



# WWURA NEWS

October 2020

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Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

## Book Review— by Minda Rae Amiran

I have been asked to take on book reviewing for *WWURA News* so that **Bob McDonnell** can pursue other interests after so many years of invaluable service to WWURA members. He will still be writing the occasional review, thank goodness, and meanwhile I'll do my best to meet the standard he has set. Please let me know if you have a book you would like to review for this page.

### **The Silk Roads: A New History of the World**, by Peter Frankopan (2015, Bloomsbury Paperbacks)

Many books claim to present “a new history” of their subjects, but *The Silk Roads* so changes one’s understanding of our human past that it truly deserves its subtitle. It centers world history mid-Asia, where trade routes went east to China and west to the Mediterranean, whereas the world history most of us learned in school centered on Athens, Rome, and western Europe.

It turns out that far from having resulted from the Crusades, or from the travels of Marco Polo, the silk roads had been well-established 2,500 years ago when northern Europe was a wilderness and Persian merchants traded silver from Egypt for ivory from India. Then and throughout the centuries, ideas, arts, and inventions traveled in both directions. It turns out that the Vikings were great slave-traders along a northeastern branch of the roads, and that Genghis Khan, far from being a simple savage raider on horseback, was an amazing strategist and organizer who created an efficient borderless empire. In fact, Frankopan argues that borders in the modern sense are relatively new in human history. He shows medieval Europe engaged in constant territorial wars while the great Asian empires lived in relative peace. He follows the accounts of Arab merchants throughout the Middle Ages, and ends his story with European colonization in Asia and the Asian disasters of our own time. The book is rich in fascinating detail.

*(cont'd on page 4)*

## *Come Join us ....*

**Wednesday, October 21st at 4:00 p.m.**



as we travel through northern France (Brittany, Normandy, and the Loire Valley with **Donna Moore, Evelyn Ames, Mary Jo Lewis and Peggy Loudon**. View scenes of Saint Malo, Chartres Cathedral and its stained-glass windows, Dinan, Mount St. Michel, Honfleur, Caen Peace Memorial, Cliffs of Etretat, Omaha Beach in Normandy, Rouen (Joan of Arc), Giverny gardens (including Monet’s house), Blois (including its Royal Chateau and the Blois Re-sistance Museum), Chateau de Chenonceau, family owned vineyard in Amboise, Chateau du Clos Luce where Da Vinci spent his last two years, and end with a few scenes in Paris.

This will be the first in our series of Travelogues shown via Zoom. **Barbara Evans** will send you an invitation by email a day or so ahead of the 21st.

**Mark your calendar for November 18 for the second of our travelogues by Zoom.**

### **Inside:**

Health Notes	p.2, 3
Cooking for One or Two	p. 3
Interest Groups	p. 4
Jingle Bell Run	p. 4
Candidates and Ballot	p. 5
A Warm Welcome	p. 6
Poetry Corner	p. 6
Getting to Know You	p. 6

## October 2020 Health Notes by Evelyn Ames

### Food Additives of Concern—An Update

Regulation of additives (such as preservatives, colors, sweeteners, fat replacers, and emulsifiers) used in foods in the United States is through the US Food and Drug Administration. Some 10,000 chemical ingredients are added to food to maintain or improve safety, freshness, nutritional value, taste, texture, and appearance. They can be direct (added for a specific purpose) or indirect (added in trace amounts due to packaging, storage, or handling). Any substance that is reasonably expected to become a component of food is a food additive. It is subject to premarket approval by FDA, unless the substance is generally recognized as safe (GRAS) as evaluated by those qualified with scientific training and experience. The GRAS list has been in existence since it was first published in December of 1959. Do note that what is allowed in the United States is not always allowed in European countries. Recent Consumer Reports and other research studies (e.g., *Nature*, a British scientific journal) have reviewed several additives and made the following suggestions about several food additives in relation to safety.

**Nitrates and Nitrites** (preservatives in bacon, deli meats and hot dogs). Foods with nitrates (either synthetic such as sodium nitrate/nitrite or natural sources such as celery) when cooked at high heat can form with stomach acid to generate nitrosamines, which may be carcinogenic. Suggestion is to eat less.

**Trehalose** is a type of sugar that enhances flavor by adding mild sweetness to foods. It is also used to extend shelf life and improve texture. Trehalose is widespread in bacteria, fungi, yeast, insects, and plants. It is used in baked goods, cereals, fish in pouches, and frozen shrimp. A study published in *Nature* found a connection between trehalose and *Clostridioides difficile*. This bacterium causes inflammation of the colon and diarrhea. Enzymes in the body that break it down get overwhelmed when too much is eaten. “Consuming trehalose doesn’t transmit the bacteria, ... but it encourages its growth. And anyone who’s taking an antibiotic—which typically wipes out the good bacteria that keep *C. diff* in check along with ridding your body of infection—can be at risk.”

**Carrageenan** is obtained from red seaweed and is used as a stabilizer. It keeps salad dressing from separating and gives yogurts, frozen desserts, and plant milks a creamy taste and texture. According to a Univ. of Illinois, Chicago researcher, carrageenan is foreign to human cells and exposure can lead to inflammation, especially in the gastrointestinal tract. Individuals with irritable bowel syndrome reported in the study that relief occurred when they avoided carrageenan. The National Organic Standards Board called for removal of carrageenan in organic products due to its questionable safety. The USDA (Department of Agriculture) decided to continue to allow carrageenan in organic products.

**Artificial sweeteners** are sugar substitutes and include acesulfame potassium (Ace K), aspartame, and sucralose. They are much sweeter than sugar and have few or no calories and are used in so-called “diet” foods. They are being used in products due to the fact the food manufacturers must list on the label how many grams of added sugars are in a product. Manufacturers want to keep total grams of added sugars low and use the artificial sweetener to keep a level of sweetness. The concern is that these sweeteners may cause changes in the intestinal tract microbiome and may also increase risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Additionally, studies have found using artificial sweeteners in place of sugar (e.g., diet colas in place of regular sodas) do not lead to weight loss but actually increase a person’s number of fat cells.

**Sorbitol**, a sugar alcohol with about half the calories of sugar and half the sweetness, is used in sugar-free versions of foods like candy, cookies, and gum. It is used as an emulsifier and anti-caking agent in some products. Sorbitol does occur naturally in some dried fruits—particularly prunes. Since sorbitol brings water into the colon, high doses can cause bloating, gas, and diarrhea.

**Phosphorus-containing additives** (phosphoric acid and disodium phosphate) are found in processed foods such as sodas, baked goods, and dairy products and in fast food. Phosphorus from additives is more readily absorbed than when it occurs naturally in food. High phosphorus intake is hazardous for people with kidney disease or those at risk for it. Additionally, too much phosphorus can bind to calcium, pulling it from bones and leaving them brittle. A United Kingdom study found subjects with normal kidney function but high phosphate levels had increased risk of heart attack or stroke.

Comment on Food Colors: these refer to substances added to food and impart color to the food. Any color additive in food is deemed unsafe unless its use is either permitted by regulation or exempt by regulation.

## Health Notes, cont'd

Unlike the definition for food additive, there is no GRAS exemption for color additives. Colors are also used in drugs and cosmetics, hence the FDC (food, drug, cosmetic) label.

Sources: *Consumer Reports on Health*, September 2020.

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-ingredients-packaging/determining-regulatory-status-food-ingredient>  
<https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/GRAS-Infographic%20%281%29.pdf>

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## Cooking for One (or Two)

**Suzanne Krogh**

I've long known Western retiree Roy Clumpner for his important contributions to the field of physical education. But, he may be more widely known for "Roy's Multi Grain Bread." For more than 40 years, he has brought it to numerous events, snugly wrapped and smelling wonderfully of being just out of the oven. However, his repertoire of recipes is extensive, based to a great extent on years spent as an educator in Japan, Germany, and at Western.

Roy describes cooking as more than a hobby, declaring it a passion, one that requires a collection of favorite tools: chopsticks, a small broiler pan, a 50-year-old Panasonic rice cooker, and a stick blender. Must-have ingredients include Kikkoman soy sauce and garlic.

While he is happy to share any of his many recipes with Newsletter readers, this month he has chosen Portabella Mushroom Burgers. He modestly describes how he came by the recipe: "It is very simple and I just put it together based on some other mushroom type burgers." Now that I've prepared it myself, I would agree that it's not only simple, but delicious.

### Portabella Mushroom Burger for One

#### Ingredients

1 Portabella mushroom with stem removed  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon Kikkoman soy sauce  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
Slice of aged Swiss or cheddar cheese  
Hamburger bun

#### Instructions

Mix together the olive oil, soy sauce, and vinegar.  
Place mushroom on its back and pour the sauce throughout the gills.  
Let mushroom marinate for 30 minutes.  
Turn the mushroom over, gills down, in a broiler pan.  
Brush the top of the mushroom with olive oil.  
Broil until the top is browned and mushroom is hot, 6 or 7 minutes.  
Add aged Swiss or cheddar slice to the top.  
Return to broiler until cheese is melted, 1 or 2 minutes.  
Serve in a toasted buttered bun with mayonnaise.



#### Tips

\*Roy's favorite cheese choice is Trader Joe's extra-sharp Swiss slices.  
\*If you would prefer a soft mushroom to the crispy one that broiling creates, bake it in a 350 degree oven for 10-12 minutes, then use the broiler to melt the cheese on top.

## October 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 have a Zoom meeting at 2 pm on Tuesday, October 20th to discuss “Outliers: The Story of Success” by Malcolm Gladwell. Discussion leader-Jan Berg. November’s book is the “The Perfect Horse” by Elizabeth Letts

INFORMAL DINING—Stephen Hutchens, 360-483-6873 sphutchens@yahoo.com. Contact Steve for more information.

OPERA GROUP--Evelyn Ames, 360-734-3184, evelyn.ames@wwu.edu Contact Evelyn for more information.

Opera update on Metropolitan Opera weekly streaming: simple way to access is type in search line: met-opera.org Operas begin streaming at 4:30pm and continue until 4pm the next day (Pacific time). You can start and stop any number of times. Check to see if other opera houses are streaming at no cost.

To listen to radio broadcasting of operas, the following stations offer opera each Saturday: CBC Radio 2 at 105.7 (starts at 1 pm with Ben Heppner). King FM (98.1) at 10:00 am (try computer if our radio/stereo does not connect). Note: Metropolitan Opera 2020-2021 season is cancelled.

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 Bill Smith 360-920-6390, billsmith1545@yahoo.com if interested.

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**Information about the 2020 local Arthritis Foundation’s Bellingham Jingle Bell Run and WWURA team.** The December 2020 JBR is going to be virtual. I hope that you will join me in supporting our local Arthritis Foundation programs. Our JBR will occur December 11-13. The 2020 Jingle Bell Run is going virtual so don’t let that stop you from jingling. Join the original festive race for charity from anywhere! You have the option of donating to WWURA team or joining the team. If you click on “Register,” you will need an email address + password to join team. Find the WWURA team. Or if wanting just to donate, click on “donate” and scroll down to find WWURA team. Here are several internet addresses that may help you navigate the Bellingham site. <https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=1102> <https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.search&search=search&eventID=1102&searchTerm=wwura> <https://events.arthritis.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.participant&participantID=212718>



Thank you. *Evelyn Ames*

## Book Review, cont'd from page 1

Frankopan bases his narrative on an impressive range of written and archeological sources in many languages, spanning many centuries. Yet his writing is lively and accessible. He has little to say about sub-Saharan Africa or the Americas, but even a work of this scope must have its limits. Although a few reviewers have questioned some of its particulars, the book has been widely praised, and I warmly recommend it.

- Minda Rae Amiran

## WWURA Board of Directors Election

The Nomination Committee presents the following slate of candidates for election to three-year terms on the WWURA Board. If you wish to write in the name of another WWURA member for any of the three positions, you may do so provided you first obtain that person's agreement to serve.

**Please detach and mail your complete ballot to Barbara Evans, 715 N. Garden Street, #502, Bellingham, WA 98225 by Friday October 29, 2020 OR, if you wish, you may email your choices to her at <barbandhoward@comcast.net>.**

### Ballot for WWURA Board of Directors

Member-at-Large	<input type="checkbox"/> Minda Rae Amiran	<input type="checkbox"/> Write In _____
Staff/Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Margaret Woll	<input type="checkbox"/> Write In _____
Faculty	<input type="checkbox"/> Barbara Davidson	<input type="checkbox"/> Write In _____

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### Get Acquainted with the Candidates

**Minda Rae Amiran** retired from the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1999, having served as an academic dean, English professor, and chair of the English Department. Subsequently, she was Voter Service chair of the local League of Women Voters and a tutor and president of the board of Literacy Volunteers. She moved to Bellingham in 2019. Her son, Edoh Amiran, is a professor in the Math Department at Western.

**Margaret Woll.** After earning her BA degree at Western, Margaret spent 18 years in various staff positions at Western in the areas of Space & Scheduling, Health Services, and the School of Education. For much of that time she was associated with Upward Bound where she held the positions of Assistant Director and then Interim Director. She has served in various capacities on the boards of numerous organizations; i.e. the Academy for Lifelong Learning, and Whatcom Chorale. She is a past president of the League of Women Voters, and WWURA. For many years, she has been the editor of WWURA's newsletter.

**Barbara Davidson** has a degree in Math and Education from Longwood University. In 1961, she began work as a computer programmer/analyst for General Electric in Schenectady, New York. In 1962, she met and married her husband, Mel. In 1967, they moved to Bellingham and joined the many new employees that year at Western. Barbara taught Computer Science and Math part-time for 18 years. She has also been a Western student, doing graduate work in Environmental Modeling at Huxley. She helped form Women of Western and has been active on campus and in the community. She and Mel joined WWURA *before* they retired and have participated in many WWURA activities ever since.

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### A Very Warm Welcome to our Newest Members:

**Catherine Adams**

**Tamara Belts**

**Catherine Shornick**

## Poetry Corner

### HAIKU 2020—2

#### WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The world is watching  
Virus spreading everywhere  
The planets' revenge

#### OUR CHOICE

Time upon the stage  
A beginning and an end  
We can choose to smile

#### ANGER

Crouching like a cat  
Hidden and ready to spring  
Where did you come from?

#### BEWARE

Life is dangerous  
It will always end in death  
No time to waste it!

- Patricia Clarke

## Getting to Know Me

*This selection is another in our series of stories from our board members.*

### What Few People Know About Me—Bob McDonnell

Many people do not know that I bookended my academic career by a few months in a Benedictine monastery before going to graduate school and by going back to graduate school in order to spend 10 years as a marriage and family therapist. Before the monastery, I had spent almost a year in Japan in the Air Force (including a week in Shanghai before Mao took over), had driven from Montana to Anchorage on the Alcan Highway, had spent a summer and a semester at the University of Vienna. Then came graduate school and my academic career. In my early 60s, after getting a degree in counseling psychology, I practiced in several venues – in a day treatment center for seniors, as senior specialist in a regional mental health clinic, and also as a therapist in a psych ward for seniors. I believe that all of it enriched my life.

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