



WWURA NEWS



March 2013

www.wwu.edu/wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

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WWURA 2013 Calendar

March 20—Travelogue
 April 5 - Spring Luncheon
 April 17—Travelogue
 August 6—Planning Meeting
 July 10—Picnic

WWURA Travelogue

"Reflections on the Danube"

Presented by Kathy Whitmer

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Squalicum Yacht Club

6:30 socializing; 7:15 presentation

Journey to Prague and then along the Danube River from Nuremberg to Budapest with stops in Regensburg, Salzburg, Linz, Melk and Vienna along the way. View scenes of castles, musical events, life aboard the *AmaLyra*, and folks you know enjoying the festive holiday markets.

Kathy will show pictures from the December 2012 trip, and others will reflect on their favorite memories from the seven Christmas markets tours over the past decade. Come and travel vicariously with them.



Greetings,

I am sometimes asked rather quizzically what Western retirees do after they leave the hallowed halls of the University. Well, I can't speak for all retirees, but I can tell you that among our WWURA membership

are included some of the most active and vibrant people you would care to meet.

First, a significant number of WWURA members contribute annually to Western's Foundation for the Endowment or for specific scholarships or library acquisitions. Additionally, many members devote numberless hours of community service, especially on boards and other policy-making positions. Some of us are continuing our writing and publishing or are producing artistic work. A few others have developed a business that commands their best efforts to succeed. In a word, we continue to honor and represent Western in wide-ranging ways.

We're now on the lookout for ways to raise money to expand our Western scholarships. As you know,

WWURA currently supports two students, but with many families experiencing tough times, the Board considered it an excellent move to create additional monies for our scholarship fund. We're launching our first project March 20 at the Travelogue featuring Kathy Whitmer's memorable Danube trip, where we'll have a silent auction. This event features a delectable wine and cheese basket contributed by Evelyn Ames, Lynne Masland, Donna Moore, Barb Evans and Nanette Davis. We're planning future auction events to be announced. In the meantime, we welcome your donations to WWURA's Scholarship Fund. Please send to John Reay, WWURA Treasurer, 117 Hawthorne Rd., Bellingham, WA 98225.

How does your garden grow? Isn't that the inevitable question every year at this time? Burl and I have decided to bag the whole muddy issue, and take off for Hawaii. So, we'll leave you all for a couple of weeks to the swelling robin population with their inevitable 5:00 a.m. chirping. See you at our next WWURA event!

-Nanette Davis

Health Notes by Evelyn Ames Choosing Hearing Aid Dispensers

Frequent advertisements come in the mail or are inserts in newspapers/magazines that promote hearing devices. A recent insert in the local newspaper promoted a “Three Day Special: Your Key to Better Hearing with the all new” using such puffery-type words as “customized exclusively for you,” “pioneering advances in science,” “world leader,” and “innovation in engineering.” The FTC (Federal Trade Commission) defines puffery as a “term frequently used to denote the exaggerations reasonably to be expected of a seller as to the degree of quality of his product, the truth or falsity of which cannot be precisely determined” (FTC).

What can the consumer do to educate and protect oneself from fraudulent or misleading promotional ads for hearing aid devices? With more than 35 million Americans experiencing some degree of hearing loss, the consumer division of the FTC suggests that people first “understand the various types of hearing loss, the differences between a hearing aid and a personal sound amplification device,” and what to consider when shopping for the most appropriate product. [-buying-http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0168 aid-hearing](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0168-aid-hearing)

Common types of hearing loss: **Conductive hearing loss** involves outer ear, the middle ear, or both (usually results from earwax blockage from earwax, fluid in the middle ear, or a punctured eardrum. **Sensorineural — or “nerve” — hearing loss** involves damage to inner ear, caused by disease, illness, age, injury from exposure to noise or certain medicines, or a genetic disorder and may be corrected with a hearing aid. **Mixed hearing loss** is a combination of sensorineural and conductive hearing loss. “Only a small portion of adult hearing problems, like ear infections and middle ear diseases, are medically or surgically treatable.” If the loss can’t be treated medically or surgically, a hearing aid may be beneficial.

Hearing Aid Device: “A hearing aid is a small electronic device worn in or behind the ear. The device has three parts: a microphone, an amplifier, and a speaker. It receives sound through the microphone, which converts the sound to electrical signals and sends them to the amplifier. The amplifier increases the power of the signals and sends them to the ear through the speaker” (FTC). Devices do not work unless users have some ability to hear.



Sound Advice from the FTC:

Price is a factor, but it’s not the only one to consider when you are determining your best option for an assistive hearing device. A more expensive device isn’t always better for your needs.

Don’t patronize a business that dismisses the need for a medical examination prior to the purchase of a hearing aid. Only two types of people are authorized to measure hearing loss and fit and dispense hearing aids in the U.S.: an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser. “The credentials for becoming a hearing aid dispenser vary by state, but typically involve working as an apprentice to an already certified dispenser for some period of time and passing a test about hearing aids. A hearing aid dispenser is not an audiologist and does not have to have a college degree related to hearing loss” (FTC). The audiologist has at least a master’s degree but generally has an Au.D. or Ph.D.

A contract (e.g., trial period, warranty, loaner, and total price) is explained at the FTC web site. If a person cannot afford a hearing aid, it is recommended the person contact the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders for information about organizations that offer financial assistance. <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

To report problems with medical devices, including hearing aids, contact the FDA [via the MedWatch program](#) (MedWatch Online Reporting Form 3500).

(cont’d on page 3)

Health Notes, cont'd

A Personal Sound Amplification Product is a device used by people with normal hearing to amplify hard-to-hear sounds. The device may be helpful if one is trying to hear table conversation while eating in a crowded or noisy restaurant.

Check <http://www.hearinglossweb.com/tech/ha/ind/ind.htm#fda> if you want to know about reports and governmental actions relating to various organizations (e.g., UnitedHealth, Online Hearing Tests) and their .attempts to provide hearing devices to consumers -Check Western Washington University's Speech Hearing Clinic-Language at <http://www.wvu.edu/csd/speechlanguagehearingclinic.shtml>.

Book Column

Lynne Masland



In her first book, *The Snow Child*, Eowyn Ivey invokes a Russian folktale about a snow maiden to tell the story of a Jack and Mabel, a childless couple homesteading in the Alaskan interior in the 1920s. Struggling to maintain their farm and crumbling from isolation and despair, the couple builds a snow child to celebrate one winter's first snowfall. The next morning the snow child has vanished but they see a young girl running through the trees. Faina, is a wild child, a girl of the woods and snow, whom the couple begin to love as their own daughter. Faina brings both joy and sorrow to the couple in a tale that braids ethereal magical realism with the harsh realities of an unforgiving land. As one reviewer wrote, "this story has the fragility of a snowflake and the honesty of dirt beneath your feet."

Eowyn Ivey grew up on an Alaska homestead. She is a graduate of Western Washington University, majoring in journalism and creative writing, and returned to her state to work for ten years as a reporter on *The Frontiersman* newspaper. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Palmer, Alaska where she is a bookseller at an independent bookstore.

From Evelyn Ames comes information about the Bellingham Public Library's Zinio program, a free App which lets users download current magazines to their computer, tablet or mobile device (except Nook Color and Nook tablets). Go to the library's web site (www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/), look for **Zinio Magazine Collection** and follow instructions. User needs a library card, email address, Internet access and computer or mobile device.

Tidbit

Sociologist and Writing Group member Nanette Davis will read from her new book, *Caregiving Our Loved Ones: Stories and Strategies that Will Change Your Life*, on Sunday, April 7 at 4 p.m. at Village Books in Fairhaven.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

Any member interested in serving on the WWURA Board is invited to submit their name for nomination. The Board particularly needs a retired faculty member to volunteer. Please send names to Lynne Masland at lmassland@comcast.net or phone 676-9821.

Writing Group Corner

Writing Group members are sharing some of their pieces and poems with newsletter readers. This month's piece is Troy Faith Ward's open letter to Julian Fellowes, writer of *Downton Abbey*.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JULIAN FELLOWES

Troy Faith Ward

February 28, 2013

Dear Mr. Fellowes:

I am really pissed off that you chose to kill Matthew as the culmination of Season 3 of *Downton Abbey*. Not only does his death follow on the heels of one of the story's happiest, most optimistic scenes—in which Matthew and Mary are rejoicing over the birth of their son and what that means to the whole family—but also that the car accident is the result of Matthew's heedless euphoria. None of us missed the prizewinning line, "I feel like I have swallowed firecrackers!"

I know s--- happens in life, but this little device of yours is unmitigated melodrama. Oh, I admitted to myself after about the third episode in Season One that what we have going here is a soap opera, albeit with early 20th century *mores* largely intact. Despite telescoped crises and zeniths typical of the genre, the story is endlessly engaging, the characters clearly drawn and complicated, and the dialogue intelligent. Soap opera aside, you are not a hack coming up with any sensational plot twist to keep the viewing audience buzzing.

I assume you had to write Matthew out of the script: because Dan Stephens got another job? Or you painted yourself into a corner where Matthew has unarguably and permanently upstaged Lord Grantham? Can't have that in the 1920's. Or the estate is financially safe for now; that plus two heirs waiting in the wings just makes us all a little too comfortable about Downton's future? Do you have to keep the tension on the Abbey's fragile lifeline that tight? Or, oh dear, please tell me you are not trying to turn Matthew, the threefold savior, into a Christ figure by martyring him!!

Well, whatever your reason for removing the Matthew character, I understand that this is a story. My husband reminded me of that after listening to me rant for a half hour on Sunday evening. I admit a bit of chagrin that I'm experiencing personal grief. But, I maintain that a really good imagination could have found a less painful way and time to delete the character. Matthew lying under the car with blood oozing out his left ear made me want to throw up for what the writer and cinematographer and director might consider the wrong reason. The level of pathos belies reality.

I ultimately judge a work of fiction by how "redemptive" it is. I can put up even with a lot of violence, either physical or verbal, as long as the ultimate message is that good is stronger than evil. I must say, my dear Fellowes, that you have set yourself quite a task here. I can only think of one way to redeem yourself. You have kept us consistently and subtly aware of Mary's fatal character flaw. Just as we start to see too much of Mary's soft side, we are reminded of her overweening self-image as the "true" heir to Downton Abbey. Lest anyone forget she is the countess-to-be, she protects herself against her insecurity with a cynical armor of insensitivity to others' feelings. I think of the scene beside Sybil's deathbed, where Mary has shown real compassion and sadness, as well as tenderness toward her other sister, Edith. Yet when Edith asks whether Mary thinks this might bring the two remaining sisters closer, Mary counters, "Oh, I wouldn't count on *that*," (or words to that effect.)

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MARCH INTEREST GROUPS

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

BOOK GROUP--Donna Moore, 360-733-5769 <donnafoore12@gmail.com>

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Donna Moore's home, 346 Bayside Rd.

We will meet March 19, 2013

March's book is *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* by Alexandra Fuller

April's book is *A Spectacle of Corruption* by David Liss

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

Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at member's homes. We will meet

March 26th, place to be announced.

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

Meets in small groups each month at member's homes.

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

Call Evelyn if you need a ride.

March 16, 2013 Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini*

March 6, 2013 Encore -- Verdi's *Rigoletto*, 6:30 pm local time

March 20, 2013 Encore -- Wagner's *Parsifal*, 6:30 pm local time

April 27, 2013 Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, a new production

Information on venues is in the September newsletter.

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

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.

An Open Letter, *cont'd from p. 4*)

The one relationship in which Mary seems always totally human is with Matthew. The happiness is palpable in intimate scenes. Even their arguments portray respect and mutuality. Was Matthew close enough to breaking through Mary's coat of armor that his death will change her? Oh, you may say, Mr. Almighty Writer, "people don't change that easily." Well, just remember, having played God in one scene, you just may have to stay in character.

I'm thinking about whether to watch Season 4.

WWURA TRAVEL NEWS

The Travel Committee met to talk about WWURA travel opportunities. Recently we have not been getting as much response or some of the more energetic overseas trips as we have in the past. We are suggesting that instead of organized group travel people who are planning their own trips and would like to invite WWURA members to join them let the Travel Committee know about the trip and we will publicize it in the newsletter.

Some upcoming opportunities are:

Donna and John Moore: trips with the MIR Corp.

Bulgaria and Romania: Frescoes and Fortresses, May 28-Jun. 12, 2013

Treasures of the South Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, Sept. 22 - Oct. 6, 2013.

<dfmoore12@gmail.com>; 733-5769

Ellie Mischaikov: Mongolia and the Gobi Desert, July 2013. <emisch5@comcast.net>; 734-7820

Gail and Marty Haines: The Wilderness Beyond: Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego & the Chilean

Fjords in February 2014. <mghaines@comcast.net>; 676-1344

Margaret Loudon: trip to Africa some time in 2014 <mloudon99@clearwire.net>; 733-6052

You can contact those people for more information.

Some other types of trips that might be of interest: riverboat trips (similar to Kathy Whitmer's Christmas Market trips) that are available in many parts of Europe; train trips to Portland or Vancouver with over-night stays; and a bus trip to a national park or other place of interest.

If any of these ideas appeal to you or if you have a suggestion, please respond to Donna (Rochon) Moore at <dfmoore12@gmail.com>, phone 733-5769.

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