



# WWURA NEWS



January 2015

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

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff



## WWURA Winter Luncheon

**Friday, February 13, 2015  
Northwood Hall, 11:30 a.m.  
3240 Northwest Ave**

Laura Laffrado, award-winning Professor of English at Western Washington University, will be the featured speaker at our Winter Luncheon. She has published widely on American literature. Her latest book, *Selected Writings of Ella Higginson*, will be published in July 2015.

### The Ella Higginson Recovery Project

Professor Laffrado will discuss the background and latest developments regarding her project to reintroduce the fascinating writings of forgotten Pacific Northwest writer Ella Rhoads Higginson to a new audience. During the turn into the twentieth century, Higginson was the most influential Pacific Northwest literary writer in the United States. Her once celebrated and award-winning writings were the very first to prominently place the Pacific Northwest on the literary map of the United States.

To learn more about Laura Laffrado's research on Bellingham author Ella Higginson, visit these websites:

"The Ella Higginson Recovery Project" <http://faculty.wwu.edu/laffrado/index.shtml>

"C-SPAN Interview about The Ella Higginson Recovery Project" <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/316868-1>

Don't miss this dynamic speaker.  
Be sure to send in your  
Reservation Form (page 6) by Mon-  
day, February 9th.

## Kerri Wood Offers Travel Tips for Italy on Jan. 21 at WWURA Travelogue

Have you ever wanted to go to Italy, but don't know how to start? Lively Kerri Wood of Adventure On Italy has all the answers you need. From how to look for accommodations, what to expect when you enjoy a meal, how to find the best activities for you and how to stay within your budget. Many of us have traveled in Italy, but we can always learn new tips and get new ideas from an expert.

Daughter of WWURA member Kathy Wood, Kerri is CEO and a guide for Adventure on Travel, specializing in Italy. She'll answer your questions and have tips on all aspects of travel, including packing, getting around, and what to see. She'll discuss individual travel vs. small groups or tours, depending on what kind of travel you prefer.

Her presentation takes place **Wednesday, Jan. 21 at the Squalicum Yacht Club, 2633 South Harbor Loop Rd., Socializing begins at 6:30 p.m.; presentation at 7.**

Members whose last name begins with **M through Z**, please bring a dessert to share. WWURA provides coffee and tea; some members bring wine. Please contact one of the board members if you need a ride.

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## January 2015 Health Notes by Evelyn Ames

### *Put a Smile on Your Face and Raise Your Endorphins*

"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." Thich Nhat Hanh

The next time you step into an elevator and there are others on the elevator with you, turn around, smile and ask them "how goes it?" You might find that doing this gives you a boost! Of course, some people might look at you and wonder what gives but most often, they will smile back at you and respond. When standing in line at a grocery or department store, smile at those in line behind you and strike up a conversation. Smiling and chatting have positive physiological effects.

Smiling "activates the release of neuropeptides that work toward fighting off [stress](#). Neuropeptides are tiny molecules that allow neurons to communicate. They facilitate messaging to the whole body when we are happy, sad, angry, depressed, or excited. The feel good neurotransmitters [dopamine](#), endorphins and serotonin are all released when a smile flashes across your face as well. This not only relaxes your body, but it can lower your heart rate and blood pressure."

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201206/there-s-magic-in-your-smile>." No one yet knows why our facial expressions influence our emotions as they seem to. The associations in our mind between how we feel and how we react may be so strong that our expressions simply end up reinforcing our emotions—there may be no evolutionary reason for the connection. Even so, our faces do seem to communicate our states of mind not only to others but also to ourselves."

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/smile-it-could-make-you-happier>.

**Reported benefits of smiling:** <http://longevity.about.com/od/lifelongbeauty/tp/smiling.htm>

- People are more likely to be drawn to people who smile compared to those with frowns and grimaces. "Smiling makes you appear more approachable. Interaction with others is easier and more enjoyable when smiles and laughs are shared, and these behaviours are contagious, making others feel better too, and make you a more appealing and attractive person to be around. This in turn will have a positive effect on your well-being." <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/7-benefits-smiling-and-laughing.html>
- Putting on a smile can help change a "downer" mood to an uplifting mood.
- A smiling person lightens up a room, changes the moods of others and makes things seem happier. Smiling is contagious.
- Become conscious that putting a smile on your face when feeling stressed may reduce your stress. When endorphins are increased, the stress hormone, cortisol, is reduced.
- Some researchers have found that smiling may boost the body's immune functions.
- Smiling helps a person stay positive about life!

**Simple ways to smile more often:** smile regularly; watch funny films, TV and theater shows; spend time with those that make you feel happy; and look for things that make you smile. When the sun shines in Bellingham, people do seem to be cheerier!

**Hints for striking up conversations with strangers!** Appear friendly (smiles do help); find a common ground; look interested in engaging in a conversation (people using their mobile phones are not likely to be receptive); find what a person's expertise is and ask questions about it; the right location helps (waiting in line at airports, stores, or sports events); and identify people in similar situations as you find yourself in. But, do sense when someone doesn't want to chat.

(cont'd on page 3)

## Health Notes, cont'd

“It's surprisingly easy to talk to strangers and make new friends. All you need to do is make them feel comfortable and engage them on a topic that's interesting to them. If you listen, you end up learning a lot about different industries and various walks of life.” <http://www.quora.com/What-are-some-tips-for-striking-up-conversation-with-total-strangers>



Smile: You're on Candid Camera!

### WWURA Calendar

#### January 2015

6—Board Meeting

21—Travelogue—Italy with Kerri Woods

#### February 2015

3—Board Meeting

13—WWURA Luncheon—Speaker, **Professor Laura Laffrado** on “The Ella Higginson Project”

#### March 2015

3—Board Meeting

18—Travelogue—Africa with Margaret Loudon

### WWURA President's Note



We began the new year of 2015 with beautiful sunshine, albeit a bit chilly, followed by turns and twists of rain, sleet, and snow. Our annual December holiday party was filled with good cheer, conversation and tasty food. Much appreciated was the background piano music provided by Lou Lippman. Burl Harmon led some enthusiastic carol singers. Many thanks to those who decorated, set up, and/or helped with the cleanup. Among members lending a hand were Margie and Frank Belzek, Donna Moore, Howard Evans, Ron Ward, Burl Harmon (music, set up and take down), Nanette Davis, Barbara Davidson, Chris and George Gerhold, Patricia Roberts. Larry Richardson provided the turkey breasts, Donna Moore provided the ham, and Evelyn Ames provided the turkey thighs.

Thanks are extended to members and friends who joined me in participating or donating to WWURA's Jingle Bell Run/Walk team: Barbara and Mel Davidson, Charlie Way, Pat Clarke, Chris and George Gerhold, Julie Gorrell, John Reay, Rosemary Flora, Margaret Woll, Lynne Masland, Lina Zeine, Ingeborg Paulus, Roy Potter, Marc Geisler, and Alisa Sachs.

Please check this newsletter's notice about our January (Wednesday 21) travelogue with featured presenter, Kerri Wood, sharing her experiences of organizing travel in Italy.

Our WWURA Board of Directors is looking for members interested in serving on WWURA committees or on the Board of Directors. Descriptions of committee responsibilities are available from Evelyn (360-734-3184) [Evelyn.Ames@wwu.edu](mailto:Evelyn.Ames@wwu.edu). We have several members on committees and the board who are friends of the university but are not necessarily former employees. Consider getting involved as a great way to stay in touch with university friends/associates and to have fun! President-Elect, Ron Ward, chairs the nominations committee; let him know if you are interested. [ron.ward740@gmail.com](mailto:ron.ward740@gmail.com) or 425-299-4924.

- Evelyn Ames

## Book Review

### Alexander McCall Smith: an Introduction

I have to call this piece an introduction to this remarkable author- Alexander McCall Smith—since I have read only about 14 novels of his prodigious output. McCall Smith, his surname, has authored some 80 works. Let me tell you about two different series of his novels.

The first of his works to come to my attention was his 1999 *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, in which Mma Precious Ramotswa opens a detective agency using the proceeds from the sale of a herd of cattle she inherited from her beloved father. It is the only detective agency in all of Botswana, which Mma Ramotswa establishes in Gaborone, Botswana's capitol. One of her early cases is that of a missing husband, whom she discovers has been converted to evangelical Christianity and was eaten by a crocodile while awaiting baptism by immersion in a river. She delivers the missing husband's wrist watch to the widow. Other cases involve moral and cultural problems in the lives of her clients. McCall Smith, a Scotsman born and raised in what was then Southern Rhodesia and now is Zimbabwe, clearly admires the ways in which his characters balance modern developments and traditional culture. Mma Ramotswa, a single lady "traditionally built," casts approving eyes on Mr. J. L. B. Maketoni, owner of Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, whom she marries at the end of the novel.

All in all, this novel and the series it introduces are a charming evocation of the small but significant realities of daily life in Botswana. A friend of mine who has lived in Africa for some years likes this series very much, partly because it gives such a delightful and authentic limning of African women, their shrewdness and their generosity.

Isabel Dalhousie, though, is my favorite McCall Smith character. She lives in Edinburg and is the owner and editor of an academic journal, *The Review of Applied Ethics*. Isabel, in her early forties, is a woman of intellect and culture who moves easily among the professional circles of Edinburg society. She attracts requests to solve genteel mysteries, because she's good at it. In a recent novel of the series devoted to her, Isabel is asked to solve the disappearance of a Poussin painting from a country mansion near Edinburg. While solving the mystery (it's a family affair), she pays automatic attention to ethical dimensions of her actions and those of the people in her life, always in a way that strikes me as generous and appealing. She solves the case while living her life fully—editing her *Review*, loving her husband and her toddler, sorting out a child-rearing misunderstanding with her son's governess. She also moves a father and a rebellious son toward reconciliation—all the while acting with generosity (there's that word again) and thoughtfulness.

There is a lot more to McCall Smith, but space limits me this time out. Perhaps I'll review his *The Forever Girl* in a later issue of our Newsletter. If you haven't already done so, give Alexander McCall Smith a try.

- Bob McDonnell

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### Well-known Artist Steve Mayo to Give Talk at WWU Jan. 20

Noted Pacific Northwest maritime artist Steve Mayo will give an illustrated talk describing the new research behind his latest watercolor painting of Capt. Vancouver's vessels H.M.S. *Discovery* and *Chatham* on **Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 4 p.m.** The talk titled "Capt. Vancouver's H.M.S. *Discovery* Re-imagined: Creating an Accurate Historical Painting" takes place in Western Washington University's Wilson Library in the Special Collections room on the 6th floor.



With the help of recent research on the appearance of Capt. Vancouver's flagship H.M.S. *Discovery*, Mayo created a painting of the two vessels becalmed in Rosario Strait on June 9, 1792. The painting received a first-place award at the Mystic Seaport International Marine Art Exhibition in Sept. 2012.

A special exhibit of 15 of Mayo's historical watercolor prints illustrating the voyages of Capts. Vancouver, Cook and Robert Gray to the Pacific Northwest in the late 18th century will be on display in Special Collections Jan. 15 through March 15.

**Reservation Form**  
**WWURA Winter Luncheon**  
**11:30 a.m., Friday, February 13, 2015**  
**Northwood Hall, 3240 Northwest Avenue**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address or Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15 member, \$18 for non-member)

**Reservation Deadline is Monday, February 9, 2015**

Make your check payable to WWURA and mail with this form to **Patricia Roberts, 715 Marine Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225**. Questions? Call Patricia at 676-2593.

Need a ride? Check here \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

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**JANUARY 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, Jan. 20th at 2:30 p.m. at Barbara Evans' home 715 N. Garden #502

January's book is *Yes Chef: A Memoir* by Marcus Samuelsson

February's book is *Boys in the Boat* by Daniel Brown. Discussion Leader is Pat Clarke

BRIDGE GROUP--Caryl Hinckley, 360-734-3728, <[carylchinckley@hotmail.com](mailto:carylchinckley@hotmail.com)>

We will meet January 27th at Caryl Hinckley's home, 18 Taylor St..

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

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

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.

January 17 - Lehar's *The Merry Widow* (new production)

Encore January 21

January 31 - Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffman*

Encore - February 4

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

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

SKIING - Charlie Way, 360-734-0649. Winter is here!! Check with Charlie if you are interested in skiing.

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.

## Writers Group

*(Nanette suffered a fall a few months ago and is recovering well. This poem is her reflection on that experience. )*

### **Better My Misery Than Hers**

Another sheet-wrapped victim, alive, breathing, a drug-induced coma,  
unable to move, feel, think or be.

Merely a body stretched out for the medical examiners,  
who probe, press, ply their expert hand on injuries that have  
stripped their subject into object; the remains of the body.

A sorry sight, but a gladdening view that lifts my spirits and lets me soar a moment.

There was I not so long ago. Frail, tiny, a mere speck of humanity,  
rendered helpless and hapless by a simple fall.

Down, Downward, Backward on the unsuspecting spine.

A crack heard, then screaming—surely not from me—followed by dread; Death  
perhaps, paralysis, endings without new beginnings.

I, a passer-by, a witness to another's misery.

She will recover. As I did. She will take those first tentative steps.  
as I did. She will secretly gloat at the newest body in observation mode,  
our open rooms exposing every function, every weakness, every sigh.

But better my misery than hers, the unconscious victim, still awaiting wakefulness and  
unspeakable pain.

*Nanette Davis  
December 2014*

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