



# WWURA NEWS

November 2015

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

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

## President's Note

We're definitely into the heart of the fall season now with daytime highs in the 40s and nighttime lows in the 30s! So, I hope you survived Halloween and the switch back to Standard Time and are looking ahead to an exciting month of November activities. We'll all be remembering our veterans especially as well as celebrating Thanksgiving.

I'm personally looking forward to our Travelogue on November 18 with Marie Eaton and Mary Ellen O'Keefe. No doubt the names Cambodia and Vietnam bring to mind for some such names and images as the Mekong Delta, Phnom Penh, Angkor Wat, Buddhist pagodas, Hanoi and Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). So, it will be both interesting and informative to hear about these two countries based on our speakers' recent trip.

WWURA has a special need at this time for volunteers to work on the Hospitality Committee as we prepare for our Holiday Party on December 16, as well as on the Program Committee as we prepare for our Winter and Spring luncheons. If you'd like to help, contact me via e-mail at [ron.ward740@gmail.com](mailto:ron.ward740@gmail.com).

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## WWURA Travelogue

### Vietnam & Cambodia

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

6:30 pm Socializing, 7:00 pm Presentation

Squalicum Yacht Club, 2633 South Harbor Loop Rd

Travel with **Marie Eaton** and **Mary Ellen O'Keefe** as they take us on a Road Scholar trip to study the cultures, heritage and natural beauty of Vietnam and Cambodia. "We began in Hanoi, exploring the artistic and historical heritage of North Vietnam, then on to the spectacular limestone islands of Ha Long Bay. Next to Ho Chi Minh City to explore this modern city and encounter the history of the Vietnam War from their side. We considered legacies of culture and war both bleak and beautiful as we navigated up the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers to access villages and rice paddies where authentic Khmer and Vietnamese culture lives on, ending in the magnificence of Angkor Wat."



Members whose last names begin with **M through Z** please bring a dessert to share. WWURA provides coffee and tea; some members bring wine. Contact a board member if you need a ride.

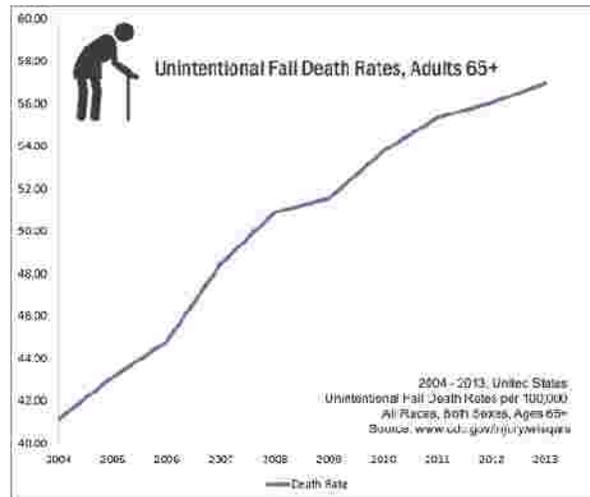
A small donation of \$2/person, \$3/couple is requested to cover room rental and beverages.

“Jack and Jill went up the hill, To fetch a pail of water.  
Jack fell down and broke his crown, And Jill came tumbling after.”

The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, in reporting results from various studies, indicate that adjusted for inflation, direct medical costs for fall injuries in 2013 were \$34 billion. Direct medical costs are what patients and insurance companies pay. Of this amount, hospital costs account for approximately 2/3 of the total. The price tag will undoubtedly increase with the rise in numbers of older adults. Falls are among the twenty most expensive medical conditions in which the average hospital cost is \$35,000 for a fall injury. Statistics from CDC show Medicare probably pays for about 78% of the costs of falls. “Each year, millions of older people—those 65 and older—fall. In fact, one out of three older people falls each year, but less than half tell their doctor.” Falling once doubles the chances of falling again.

**Some statistics about falls:**

- One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- Each year, 2.5 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries.
- Over 700,000 patients a year are hospitalized because of a fall injury, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.
- Each year at least 250,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures.
- More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.
- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries (TBI).



**Risk factors/conditions that contribute to falling include:** lower body weakness, Vitamin D deficiency, difficulties with walking and balance, use of medicines such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants and over-the-counter medicines, vision problems, eyeglass lens prescriptions, foot pain or poor footwear, home hazards such as broken or uneven steps, throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over, and absence of handrails along stairs or in the bathroom. A combination of factors is most likely the reason. The more the risk factors, the greater the chances of falling.

**Diseases causing Infections and their relationship to falling.** An October media release from the Infectious Diseases Week annual meeting of specialists in infectious diseases reported, that although falls brought patients to emergency centers, the underlying factors were infections in many cases. Some stud

ies suggest between 20 percent and 45 percent of falls are caused by infections. “Infections can lower blood pressure and lead to dizziness and lightheadedness, increasing the risk for a tumble. Illness can also increase confusion in older people with dementia.” Urinary, bloodstream and respiratory infections were the most common culprits.

**Take actions to prevent falls! Do a visual check of your home surroundings and remove the clutter!**

- **Do Strength and Balance Exercises.** Do exercises that make legs stronger and improve balance. Consider using a walking or hiking stick to aid in walking. Include weight lifting in exercise routines. Tai Chi is a good example of an exercise that helps improve balance. Various places in Whatcom County offer Tai Chi classes. For example, the YMCA offers Introduction to Tai Chi (Monday and Thursday at noon) with a new class beginning in January, 2016).
- **Have Eyes Checked.** Update lens if needed. If bifocal or progressive lenses are worn, consider using a pair of glasses with only distance prescription for outdoor activities, such as walking. Take care in walking down stairs if wearing progressive lens.
- **Make Home Safer.** Get rid of things that can be tripped over. Add grab bars inside and outside bathtub or shower and next to the toilet. Put railings on both sides of stairs. Make sure home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs.
- **Talk to Your Doctor or health care provider to evaluate risk.** Review medications (both prescription and OTC’s) that might cause drowsiness. Check labels to see if lightheadedness or drowsiness are side effects. Have vitamin D level checked to see if supplementation is needed.

**Resources:**

*CDC Compendium of Effective Fall Interventions: What Works for Community-Dwelling Older Adults, 3rd Edition*

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/compendium.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/adultfalls.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/falls/fallcost.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalsafety/index.html>

Ten Leading causes of death in United States: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leadingcauses.html>

Infectious Diseases Week, news release, Oct. 9, 2015 [http://www.idsociety.org/News\\_Releases/](http://www.idsociety.org/News_Releases/)

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**President’s Note**, cont’d from page 1

We also continue to welcome additional contributions from WWURA members to our Scholarship Fund. We are sponsoring two students this year at Western: **Maria Battor** and **Diane Perez**, both seniors. If you wish to contribute, make your check payable to WWURA, designate it for scholarships, and mail it to Barbara Evans at 715 N. Garden St. #502, Bellingham, WA 98225.

As always, you’ll find a wealth of information and interesting reading in this issue of the Newsletter, including a book review, health notes, interest groups, a Calendar of Events, and others. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Squalicum Yacht Club on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm for socializing, followed by the Travelogue presentation at 7 pm.

—Ron Ward



**Check it out!**

**[www.wvu.edu/wwura](http://www.wvu.edu/wwura)**

WWURA’s website has a wealth of information such as

- Past Newsletters
- Past Health Notes
- Current list of Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairmen

## Book Review

### *Last Bus to Wisdom* by Ivan Doig: A Review

Doig needs little introduction to Bellingham readers. He filled to overflowing every session of Chuckanut Radio Hour sponsored by Village Books at which he appeared. This endearing novel is Doig's last novel, in both senses of that world. It is his latest and his final novel. Alas, Doig died in April of this year.

*Last Bus to Wisdom* tells the tale of Donal, an eleven year old boy who has been living with his beloved grandmother on the high plains of northern Montana just east of the Rocky Mountains, precisely where Doig himself grew up. In an introductory section, because of her health problems, Donal's grandmother reluctantly sends Donal to live temporarily with her estranged sister in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Thus follows the three part novel. In the first part Donal travels by bus—alone—from Gros Ventre, Montana, to Sheboygan. In the second part, grandmother's estranged sister turns out to be deservedly estranged—self-centered, tyrannical, stingy, and mean-spirited. Donal precipitates the third part of the adventure when he escapes his great-aunt and Sheboygan, to ride back to Montana, with the legendary town of Wisdom as his goal. The great-aunt's henpecked common law husband escapes with him.

On his bus trips Donal meets and mostly charms an intriguing set of characters. An incomplete list includes an itinerant waitress who formerly worked with Donal's grandmother, her freespirited boy friend, who is being escorted to prison by his half-brother sheriff, several scam artists, a world champion rodeo rider. And others. In this episodic tale, Donal makes his way through the world with a fruitful imagination and impish charm.

Doig places eleven year old Donal's adventures in the summer of 1951. It is striking to me that in 1951 Doig was himself eleven years old. I am at a loss to guess the significance of this coincidence.

Two more observations: Doig's art as a master stylist, with wit that was recognizably his alone, is in full display in *Last Bus to Wisdom*. There is in fact a town in Montana named Wisdom. It's not on highway maps. It's population in the 2000 census was 114; in 2010 it was 98. It nestles at an elevation of 6,000 feet in the valley of the Big Hole River, originally named Wisdom River by Lewis and Clark.

The novel begins with the precarious health of Donal's grandmother and concludes happily with her return to health. In the interim, our hero samples life richly and may indeed have finished his adventures not only safely reunited with his greatly loved grandmother but perhaps also with a measure of wisdom.

- Bob McDonnell

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## NOVEMBER 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 at 2:30 Tuesday, November 17th at the home of Donna Moore, 1200 Birch Falls Drive.

November's book is *Daughters of Mars* by Thomas Keneally; discussion leader is Barb Evans; snacks, Evelyn Ames.

December's book is *The Black West* by William Loran Katz; discussion leader is Donna Moore; snacks Donna.

BRIDGE GROUP--Nicholas Bullat, 360-770-7270 <[gmb.maestro@q.com](mailto:gmb.maestro@q.com)>

We will meet at 1:30 on Tuesday, November 24th at Caryl Hinckley's home 1804 Taylor Ave., 734-3728.

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

Meetings will resume this month.

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

Web site for The MET HD: <https://www.metopera.org/Season/InCinemas/>.

and for the Skagit Opera: <http://skagitopera.org/performances/>

Locations for MET HD: Barkley Film Center and Lincoln Theater in Mt. Vernon. Skagit Opera is at McIntyre Hall in Mt. Vernon. At various times the Pickford Film Center offers opera, ballet, and theater productions from Europe venues.

### Schedule for Met HD

November 21 - *Lulu* by Alban Berg; Encore - December 2

December 12 - *The Magic Flute* by Mozart, Holiday Encore Performance

Skagit Opera Hansel & Gretel, November 6/8/13/15 at McIntyre Hall in Mt. Vernon.

SKIING - Charlie Way, 360-734-0649. Over for this season. Let's hope for more snow this year!

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.

### WWURA 2015 Calendar

#### November

3—Board Meeting

18—Travelogue-Vietnam and Cambodia

#### December

1—Board Meeting

16—Holiday Party

## WWURA's Bellingham Jingle Bell Run/Walk Team

Come jingle with WWURA's Bellingham Jingle Bell Run/Walk team. It's fun to walk our colleagues and enjoy seeing various fun-like costumes that other teams sport! There are lots of dogs on leashes and sometimes we have small ponies and goats. Not sure what small animal will take part this December (always the second Saturday in December). All the money we raise goes to local programs, to research to find cures for arthritic diseases and to support a fellowship for a physician to focus on juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Here is how to register online for the WWURA team:

Steps for registering for WWURA Jingle Bell Team for December 12, 2015

<https://www.kintera.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1139054>

- Under get involved (left side), click on registration
- Click on "agree" under waiver
- Follow instructions under first category: register one person with credit card
- Click on join a team and scroll down to find WWURA
- Follow instructions for registering in one of three ways and complete requested information.

If you do not want to register online, contact Evelyn Ames ([evelyn.ames@wwu.edu](mailto:evelyn.ames@wwu.edu)) to obtain a paper form for registering.

We hope you join us. Additional contributions above registration fee are welcomed.

- Evelyn



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