



WWURA NEWS

February 2019

www.wwu.edu/wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

WWURA's Winter Luncheon

Friday, February 15, 2019

Northwood Hall, 11:30 a.m.

3240 Northwest Avenue

Speakers: Professor Mark Peyron, Department of Engineering & Design, WWU
Professor Marion Brodhagen, Department of Biology, WWU

“An Exploration of the Use of Plastics in Agriculture”

The word plastics has morphed from a connotation of “cheap” to one of “trash”. At the same time, phrases such as “biodegradable” and “compostable” and bioplastic” have been used to promote greener materials. The reality of manufacturing, consumer usage patterns and end-of-life options for these products is much more complex and more interesting than these labels would suggest. We will take an example of the use of plastics in agriculture to explore the technical challenges economic compromises, practical considerations and biological realities of the use of these materials



Dr. Marion Brodhagen earned her master’s degree in science from Oregon State University in 1998 and her doctorate from OSU in 2003. She has taught at Western since 2006. She became fascinated with secondary metabolites after college while working with the plant natural product taxol (an anti-cancer drug) and has expertise in Plant Protection and Animal Health, Agricultural Plant Science and Food Science.

Dr. Mark Peyron earned his B.S. in Chemical Engineering at the University of Idaho in 1985 and his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering & Polymer Chemistry at the University of Washington in 1993. His research interests are in Biodegradable plastics, Polymer characterization, Additive manufacturing (3D Printing, fused deposition modeling) and Engineering education.



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2019 February Health Notes by Evelyn Ames

Knowing When to Stop Driving!

For most older adults, driving is a key to independence. So how does an older driver, concerned family member, or friend know when it is time to stop and hang up the keys.? Chronological age alone does not determine if someone is capable of driving carefully. Changes in vision, hearing, reaction time, mental and physical health, and environmental awareness are factors. Driving is a demanding activity that requires one's full attention to many things at the same time. Potential risk factors are distractions inside and outside a car that take a driver's eyes off the road or take both hands off the wheel.

“The question of when it is time to limit or stop driving is not about age. It's about the ability of the driver.” Safely driving a vehicle requires physical and cognitive capabilities, driving skills and good driving behavior. AARP suggests the following are warning signs of unsafe driving:

- Delayed response to unexpected situations.
- Becoming easily [distracted while driving](#).
- Decrease in confidence while driving.
- Having difficulty moving into or maintaining the correct lane of traffic.
- Hitting curbs when making right turns or backing up.
- Getting scrapes or dents on car, garage or mailbox.
- Having frequent close calls.
- Driving too fast or too slow for road conditions.

Clear indications when it is no longer safe to drive: Stopping at green lights or when there is no stop sign. Getting confused by traffic signals. Running stop signs or red lights. Having accidents or side-swiping other cars when parking. Getting lost and calling for directions. Hearing from friends who are concerned about a person's driving.

Assess your own driving skills: Ask yourself how is your attention and reaction time? Do you pay attention to changes in the driving environment? Can you process information quickly and accurately? Relying on a cell phone while driving is not going to do it! How is your memory? Can you figure out how to get from one place to another (e.g., to the grocery store or doctor's office)? Do you know what to do if the car has a flat tire or the engine doesn't start? Consider what effects a person's medications may have on driving skills.

Telltale signs signaling a decline in a person's driving abilities. **Their driving is dangerous** (ElderKind.com):

- Do they have difficulty in turning their head, neck, or body while driving or parking?
- They don't have enough strength to turn the wheel quickly in case of an emergency.
- Become angry and frustrated easily while driving.
- Do they fail to yield to pedestrians or motorists who have right of the way?
- Do they get lost in familiar neighborhoods?
- Do they find it difficult to drive with glare from oncoming vehicles, or other bright or shiny objects?
- Have they had one or more accidents or near misses recently?

Preparing for the conversation with [We Need to Talk](#), is a free online seminar developed jointly with the Hartford and MIT AgeLab. <https://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/we-need-to-talk/>
<https://www.caring.com/articles/when-to-stop-driving> <https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/driving-safety.aspx>
<http://www.talk-early-talk-often.com/Senior-Drivers.html>

FEBRUARY 2019 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

We will meet on Tuesday at 2:00 pm February 19th at the home of Donna Moore, 1200 Birch Falls Dr., 360-733-5769.

February's book is *Forged in Crisis* by Nancy Koehn. Discussion leader-Donna Moore.

BRIDGE GROUP—Caryl Hinckley, 360-739-1036, carylchinckley@hotmail.com

Is anyone interested in restarting the bridge group? Let Caryl or Barb Evans know.

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

Informal dining is ongoing, information for the remainder of the year will be coming soon.

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

Contact Evelyn for more information.

Seattle Opera: Feb 23-March 09: *Revolution of Steve Jobs*

Vancouver Opera: February 14-24: *La Boheme*

Met HD: March 2: *La Fille du Regiment*

Radio: CBC Radio2: starts at 1 pm King FM: starts at Eastern time: Feb 9: *Iolanta* and *Bluebeard's Castle*; Feb 16: *Don Giovanni*; Feb 23: *Rigoletto*

WRITER'S GROUP - Troy Faith Ward, 425-299-4924, troyfaithward@gmail.com.

Meets twice a month. The groups are kept small so there is time for reading and critiquing each other's work.

HAPPY HOUR—Claire Bowden, 360-540-2122 clairebowden14@gmail.com

The "Happy Hour" group will not get together this month but resume meeting in May 2019.

Noteworthy

Lynne Masland's latest book, *Island Reflections: Poems and Paintings* is available at Village Books in Fairhaven, upstairs in the poetry section.

About this book **Laura Laffrado**, author of *Selected Writings of Ella Higginson: Inventing Pacific Northwest Literature*, has said: "Masland's exquisite poems and hauntingly beautiful paintings invite us into the startling beauty of the Pacific Northwest's Lopez Island. As we move with Masland through places like Shark Reef and Shoal Bay Lane, we share her vibrant island life of seals and Steller's jays in a rich landscape of laurels, rhododendrons, and roses. The perfect book for all those who love the wonderful Pacific Northwest."

WWURA Calendar 2019

February

5—Board Meeting

15—WWURA Lunch—Northwood Hall

“The Environmental Degradation Ability of Plastics”

March

5—Board Meeting

20—Travelogue—6:30 p.m. Squalicum Yacht Club

Lina Zeine on Lebanon

April

2—Board Meeting

17—Travelogue—6:30 p.m. Squalicum Yacht Club—

Peace Corps

19—WWURA Luncheon—11:30 a.m. Northwood Hall

May

7—Board Meeting

30—Western's Retirement Dinner

Book Review

***No Time to Spare* by Ursula K Le Guin: a Review**

This book is a collection of meditative essays. I generally avoid them, but Ursula Le Guin has overcome my prejudice with this small and thought-provoking work. Le Guin was—she died last January at the age of 88—a prolific, influential writer of fantasy and science fiction, also a poet. Her awards and prizes are almost too many to count.

Late in life she began writing a blog, and this book is a number of her entries. She is an engaging writer, thoughtful, even meditative at times, with strong opinions beautifully expressed with gentleness and civility. The first breath of fresh air for me was when I read the essay in which Le Guin embraces being old. Actually there are several of them. Her clear-eyed rumination on the diminution of being old is heartening.

Le Guin is wonderfully observant of and sensitive to natural things. She learns much from her mostly amicable sharing her home with her cat Pard. She has a marvelous encounter with a rattlesnake in which she and it hold each other in an hypnotic stare for fifteen minutes or so. Both survive the experience. And there is her encounter with a captive lynx. His beauty captures her.

Sometimes Le Guin uses a literary work to power her thinking. My favorite instance is her piece on Homer. She gets him just right, I think. She sees the Trojan War as simply war, not noble but “wasteful, useless, needless, stupid, protracted . . .” She calls Achilles (accurately, I think) “a sulky, self-pitying teenager” and a great warrior.

Laced throughout the book are Le Guin’s thoughts on sexual politics, about which she taught me much, particularly about the difference between male bonding and female bonding. A strong and thoughtful feminist, she values both, of course.

There is more, a whole lot more, in this small book of short and deep essays.

- Bob McDonnell

Northwest Youth Services – a Worthy Non-profit

This estimable organization serves some of the most vulnerable among us—at-risk, runaway or homeless youth, from age 13 to 24. It does so with a well-calibrated set of programs. There is street outreach to identify homeless youth and to connect them with needed services, emergency housing for up to 90 days, transitional and permanent housing (with case managers), mental health services across all other programs, employment and education support (the employment is short-time, part-time employment with wages supplemented by NWYS), Queer Youth services (for the 40% of homeless youth who self-identify as LGBTQ), and teen court, a diversion program which is a cooperative effort of NWYS and Whatcom County Superior Court. Extraordinarily transparent about its finances, NWYS has posted several years of its annual report to the IRS. Its newly enlarged building is at 1022 North State Street. Its URL is nwys.org.

Writer's Group

Finding Our Roots

I watch each Tuesday evening as Dr. Henry Gates, Jr. untangles the genetic threads” of heritage with three guests on his PBS television program “Finding Your Roots.” Who will his well-known guests be this week? What will be their surprise stories?

Gently, with humor and deep research, he traces each one’s ancestry, recounts the stories of his guests’ forebears, researching records for names, places and migration histories of long-forgotten ancestors to understand how his guests came to be who they are today.

Patiently he peels back the layers of outward identity to reveal the mixing underneath: the ancient journeys out of Africa across the Mediterranean Sea, the Irish person with dashes of Spanish, and middle-Eastern ancestry, the genetic mixings of great migrations, wars, small villages, large cities.

Each of us has this record of long-ago mixing, coupling, sometimes love stories carried within us, making us who we are -- but collectively revealing our human stew.

All this Dr. Gates unfolds within the allotted hour, in his quiet way – but not so quiet after all – showing us our diversity. His voice is a strong protest against those who would divide us, label us, anoint some, reject others. His is a voice for acceptance, the truth about our tangled stories, the forgotten lives of those who have gone before us: their struggles, bravery, resolve, weaknesses, journeys, work, loves, perhaps even chicanery. Not always a straight road, often with cover-ups to conceal origins or deeds, but always interesting.

In the end, though, Dr. Gates says as his guests express surprise, wonder sometimes a touch of shock, “Who you are is as much how *you* define yourself as who your ancestors are.”

- Lynne Masland

Reservation Form WWURA Winter Luncheon 11:30 a.m., February 15, 2019 Northwood Hall, 3240 Northwest Avenue

Name (s) _____

Address or Phone Number _____

Amount Enclosed _____ (\$17 members, \$19 for non-member)

Reservation Deadline is Monday, February 11, 2019

Make your **check payable to WWURA** and mail with this form to **Chris Gerhold, 829 Racine, Bellingham, WA, 98229**. Questions ? Call Chris at 360-733-9265.

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