



WWURA NEWS

October 2019

www.wvu.edu/wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

President's Note by Kevin Majkut

I remember almost 60 years ago my Dad taking me to "volunteer" at a variety of club dinners and fundraisers. As a 9 year old my duties included setting up chairs, clearing plates, and sweeping... yes, lots of sweeping, sweeping and sweeping. (This would be the place where I would normally tell the story of how as a college freshman sweeping up the gym after a Santana concert resulted in a 40-year career on campus... but I'm trying to stay on task so I'll hold that for a future story telling.)

And, of course, that brings me to WWURA. In the best of all worlds, organizations function in a manner whereby people step forward to assume tasks for a time, then another person steps forward... in that way sharing the load among the membership. Of course, not everyone likes chairing a meeting or setting up chairs but people hopefully can find a task that meets their interests and talents. It can be problematic for the group when no one steps forward or the same people get tasked year after year.

I'm asking the membership to help in two ways this month.

First, the upcoming October 18th luncheon looks to have a great program from the Western Heritage Center staff on WWU campus building's history. After years of walking those hallways and watching buildings develop, we'll be hearing new information. And the luncheons are always a great time to gather with colleagues and friends. I'm asking you to take a moment to think about WWURA members who you haven't seen at programs/events recently; WWU retirees who are not members, but you believe would benefit from joining, or other friends that might be interested in attending/joining...and invite them to the event.

Secondly, we are in need of some people to volunteer with Hospitality, mainly set-up and strike at events, storing supplies, and staffing the welcoming

WWURA's Winter Luncheon

Friday, October 18, 2019

Northwood Hall, 11:30 a.m.

3240 Northwest Avenue

Presenters: Elizabeth Joffrion, Director of Heritage Resources; Tony Kurtz, University Archives; Michael Taylor, Special Collections; Ruth Steele, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies.

Title: Everyone has an Opinion: The Evolution of a Campus Design

Drawing on the archival collections held by Western Libraries' Division of Heritage Resources, this presentation will explore the history and development of Western's campus through three critical periods of growth and change. Using campus plans, photographs and other original documents, staff will discuss the vision and controversies behind Western's planning and design and contrast campus growth with images and facts about the broader community of Bellingham.

table. The people currently performing those tasks need to step back a bit. Please contact Chris Gerhold (chrisandgeorge@comcast.net) or myself directly or by email if you are willing to volunteer.

What's the saying "...many hands make light work?"

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OCTOBER 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 October 16th at the home of Donna Moore 1200 Birch Falls Dr., 360-733-5769.

October's book is *The Soul of America* by Jon Meacham. Discussion leader-Inge, snacks-Inge.

November's book is *The House at the Edge of the Night* by Catherine Banner.

Discussion leader-Suzanne, snacks-Suzanne.

INFORMAL DINING—Stephen Hutchens, 360-483-6873 sphutchens@yahoo.com

The dining schedule has been sent to participants. We look forward to another great year starting in October!!

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

Contact Evelyn for more information.

2019-2020 MET HD schedule (Saturdays): Oct. 12 (*Turandot*); Oct. 26 (*Manon*); Nov. 9 (*Madama Butterfly*); Nov. 23 (Philip Glass' *Akhmaten*); Jan. 11 (*Wozzeck*); Feb. 1 (*Porgy and Bess*); Feb. 29 (Handel's *Agrippina*); March 14 (*Der Fliegende Hollander*); April 11 (*Tosca*); May 9 (*Maria Stuarda*).

Met HD: Radio broadcasts: King FM-98.1 and CBC Radio 2 105.7

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

Happy Hour has been discontinued due to lack of participation

SECOND WRITER'S GROUP FORMING

Recently a few WWURA members have expressed an interest in joining a writer's group. Since the established group is full, we have offered to help get a second group started. Two people have already "signed up."

If you would like to be in a small, group of colleagues who share writing, and offer supportive comments and editing to each other, please speak up. Even if you want to explore the possibility of joining such a group, come try it out. The group will be designing its own "best practices," so you will have ample opportunity to make it the kind of group that fits your needs.

You may contact either: **Suzanne Krogh:**

Suzanne.Krogh@wwu.edu 360-220-5402 **OR** **Troy Faith Ward :**
troyfaithward@gmail.com 360 738 8900.

Editor's Note

Due to technical difficulties the **Health Notes by Evelyn Ames** cannot be printed in the October Newsletter. However you can find them on our web page www.wwu.edu/wwura.

They are under the category of Health Notes and are titled, "Mixing Food and Medications: The Interaction of Common Foods and Various Medications".

Book Review

The Spy and the Traitor by Ben MacIntyre: A Review

This absorbing spy story comes from the Cold War era, features a Soviet KGB agent—Oleg Gordievsky—who became an informant for the West for 11 years and is alive and well in England today. His tale is told engagingly and with some thrilling suspense by Ben MacIntyre, an experienced teller of spy stories. Published last year, the book is now newly released in a paperback edition. MacIntyre draws extensively, of course, from Gordievsky's own memoir *Next Stop Execution*, published in 1995.

Gordievsky was born in 1938, just as Stalin's bloody purges in the Soviet Union came to a close. His father was a KGB general, his older brother was a KGB officer, his first wife was a KGB officer, his second wife was the daughter of a KGB officer.

After graduating from an elite Soviet university, Gordievsky joined the Soviet foreign service and in 1961 was assigned to East Berlin, just in time to experience the building of the Berlin Wall—which appalled and disillusioned him. The disillusionment was not complete, however, for he returned to Moscow and in 1963 joined the KGB, which posted him to Copenhagen. He enjoyed the open social life, the rich artistic and intellectual life of Copenhagen. Then in 1968 the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to crush the Prague Spring completed the disillusionment of Gordievsky. He signaled his disenchantment and was recruited by the Danish and British secret services.

Gordievsky did not inform anyone of his defection to the West, not even his wife. He became even more valuable an asset when he was assigned to the Soviet London embassy as its KGB officer-in-charge. He had a major role in avoiding a nuclear war, with the Soviets misinterpreting a NATO war game. Perhaps it was Aldrich Ames, our CIA traitor, who identified Gordievsky. In any event, he was recalled to Moscow, drugged, interrogated, but not arrested. The British MI 5 performed the impossible task of exfiltrating him from under the surveillance of the KGB. MacIntyre's extensive narrative of Gordievsky's escape is thrilling to read. It succeeded against the highest odds. I like this book.

- Bob McDonnell

A Worthy Non-Profit

Law Advocates of Whatcom County

This worthy non-profit organization has as its estimable mission "to provide free legal assistance to low income residents of Whatcom County." To that end it provides lawyers whom one may consult on alternate Saturdays at the library, where it offers sessions on Street Law, Homeless Disability Advocacy, Veterans Advocacy, and Tenants Clinic. With Access ID knowledgeable volunteers offer assistance in obtaining state-issued ID. Because its annual revenue is less than one million dollars, Charity Navigator does not rate it. The office is at 1415 Commercial Street. Its phone number is 360-671-6079. It welcomes contributions. Volunteer lawyers may contact the organization directly. It asks non-lawyers to check with Whatcom Volunteer Center.

WWURA Calendar 2019

October

1- Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

18- WWURA Lunch, 11:30 a.m.—Northwood Hall—Speaker- Director **Elizabeth Joffrain** and staff of the WWU Heritage Resource Center

November

5- Board Meeting, 10:30 a.m.

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

December

3- Board Meeting

18- Holiday Party

Writer's Group

The American Character

by Nanette Davis

We rarely question the “real” American Character, but we know full well the idealized one; A kind of the “right stuff” sort of person. If male, surely strong and deep voiced, and having a combination of traits we deeply admire: enterprising, honest, reliable, predictable, intelligent, self-assured, patient, preferably kind, a sort of everyman’s first responder. A protector figure comes to mind, someone you can trust to handle every crisis with aplomb, or at least with a measure of efficiency and smarts. A deliberate man, he rarely reacts with haste or thoughtlessness; and if an error is made, he reacts swiftly to rectify it. He is above all, a person of integrity, likeability and self mastery.

Occupational roles in our era for the idealized man could range from physician to astronaut, from law enforcer to entrepreneur; leadership roles that enable him to exert influence over others and his environment. Not a self-aggrandizement project at all. He is persuasive and maintains a focused effort to advance the welfare of others.

The adult female version of the American Character may be less developed—after all, women in the twenty first century still find themselves struggling for basic reproductive rights and parity in the workplace. Here’s a rendering of the American female character that’s still evolving: she’s a working mother, with or without a supportive man. She’s feisty, not pushy, never aggressive, and manages to mark her territory with certainty, integrity and spirit. If defeated by circumstances, she responds with flexibility and humor, a kind of feminine urban cowgirl. Her attributes include moral intactness, candor, kindness, likeability and straightforwardness. She is highly articulate and wholly authentic, she is a stellar credit to her family and community.

Traditional expectations linger and, although not always achieved, favor a soft-spoken, kindly individual devoted to family; someone highly responsive to duty and social approval. Engaging in nurturing occupations, such as nurse, teacher, social worker, a professional or office assistant—typically service roles—the caregiving woman invariably performs with a willing smile.

As a leader, she is forthright, highly intelligent, determined and successful. She pledges a negotiated social order, and achieves her goals without creating enemies.

Both our ideal Man and Woman express social justice principles. Their personal codes of conduct include anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-cruelty to humans and animals alike.

From what American pool of characters did our current president spring? How unlike our ideal character in every possible way. A recitation of his personal qualities all point downward; a slippery slope of negative values and standards that Mr. Trump apparently embraces. The human qualities that define the man range from outright lying to impetuous policy decisions to racist actions that threaten American interests at home and abroad. Our elected president could be likened to a “bull in the China shop,” rattling economic markets, creating new enemies with a single Tweet, and upsetting long-term alliances that have helped maintain a measure of world peace and stability.

Where is the caution, the self-mastery, thoughtfulness, or at a minimum, intelligence required of a person at this level of leadership? In abstentia, missing, gone, lost; perhaps, never possessed. As a new public cry of outrage, the man has recently been accused of rape: he takes what he wants, and damn the consequences, and especially damn the victim.

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Writer's Group, cont'd

Reading the daily news can be agony. Today's case: Children at the southern border—all 300 of them, ill and without adequate supplies, the older ones caring for the babies and toddlers. What kind of policy focuses on injuring children, isolating them from parents and guardians?

Does Character count at all, anymore? Have we, as a people, forfeited our cherished ideal of the "good man or woman," one who humbles self for the betterment of others, to make the world a more secure place? Are we in the process of constructing a different ideal leader: a lying, cheating, thoughtless, cruel and self-absorbed person?

American presidents rarely have lived up to the high moral character of our model. With few exceptions (e.g. Andrew Jackson), our presidents have brought distinction and judicious decision-making to the White House, qualities sorely lacking in this administration.

As we face upcoming elections for 2020, perhaps our primary insistence as a voting public, should be to restore to the presidency those positive qualities of mind and spirit, which at the very least, demonstrate all or most of the idealized portrait of the Good Man or Woman. Can we do anything less to hold this country and the world together?

Reservation Form

WWURA Fall Luncheon
11:30 a.m., October 18, 2019
Northwood Hall, 3240 Northwest Avenue

Name (s) _____

Address or Phone Number _____

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

Reservation Deadline is Tuesday, October 15, 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.

**Western Washington University
Retirement Assoc. (WWURA)**
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**Dated Material
Open Immediately**