



# WWURA NEWS



October 2014

[www.wwu.edu/wwura](http://www.wwu.edu/wwura)

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

## President's Note

Fall season has arrived. WWURA members are returning safe and sound from late summer travels and making plans for future travels! We hope they might consider sharing their adventures at future travelogues. By the way, our next travelogue is Wednesday, November 19 (6:30 in the evening) at our usual place.

**Deb Dempsey**, former Columbia River Bar Pilot, will show a video about guiding ships up the Columbia and share her experience as a bar pilot.

Each academic year WWURA members support two or three \$2000 scholarships for undergraduates at Western Washington University. Our recipients for the 2014-2015 year are **Arcadia Trueheart** and **Leah Stephens**. Future Newsletters will carry their thank you notes. Invitations for them to attend our February or April luncheons will be given.

**Marie Eaton**, who presented the September Travelogue on her trip to the Galapagos, is repeating her program on Thursday, October 16th (at 7:00 pm) at the Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room in the Old City Hall building.

The new membership roster for 2014-2015 is now available. Copies are available at travelogues, February and April luncheons and at our interest group meetings and future luncheons.

Please check the Newsletter calendar and Interest Group article for interest group event dates and other events. And, of course, our Board members encourage all WWURA members to reach out to recent retirees and former members to join WWURA and to become involved in our activities. Membership Chair is **Barbara Evans**. (360-650-9724, 715 N Garden St. #502, Bellingham, 98225, or [barband-howard@comcast.net](mailto:barband-howard@comcast.net))

-Evelyn Ames

## Volunteer to Mentor for Compass 2 Campus Program

Interested in mentoring young students in the 5th through 12th grades through Western's Compass 2 Campus program, a day-long program that encourages young people to go to college? Volunteer on Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 or 3 p.m., with a training session set for Wednesday, Oct. 15 either at noon or 5 p.m.

Director **Cyndie Shepard** appreciates having WWURA participation. For more information view the Compass 2 Campus website or contact program manager Shar Sarte Prince, 360-650-4565 or [shar.artep@wwu.edu](mailto:shar.artep@wwu.edu). The link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/voltour2014> leads to the C2C registration page; signing up is required so that Cyndie and her team know who is coming.

### WWURA 2014 Calendar

#### November

- 4—Board Meeting
- 19—Travelogue— "Life of a Columbia River Bar Pilot"

#### December

- 2—Board Meeting
- 17—Holiday Party

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## October 2014 Health Notes by Evelyn Ames Medications in Older adults

Medications, be they prescriptions by medical personnel or over-the-counter drugs, are taken by people age 65 and older more than any other age group in the US. Older people as a group tend to have more long-term, chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

(<http://www.nia.nih.gov/newsroom/2004/12/innovative-website-helps-seniors-take-medicines-safely>) Medications no doubt improve the quality of life for older adults but the elderly are especially at risk for medication-related problems due to physiological changes that affect absorption, metabolism, and elimination of medications.

“Over the last decade the percentage of Americans who took at least one prescription drug in the past month increased by 10%. The use of multiple prescription drugs increased by 20% and the use of five or more drugs increased by 70%.” “Women were more likely to use prescription drugs than were men.” Those who were without a regular place for health care, health insurance, or prescription drug benefit were less likely to have used prescription medication compared with their counterparts.”

(<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db42.htm>).

Once medicines enter the body (for example, orally through a pill, a skin patch, an inhaler, or a hypodermic needle), absorption occurs and drug distribution (that is, where the drug goes after entering the blood stream) occurs. “Aging influences every aspect of physiologic drug processing. While the absorption of oral medications from the GI tract remains relatively constant in the absence of disease states and gastric pH altering medications, bioavailability and clearance dramatically change with aging. These changes become the most pronounced after age 75, when kidney and liver function become limited.” “The aging process can have a significant effect on how a drug is distributed in the body. As the body ages, muscle mass declines and the proportion of body fat increases; therefore, drugs that are fat soluble will, in general, have a greater volume of distribution in an older person compared with a young person, but for drugs distributed in muscle tissue, the volume of distribution may be reduced.” “This increase in body fat expands the volume of distribution for lipophilic drugs and also decreases the volume of distribution for hydrophilic drugs. The result is that water-soluble medications have an elevated active serum concentration, and lipid-soluble agents, while they may have a decreased serum concentration, have a prolonged half-life.”

[http://www.the-hospitalist.org/details/article/234051/Drugs\\_and\\_the\\_Elderly.html](http://www.the-hospitalist.org/details/article/234051/Drugs_and_the_Elderly.html) and

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/takingmedicines/drugsinthebody/01.html>

Metabolism is the chemical alternation of a medicine by the body. Generally medications taken orally go to the stomach and small intestine and then to the liver where metabolism takes place. Various enzymes break drugs down and usually convert them into metabolites). “These metabolites are not usually as strong as the original drug, but sometimes they can have effects that are stronger than the original drug. For example, codeine in the prescription pain killer Tylenol#3 becomes fully active only after the medicine is metabolized in the liver.” The liver acts as a “detoxifying” organ. “As such, the liver can be prone to damage caused by too much medicine in the body. Drug metabolites often return to the liver and are chemically altered once again before they exit the body.” <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/takingmedicines/drugsinthebody/01.html>

Elimination of medications: “Elimination of drugs from the body occurs primarily via renal excretion. As with metabolism, the half-life of drugs is increased as renal function is reduced. As the body ages, renal function declines, sometimes by a significant degree. This decline is the result of several physiological changes, which include a reduction in blood flow to the kidneys, a decrease in kidney mass, and a reduction in the size and number of functioning nephrons. Unlike hepatic effects, these changes are consistent from one patient to another.” “The impact of renal elimination of medications cannot be overstated. Many drugs are completely or partially excreted by the kidneys. Other drugs are metabolized (sometimes to active metabolites) and these metabolites are then excreted renally. A reduction in glomerular filtration rate is a

## Health Notes, cont'd

noted consequence of aging. Knowing which drugs are excreted renally and knowing how to adjust the doses of those drugs in patients with renal impairment is imperative to ensure safe and effective drug dosing in all patients.” [http://www.the-hospitalist.org/details/article/234051/Drugs\\_and\\_the\\_Elderly.html](http://www.the-hospitalist.org/details/article/234051/Drugs_and_the_Elderly.html) and [http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/769412\\_2](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/769412_2) and <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/takingmedicines/drugsinthebody/01.html>

Other web sites to consider: [www.nihseniorhealth.gov](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov)  
[http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/health\\_notes\\_drug\\_therapy.pdf](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/health_notes_drug_therapy.pdf)  
Information about geriatric hospital polypharmacy can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3038805/>

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### OCTOBER 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 <[dfmoore12@gmail.com](mailto:dfmoore12@gmail.com)>

We will meet Tuesday, Oct. 21st at 2:30 P.m. at Donna Moore's home at 346 Bayside Rd.

October's book is Transatlantic by Colum McCann

November's book is Empire of the Summer Moon by S. C. Gwynne

BRIDGE GROUP--Barb Evans, 360-650-9724, <[barbandhoward@comcast.net](mailto:barbandhoward@comcast.net)> We will meet Tuesday, October 28 at 1:30 p.m. at Barb Evans home at 715 N. Garden St., #502.

INFORMAL DINING -- Janet Berg, 360-733-4654, <[janetlila@hotmail.com](mailto:janetlila@hotmail.com)>

Meets in small groups each month at member's homes. The group will start meetings in October.

OPERA GROUP--Evelyn Ames, 360-734-3184, <[evelyn.ames@wwu.edu](mailto:evelyn.ames@wwu.edu)>

This group usually attends the opera independently or in small groups. Call Evelyn if you need a ride. Metropolitan Opera HD Series for 2014-2015, check this website for cast and dates of encores: <http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/liveinhd/LiveinHD.aspx> In the left corner is Participating Theaters (click on United States and/or Canada for listing). There are 10 HD showings this season. Running times of each opera are listed at main web site.

October 18 - Mozart's *Le Nozze de Figaro*

Encore - October 22

November 1—Bizet's *Carmen*

Encore—November 5

November 22 - Rossini's *IL Barbiere di Siviglia*

Encore - November 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Lincoln Theater in Mt. Vernon: <http://www.lincolntheatre.org/welcome> (click on calendar)

Check the Pickford Film Center for European opera showings: <http://pickfordfilmcenter.org/>

SKIING - Charlie Way, 360-734-0649. Check with Charlie next winter.

WRITER'S GROUP - Evelyn Wright, 676-0227, <[ewright410@comcast.net](mailto: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 in a second group, call Bill Smith, 647-4534, <[billsmith1545@yahoo.com](mailto:billsmith1545@yahoo.com)>

## Book Review

### Half the Sky: A Review

*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide.* By Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn.

This important book was published in 2009. I missed it then, but I'm reviewing it now because its topic, announced in the subtitle is, I believe, of paramount importance. (The title comes, surprisingly, from a sentence of Zedong, "Women hold up half the sky.") What forms of oppression, you might ask. The most terrible ones, is the answer. A partial list goes something like this: denial of education to girls and women, honor killings, female circumcision, forced marriage of very young girls, beating, programmatic infliction of fistula, prostitution, slavery.

Our authors, a husband and wife team, provide several reasons for the importance of their book, over and above the human reason of promoting the dignity and welfare of all human beings. In these days when the horrific actions of ISIS, or the Islamic State, are on almost everyone's mind, Kristof and WuDunn report that "countries that support terrorists are disproportionately those where women are marginalized." Allied to that social observation is the economic observation that "Women's empowerment helps raise economic productivity and reduce infant mortality. It contributes to improved health and nutrition." Noting that "investment in girls' education may well be the highest-return investment in the developing world," Kristof and WuDunn quote Lawrence Summers, then chief economist of the World Bank, "The question is not whether countries can afford the investment, but whether countries can afford not to educate more girls."

Authors Kristof and WuDunn report in chilling detail the horrific realities about the oppression of women in many of the developing countries of the world. Not only have they visited the countries in question, but they know personally the girls and women whose stories they tell: Meena Hasina in Bihar, India; Geeta Ghosh of Bangladesh; Zoya Najabi of Afghanistan; Mukhtar Mai of Punjab, India; Mahabouba Muhammed of Ethiopia; Claudine Mukakarisa of Rwanda; and many more. Their names are different and perhaps a bit exotic, but the realities they and millions more experience are only too brutal and nevertheless commonplace.

Because our authors focus on the oppression of women mostly in Asia and Africa, Germaine Greer, in reviewing the book, faults them for letting us in the first world off the hook. She has a point. Even so, the conditions the Kristof and WuDunn expose are so horrific, so brutal that attention must be paid to them. And they pay compelling attention.

They also provide their readers with answers: education, especially of girls, and micro-financing, to empower women to liberate themselves by establishing a small business. Their last chapter—"What You Can Do"—ends with a page listing "Four Steps You can Take in the Next Ten Minutes."

Two more notes: Locally, Kathryn Roe, retired art professor from Whatcom Community College, has founded a non-profit corporation, "Anansi," that provides high school tuition for poor students in Ghana, where public high schools charge tuition. Kathryn and her crew make a special effort to identify girls for this assistance. Also, it is especially heartening to see the Nobel Peace Prize to Malala Yousafzai, courageous young Pakistani woman whom the Taliban targeted and shot in the head because she advocates for education girls.

As I said in the beginning, this is an important book.

- Bob McDonnell

## Poetry Corner

### A Conversation with My Critic

Do you have a voice  
That sits on your shoulder observing,  
Delivering opinions?

“That turquoise looks good on you.  
Don’t ever wear beige, you’ll look dead.  
What’s happened to your skin? It’s wrinkled, blotchy.”

“By the way, your paintings are awkward;  
Your writings banal.  
What are you thinking!  
Why do you keep on?”

To see morning sun rise over the hill, I reply  
Smell damp wind; walk along the bay.  
Watch crows sweep down the alley.  
Drink tea in my garden.

Brush paint on canvas  
To catch play of color and shade,  
Translucence of a flower,  
Sunlight on the green leaf of a tree.

Scribble to explore ideas, memories,  
Patterns with words, images, dreams, stories.  
Make music with poems;  
Listen to the haiku beat of the heart.

“Hmph,” says the voice, sinking back  
Into silence.  
But only for a while.

*Lynne Masland, 2014*

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### A Note from Lou Lippman

“It occurred to me that the WWURAs might enjoy a talk I’ll be giving at Bellingham Senior Activity Center on Friday, October 24th, starting at 1 pm. I’ll essentially be giving something like the “book talk” that I had done at Village Books, describing how my collection of original pun stories came about and the studies I did with students at WWU to identify a couple mechanisms by which the humor of such stories can be boosted. The book is *Wince A Pun On Thyme--Scientifically Crafted Tales*. (Available at Village Books, Amazon and Kindle, and from me.)”

## **WWURA Bellingham Jingle Bell Run/Walk Team** **for 2014.**

Hope you will join our team, either as a walker/runner or one who donates to our team for the Arthritis Foundation. If you prefer not to register on-line but want a paper registration form, call **Evelyn Ames** at 734-3184 or email [Evelyn.Ames@wwu.edu](mailto:Evelyn.Ames@wwu.edu)

Date of walk: Saturday, December 13, 2014. Directions for logging on to our team:



1. Google: Bellingham jingle bell 2014
2. The first site listed is probably the best, so click on it. What comes up is the home page for the jingle bell.
3. Look to your left and note the column that says get involved as participant.
4. Click on this item and up comes a waiver agreement.
5. Click on agree
6. The next page indicates joining a team. At the bottom, there is a space to type in the name of the team (wwura). Enter wwura and click on "join a team."
7. This page should show "join a team" at the right side. Click on this and the next page should indicate to join as an individual with credit card or multiple with credit card. Next click should be using credit card to join.

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