



WWURA NEWS

February 2021

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Serving Retired Faculty and Staff

President's Notes

Thursday, February 4th, was an interesting, heart-warming, and challenging day for me. First the heart-warming part; I went to the mailbox to find a small envelope...inside was a heart-shaped invitation to the WWURA Valentine's Day Party. Someday, hopefully in the near future, we'll be back to meeting face-to-face but for now we have to reach out and "touch" each other via Zoom. Building on the success of the December Holiday Party the planning group displayed their creative juices in developing the invite...and planning the event. Too cute!

The Thursday appointment for the first Covid 19 vaccine shot was both challenging (because I'm still nervous around needles) and interesting... after watching innumerable TV reports of people receiving their vaccines, I was finally able to navigate the online reservation system to schedule an appointment. The advice I can give from my scheduling experience is to be persistent and avoid frustration in trying to work with overloaded scheduling programs...check back often because the vaccine availability is ever-changing and try to book an appointment in the early morning or late night when not so many people are online.

There was a productive Board meeting this week with significant discussion surrounding the history and goals of the Annual Retirement Dinner. There will not be a face-to-face event this spring but the President's Office and the Board are discussing what type of activity might occur this year and in the future.

There was also discussion on the potential to reenergize the WWURW travel program of years past. People talked about WWURA history, their travel experiences and potentials of bringing back a broader program.

If you have any thoughts about either the Retirement Dinner or the travel programs, please share

WWURA Zoom Valentine Party



Saturday, February 13th
4:00 PM



Decorate yourself and your surroundings
as you like

Plan to enjoy music and poetry
Plan to make a toast

Bring stories and memories...romantic or fun

A Zoom link will arrive in your email
the day before
We hope to see you!

Coming up: WWURA's next travelogue

Put it on your calendar!

March 17th at 4:00 PM

David Carroll and Susan Donnelly will present
the third and final leg of their global travels

Details in the March WWURA Newsletter

with me or another Board member. Your participation is important.

Please stay safe...and keep outreaching to others in our continuing challenging environment.

- Kevin Majkut

Inside :

Health Notes - by Evelyn Ames	p. 2, 3
Book Review	p. 3
Meet Newest Members	p. 3, 5
Cooking for One (or Two)	p. 4, 5
Addendum to Burl Harmon's Story	p. 5
Interest Groups	p. 6

February 2021 Health Notes by Evelyn Ames *Vaccines: The Basics*

Questions about safety and effectiveness and what is in vaccines permeate the social, and various forms of media. The following information addresses several questions relating to ingredients used in manufacturing vaccines.

Active Immunity: Exposure to a disease organism triggers the immune system to produce antibodies to that disease. It can occur through infection with the actual disease (resulting in natural immunity), or introduction of a killed or weakened form of the disease organism through vaccination (vaccine-induced immunity). Either way, if an immune person comes into contact with that disease organism in the future, the immune system will recognize it and immediately produce the antibodies needed to fight it. Active immunity is long-lasting, and sometimes life-long. **Passive Immunity** is provided when a person is given antibodies to a disease rather than producing them through his or her own immune system.

Ingredients in vaccines: Antigens are very small amounts of weak or dead germs that can cause diseases. They help the immune system learn how to fight off infections faster and more effectively. The flu virus is an example of an antigen. **Adjuvants**, which are in some vaccines, are substances that help the immune system respond more strongly to a vaccine. This increases one's immunity against the disease. Aluminum is an example of an adjuvant.

Ingredients keep vaccines safe and long lasting: Some ingredients help make sure a vaccine continues to work like it is supposed to and that it stays free of outside germs and bacteria. **Preservatives**, like thimerosal, protect the vaccine from outside bacteria or fungus. Today, preservatives are usually only used in vials (containers) of vaccines that have more than 1 dose. That is because every time an individual dose is taken from the vial, it is possible for harmful germs to get inside. Most vaccines are also available in single-dose vials and do not have preservatives in them. **Stabilizers**, like sugar or gelatin, help the active ingredients in vaccines continue to work while the vaccine is made, stored, and moved. Stabilizers keep the active ingredients in vaccines from changing because of something like a shift in temperature where the vaccine is being stored.

Ingredients are used during the production of vaccines: Some ingredients needed to produce the vaccine are no longer needed for the vaccine to work in a person. These ingredients are taken out after production so only tiny amounts are left in the final product. The very small amounts of these ingredients that remain in the final product are not harmful. Examples of ingredients used in some vaccines include: **Cell culture (growth) material**, like eggs, to help grow the vaccine antigens. **Inactivating (germ-killing) ingredients**, like formaldehyde, to weaken or kill viruses, bacteria, or toxins in the vaccine. **Antibiotics**, like neomycin, to help keep outside germs and bacteria from growing in the vaccine.

Can vaccines with thimerosal cause mercury poisoning? A: No. Thimerosal has a different form of mercury (ethylmercury) than the kind that causes mercury poisoning (methylmercury). It is safe to use ethylmercury in vaccines because it is less likely to build up in the body — and because it is used in very, very small amounts. Even so, most vaccines do not have any thimerosal in them. If you are concerned about thimerosal or mercury in vaccines, talk with your doctor.

Can people who are allergic to antibiotics get vaccinated? A: Yes. However, if you have an allergy to antibiotics, it is a good idea to talk with your doctor about getting vaccinated. But in general, antibiotics that people are most likely to be allergic to — like penicillin — are not used in vaccines.

Can people with egg allergies get vaccinated? A: Yes. People with egg allergies can get any licensed, recommended flu vaccine that is appropriate for their age. They no longer need to be watched for 30 minutes after getting the vaccine. People who have severe egg allergies should be vaccinated in a medical setting and be supervised by a health care professional who can recognize and manage severe allergic conditions.

Is the formaldehyde used in some vaccines dangerous? A: No. If formaldehyde is used to help produce a vaccine, only very small amounts are left in the final product. This amount is so small that it is not dangerous — in fact, there is actually more formaldehyde found naturally in our bodies than there is in vaccines made with formaldehyde.

Health Notes, *cont'd*

Is the aluminum used in some vaccines dangerous? **A:** No. Vaccines made with aluminum have only a very small amount of aluminum in them. For decades, vaccines that include aluminum have been tested for safety — these studies have shown that using aluminum in vaccines is safe.

Any vaccine can cause side effects. For the most part these are minor (for example, a sore arm or low-grade fever) and go away within a few days. There is a lengthy list of vaccines licensed in the United States and the side effects at [CDC's Vaccine Information Statements](#) (VISs), which in turn are derived from the [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) (ACIP) [recommendations](#) for each vaccine.

Note: most of this information comes directly from these two web sites. Information is in the public domain. https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/vaccine_ingredients <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/side-effects.htm>

Book Review

Trace Elements, by Donna Leon (2020, Atlanta Monthly Press)

I had never heard of the American detective writer Donna Leon until I saw this book mentioned in a respected journal as a favorite read of 2020; perhaps you've known about her for years, and don't need me to tell you more. She has published 33 books, most of which feature a fictional Venetian policeman named Guido Brunetti and his associate from Naples, Claudia Griffoni.

This latest book crosses genres between detective fiction and cultural analysis. It's really a study of ethics amidst corruption, a vivid picture of life in everyday Venice, overrun by tourists, full of local traditions and prejudices, gripped by crooked businessmen and venal politicians, wilting in summer heat, yet peopled with many ordinary citizens doing their best. The plot concerns a water-monitoring technician killed in a motorcycle accident which his dying wife claims was murder. There's a subplot of sorts about two juvenile Roma pickpockets caught in the act by the mayor's wife. Any violence is off-stage, there are no breathtaking chases, and Brunetti is an exemplary husband and father, though his professional hands aren't totally clean. All the drama is in the difficult decision he faces when he has to choose between two criminals, only one of whom he can arrest. The clever plot, deceptively straightforward, is presented as one thread in the tapestry of Venetian life—as such an inquiry would be if it really took place.

Although my account might make you think this is a depressing work in the “noir” category, I didn't find it to be so, mostly because of the decency of Brunetti and his creator. If you're up for a crime story that is not a thriller, vividly written but never sensational, you might find *Trace Elements* as enjoyable as I did.

- Minda Rae Amiran

Meet Some of Our Newest Members—**Cathleen Adams** has had a fascinating career as a physical education teacher (grades 1-12) in International Schools in Brazil and Great Britain. Born in Chicago, she grew up in southern California, getting her degree at Chico State University. Starting with a year at Phillips Exeter Academy, she then spent two years teaching in Brasilia and 31 in London, where she also served as varsity tennis coach. She moved to Bellingham a year and a half ago to be closer to family, and lives in Fairhaven.

Tamara Belts came to WWU as a History major, and after graduating spent 42 years as a WWU librarian. Born in Bellingham, she grew up in different parts of the County, but returned to Bellingham as a freshman. During her last twenty years at WWU she was the Special Collections librarian, responsible for ten kinds of collections of books or other materials that are too delicate or rare to circulate. Now, in retirement, Tamara belongs to three different book groups, including ours, all of which meet on Tuesdays. Yet she still finds time to walk or hike five or six miles a day.

COOKING FOR ONE (or two)
Suzanne Krogh
My Japanese Friend's Chinese Cooking

The story of this month's recipe begins in 1960, when President Kennedy sent Harvard professor Edwin Reischauer to Japan as our new ambassador. Dr. Reischauer, the son of missionaries, had grown up in Japan and, as a Harvard professor, writer, and researcher, was uniquely qualified for the job. Accompanying him was his wife, Haru Matsukata, daughter of a well-regarded Japanese political family.

The Reischauers had resided in the embassy only a few days when they realized that something had to be done about the meals, which were apparently abysmal. For help they turned to their long-time friend Imu Ichiura, a locally renowned and creative cook, inviting her to give lessons to the somewhat embarrassed embassy chefs. A surprise in all this was Haru's preference for Chinese...not Japanese...cooking. Thus, Chinese became the focus of the cooking lessons. Fortunately, it was Imu's specialty.

In addition to cooking, Imu...along with her architect husband...had helped to found an international school which, over the decades, has grown in both size and reputation. It was Haru's sister Tane who became Nishimachi School's first principal and its founding director.

Two days before the Reischauers arrived in Tokyo, I landed there myself as the new second grade teacher. I had asked if I might live with a Japanese family my first year on staff, and Tane placed me with the Ichiuras. On occasion, the Reischauers were invited to dinner as an escape from the pressures of embassy life, and I would be asked to join. The menu was frequently Chinese.

The recipe that follows was one I learned to make during the three years I lived in Japan. Although I long ago misplaced Imu's cooking instructions, it is similar to one that the Reischauers enjoyed when they visited.

Fried Chicken with Walnuts for One

Ingredients

- ¼ pound white meat chicken, cubed
- ½ egg white, unbeaten
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- ½ cup walnuts
- 1 teaspoon white wine or vermouth
- Pinch sugar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon cornstarch mixed with ½ tablespoon water



Instructions

- Mix egg white and cornstarch in a small bowl. Add chicken and cover with mixture. Save to one side.
- Cover walnuts with cold water in a small pot. Boil for 3 minutes, then drain, washing off skin residue. Pat dry with a paper towel.
- In about a half inch of oil, over medium heat, cook walnuts. With a slotted spoon, remove them as soon as they change color. Do not overcook. Save to one side.
- Remove oil from pot, then add back in about 2 tablespoons. Add the chicken and cook, stirring, over medium heat. After chicken changes color, add wine, sugar, and soy sauce. Cook a few more minutes until the chicken is cooked through.
- Add the walnuts and cornstarch mixture. Mix well, cooking a few minutes longer.
- Serve with unsalted rice.

Cooking for One, cont'd

TIPS

This is not a quick and easy, basic recipe. Prepare it some evening when you have time, patience, and maybe a bit of courage.

When their daughter Makiko was ready for first grade, the Ichiuras and three other sets of parents asked Tane to start a school where their children could learn English. Perhaps you have met Makiko, because she has lived in the Bellingham area since the late 1980s. She has given up on my Japanese cooking lessons.

Meet Some of Our Newest Members, *cont'd from page 3*

Lorie McNeill grew up in Bellingham and worked at Western for 40 years in the Office of the Vice President for University Relations and Marketing. She recently retired, having been the Administrative Assistant to several Vice Presidents. Lorie is looking forward to traveling with the WWURA group when this pandemic is over. She enjoys playing pickleball and golf when it isn't raining.

Carol Rice. Many of us already know Carol from numerous ALL classes, as well as a fellow traveler on WWURA trips abroad. Traveling was a central part of Carol's life when she worked for both UNICEF and USAID, part of the Foreign Service. Planning and managing Maternal, Child Health, and Family Planning programs, she has lived in Thailand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and many other Asian Countries. While Carol grew up in California, she often visited relatives in Seattle and other parts of the Pacific Northwest, and hoped to someday live here. Happily, she found her perfect home 15 years ago while visiting friends in Birch Bay Village.

Catharine Shornick's official title at WWU was Operations Manager for the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, but effectively she was an all-purpose assistant to the dean. During her eighteen years in the office, she worked with five deans (which means that she taught at least four of them the ropes). She regards Esther Harris as her mentor. Despite raising four children and working her demanding job, she won her BA in Creative Writing and Communication Studies during her time on campus. Three of her children still live in this area, as do all nine of her grandchildren. Gardening and reading are her hobbies. She lives on Lummi Island and serves on the board of the Island Heritage Trust, which works to preserve the Island's natural environment.

WWURA is fortunate to be able to welcome these new members. It will be a pleasure to meet them in person when that becomes possible.

Addendum to Burl Harmon's Story in the January 2021 Newsletter

Burl Harmon was Technical Sergeant Flight Engineer on the B-24, Liberator, a bomber. The P51 was a single engine fighter plane, operated by a single pilot, and which flew cover for the B-24's. The airplane in the photo on page 4 of the January 2021 newsletter is a B-24.

Burl served as Tech Sergeant in the Army Air Corp from March 1943 to October 1945. He is currently completing his book, "Combat Missions," to be published in January. Burl will be 97 years old in February and remembers every detail of these missions.

FEBRUARY 2021 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 February 16th at 2:00 pm on Zoom to discuss *This Tender Land* by William Krueger. Lina will send a link for Zoom.

March's book is *Mama's Last Hug* by Frans de Waal, discussion leader-Minda Rae Amiran.

April's book is *White Too Long* by Robert Jones.

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.

Metropolitan Opera streaming:

Update on Metropolitan Opera streaming dates: February: 6th: *Ariadne auf Naxos* –1988; 7th: *Tosca* – 1978; 8th: *Das Rheingold* – 2010; 9th: *Ernani* – 1983; 10th: *Barber of Seville* – 1988; 11th: *Masked Ball* – 1991; 12th: *Akhnaten* – 2019; 13th: *Les Troyens* – 1983; 14th: *Die Walkure* - 1989

CBC Radio is playing operas of the MET from previous years. Start at Saturday 1pm PST. King FM broadcasts Seattle productions 10 am on Saturdays.

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 your 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.

Western Washington University

Retirement Assoc. (WWURA)

516 High Street

Bellingham, WA 98225-9020