



WWURA NEWS

February 2020

www.wwu.edu/wwura

Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

President's Note

The holiday season has faded into the past and the Bellingham winter has settled in...rain, some snow, waking in darkness, and dreary days. But of course there are those few days where the sky is blue, the sun shining, and that balmy feeling is in the air. For me it has been the month of my yearly cold, which I hope is finally drawing to a close.

For WWURA this is the beginning of a period of activities and events. Hopefully the membership will find community in gathering with others at travelogues and luncheons. Both series have excellent programs planned in the coming months.

We decided to cancel a recent travelogue due to concerns about driving conditions, especially in the evenings. The Board has decided to change the schedule for next year planning the December Holiday Party and the January travelogue in the mid-afternoon as an experiment.

Thanks to efforts by **Evelyn Ames** we are also adding a few informational events to explore topics relevant to the membership. Sometime in March we'll be scheduling a "Brown Bag Lunch" exploring issues of memory loss/dementia which will be packed with important information. Future "Brown Bags" on conflict resolution with adult children and addressing grief in times of loss will also be on-tap.

Finally, although it is only the beginning of February, the nominations process for next year's officers and Board members is formally beginning. If you are interested in serving, please contact me. I'll see you soon.

—Kevin Majkut

WWURA's Winter Luncheon Friday, February 21, 2020 Northwood Hall, 11:30 a.m. 3240 Northwest Avenue



Speaker: Ambassador Terence McCulley (Ret.) "Engaging Africa in the Era of America First"

Ambassador McCulley is a Senior Director at McLarty Associates, a strategic advisory firm based in Washington, DC. For over three decades, he served in important appointments throughout Africa: Ambassador to Mali, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, as well as U.S. Embassy assignments in Togo, Senegal, Tunisia, Niger, South Africa, Chad, India and Denmark. For his work, he has received awards from the State Department and from countries served. For three years, he served as Senior Advisor on African affairs to the U.N General Assembly.

In a discussion about engaging Africa in a 21st century version of America First, Ambassador McCulley assesses the importance of Africa on the global scene and argues that U.S. policies on the African continent that promote transparency, the rule of law, democratic institutions and respect for human rights advance America's broader foreign policy interest and promote prosperity at home by opening new markets for U.S. commerce and investment.

Make your reservation early—form on page 5.

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2020 February Health Notes by Evelyn Ames Does Gratitude Affect our Health?

"Gratitude is one of the sweet shortcuts to finding peace of mind and happiness inside. No matter what is going on outside of us, there is always something we could be grateful for." Barry Neil Kaufman

Gratitude: the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return thankfulness. It comes from the Latin word *gratus* ('pleasing, thankful'). Generally, many of us have an instinctive understanding of gratitude but defining it is more difficult. Is it a virtue? Is it a behavior? Is it an emotion? Researchers such as Robert Emmons who study gratitude find that it can mean different things to different people in different contexts. Gratitude has been described as a two-step process: the first is "recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome" and the second is "recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome." Gratitude is "an affirmation of goodness."

How does gratitude affect our health? Those who research "gratitude" have found that subjects in their studies report decreased levels of anxiety, envy, depression, job-related stress and burn-out. They also found that people have increases in vitality, hope, life satisfaction, and optimism. The following list of benefits from "healthline.com" include: 1) people take better care of themselves physically and mentally; 2) engage in more protective health behaviors and maintenance; 3) get more regular exercise; 4) eat a [healthier diet](#); 5) have improved mental alertness; 6) schedule regular physical examinations with their doctors; 7) cope better with stress and daily challenges; 8) feel happier and more optimistic; 9) avoid problematic physical symptoms; 10) have stronger [immune systems](#); and 11) maintain a brighter view of the future.

While some studies have associated gratitude with a large list of benefits such as fewer aches and pains, improved sleep or better cardiovascular health, other studies show mixed results. Overall, there is some reason to suspect that gratitude has positive influences on our health. A major question needing to be addressed: **Is it gratitude that makes people healthier or is it that grateful people live healthier lifestyles?** While studies that suggest grateful people are healthier, the studies also suggest that people in poorer health are less likely to feel being grateful. In finding some answers to this relationship, researchers are exploring whether people who engage in gratitude activities benefit from improved health. Studies that have focused on the cardio-vascular system used blood tests to measure inflammation and looked at plaque buildup in the arteries. Subjects practicing gratitude (writing in journals for two months) showed lower levels of inflammation and better heart rhythm. This may be attributed to a lower level of stress. Suggestions for starting or continuing to practice gratitude: "Focus your attention outside of yourself! Be mindful of what you have not how much you have! Try keeping a weekly gratitude journal! Reframe challenging situations or hassles to positive situations. Switch the switch to the positive!"

For people going through a difficult period of time, the "how to be happy guru" offers these suggestions: Be grateful for your life: you are breathing and you have all of your five senses, you have a house/abode in which to live, you have food on the table, you have water to drink and wash yourself and heating to keep warm, you have kind people around you, you have people who love you, you have pets to comfort you, you have nature around you, you have music and theater and nature to stimulate your senses, and you have your freedom."

"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for." — Epicurus

Sources: <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/giving-thanks#1>
<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition>
https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-

[Health Notes, cont'd](#)

[FINAL.pdf?_ga=2.141054258.1811663936.1579114920-1963272916.1579114920](#)
[http://howtobehappy.guru/things-to-be-grateful-for-in-our-life-when-going-through-a-tough-period/Gratitude-helps-keep-our-hearts-healthy.](http://howtobehappy.guru/things-to-be-grateful-for-in-our-life-when-going-through-a-tough-period/Gratitude-helps-keep-our-hearts-healthy)
<http://howtobehappy.guru/gratitude-helps-keep-our-hearts-healthy/>
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/is_gratitude_good_for_your_health

Quotes to give you some thoughts for the day:

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." *William Arthur Ward*

"Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful."
Buddha

"Silent gratitude isn't very much to anyone." *Gertrude Stein*

"No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude." *Alfred North Whitehead*

"Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude." *A.A. Milne*

"Forget yesterday--it has already forgotten you. Don't sweat tomorrow--you haven't even met. Instead, open your eyes and your heart to a truly precious gift--today." *Steve Maraboli*

"Gratitude also opens your eyes to the limitless potential of the universe, while dissatisfaction closes your eyes to it." *Stephen Richards*

"This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before." *Maya Angelou*

Book Review

***Think Black* by Clyde W. Ford: A Review**

This fascinating book is difficult to review. The author lives in Bellingham, has led a remarkable life, has thought about it deeply, and in this memoir has told us about it and some of its appalling and important implications in almost spellbinding detail.

In one sense, this book is Clyde Ford's a tribute to his father—the first Black systems engineer at IBM—and a wrestling with his fraught relationship with him. His father was a brilliant man, hired directly by Thomas J. Watson, Sr.—the CEO and in some ways the founder of IBM-- not as a matter of hiring a fine mind, nor as a matter of social justice, but as a smart public relations move. Stanley Ford's response was to revere Watson and to accept IBM's racist glass ceiling.

In his own time Clyde was hired by IBM also as a systems engineer, showing up for work with a big Afro, a zoot suit, red sneakers, and an attitude to match. He thrived, until he too hit the glass ceiling.

We learn about his father's music training and talent, his devotion to chess and seeing it as a metaphor for life, his love connection to Ruby Dee, his straight arrow social attitudes.

Clyde Ford ranges far and wide to tell these tales, exposing the darker side of IBM, including its connections with Nazi Germany and with apartheid South Africa. He treats us to his visit to Ghana just after graduating from high school, just at the time of the fall of Kwame Nkrumah—including his visit to the slave castle at Elmina. And more. In time Clyde comes to terms with his father and his father's legacy. This is a disturbing and enlightening memoir.

- Bob McDonnell

Writers Group

GIVINIG A HOOT: A Valentine's Day reflection

Troy Faith Ward—2020

Valentine's Day Is a perfect day for sweethearts, for cherished family members. And a special opportunity to befriend someone.

Margaret was a new girl in our second grade class. Her dress was too small and faded. A faint, but nonetheless unpleasant odor of rotten eggs came from her mouth and hovered around her. No one was talking to her.

Sunday School lessons and home Bible teachings had "taken" (like a smallpox vaccination) with me. There was a spot in my young soul that knew "be ye kind one to another" was not talking just about the easy-to-be-with "other." Also that welcoming a stranger is paramount to "loving your neighbor as yourself."

The recess bell rang. While the rest of the second grade rushed for the door and scattered onto the playground, I waited for Margaret. We went out and began walking around the school yard perimeter. I must have been doing almost all the talking, if we talked at all, because I was surprised to hear her subdued voice.

"*Mumble mumble.*" She was looking toward the porch by the first grade room.

"What?"

"Pat's crying. My brother."

She spoke more confidently. I couldn't actually see well enough across the yard to confirm tears. But I saw a boy with hair the same faded carrot shade as Margaret's, leaning against the post, head down. I felt immediately sad, and just as quickly stymied. The part of me that was grown up enough to reach out to a new classmate did not know what to do with a "heavy" emotional situation. Not knowing what to do flushed the timid part of me out of the bushes, where it had been hiding behind the euphoria of doing a good deed. That scared bunny hopped right out of my mouth as words that horrified me even as I heard them.

"I don't give a hoot." It was a phrase I had learned that week from the older kids. It sounded so—smart! I looked for opportunities to use it.

Margaret, to her credit as a 2nd grader trying to fit in—or discredit, as a big sister who might have had more compassion for her little brother (but who am I to judge?) snickered and repeated. "I don't give a hoot!" and we walked on.

We walked on. I walked on. But, I never forgot.

Sixty-eight years later, the incident still squeezes my heart. Hopefully I have put it behind me psychologically. That is, I don't wallow in guilt. Emotionally, I hope I never put it behind me. May it have left a soft spot in my heart that will never let me walk past another's tears without:

sadness

compassion strong enough to reach beyond self-consciousness and express concern visibly or verbally when it is appropriate.

sending a prayer/hopeful thought toward the sad heart when that is the wiser action.

Somewhere out there, likely still alive, is another woman, 75 like me, named Margaret. May she and her 74 year old brother Pat be having a better life because someone walked with her in the schoolyard on her first day. May life not be worse because she heard—unintentionally—cruel words from that same someone.

FEBRUARY 2020 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, February 18th at 2:00 pm at the home of Donna Moore, 1200 Birch Falls Dr., 360-733-5769.

February's book is *Mudbound* by Hillary Jackson. Discussion leader-Mary Jo Lewis, snacks-Evelyn Ames.

March's book is *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean. Discussion leader-June Hopkins, snacks-Lina Zeine

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

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

Contact Evelyn for more information.

2019-2020 MET HD schedule (Saturdays at Regal Cinema. Tickets can be ordered ahead of time by going online.)

February 29 - *Agrippina* by Handel

Met HD: Radio broadcasts: King FM-98.1 at 10 a.m. and CBC Radio 105.7 at 1 p.m.

Lincoln Theater in Mt. Vernon - December 14th at 12:45 is *The Magic Flute* (the first Met HD live of several years ago).

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.

A second writing group has started and is accepting new members. Meets twice a month. Call Howard Evans, 360-650-9724, barbandhoward@comcast.net if interested

Reservation Form WWURA Winter Luncheon 11:30 a.m., February 21, 2020 Northwood Hall, 3240 Northwest Avenue

Name (s) _____

Address or Phone Number _____

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

Reservation Deadline is Monday, February 17, 2020

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.

WWURA Calendar 2020

February

- 4—Board Meeting
- 21—WWURA Lunch—Northwood Hall
Speaker—**Ambassador Terence McCulley (Ret.)**
“Engaging Africa in the Era of America First”

March

- 3—Board Meeting
- 18—Travelogue—6:30 p.m. Squalicum Yacht Club
“Wales and Ireland” with **Carol Rice**

April

- 7—Board Meeting
- 15—Travelogue— 6:30 p.m. Squalicum Yacht Club—
“Around the World” with **David Carroll**
- 17—WWURA Luncheon— 11:30 a.m. Northwood Hall
Speaker: **Terry Flinn**, Railroad Issues Affecting Bellingham

May

- 5— Board Meeting
- 28—Western’s Retirement Dinner

A Worthy Non-Profit

Whatcom Land Trust

This wonderful non-profit seeks to preserve the natural beauty and habitat of Whatcom County. Since its founding in 1984 it has conserved over 20,000 acres throughout our beloved county. Its highly interesting and informative website tells about its activities, provides a map of the properties it has conserved through one vehicle or another, and provides opportunities to donate and to volunteer. In 2019, 120 volunteers took part in 24 work parties, conserving our county. The acquisition of Lower Skookum Creek was a major accomplishment of the year. Offices are at 412 North Commercial Street. Phone – 360-650-9470.

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