is too good to put my spoon down" amount of time. I had to eat slowly in deference to cold-sensitive teeth. When her bowl was empty, I offered, "I can finish this on the way home." She had work early the next morning.

Chatting all the time, we walked past the bussing bin where I watched Marie place her bowl and spoon. In the car, I put my ice cream in my lap to fasten my seat belt. Looking down I noticed. "Oh, I carried out their spoon. Guess I'm not used to real dishes. Oh, well, let's just go, I'll bring it back next time." (Lurking just below the level of consciousness, I glimpsed an excuse to come back soon.)

We were halfway home when, as I raised the bowl toward my face for another bite, another light bulb came on in my ice cream-sedated brain. "Hey, the bowl is also not disposable!" Never mind. Now I'd really have to make a trip back soon.

Often positive consequences hide in mistakes. This one raised my "green" consciousness. Being able to walk out with the bright orange bowl and stainless steel spoon made me acknowledge that I had internalized disposable dishes as the norm. I choose to eat less and less often where I create two handfuls of non-recyclable trash. May the day when I could do it unconsciously never return.

Gratitude felt increases exponentially when you express it. I returned the dishes with an explanation and the following note to the Mallard's staff. *I am grateful for your presence. Your gifts to the community pile up: real food, delectable on the tongue, an ambience that enhances the eating, and reminiscences engendered by both. Your commitment to environmentally sound practices and creating healthy community in general are like a locally grown organic cherry on top--and natural flavors throughout the whole.*



WWURA 2012 Calendar

Dec. 2 - Holiday Markets Trip

Dec. 8 - Jingle Bell Run

Dec. 19 - Holiday Party

2013 Calendar

Jan. 16 - Travelogue - China

Feb. 8 - Winter Luncheon

March 20—Travelogue

April 5 - Spring Luncheon

April 17—Travelogue

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