

THE GOLDEN EAGLE CALL

EWU RETIREES ASSOCIATION SPRING 2024

STEVE BLEWETT HELPING TO EXPAND AP'S ELECTIONS REPORTING SYSTEM



EWURA member Steve Blewett is working to expand an Associated Press election results reporting program he initiated at Eastern in 2000 into a nationwide system.

Blewett, who worked for more than 30 years as a journalism professor and program director at Eastern, collaborated with AP, those two decades ago, to create a Cheney-based election reporting center hiring students to work as Vote Entry Operators, directly processing live election returns, which were then reported across AP's network worldwide.

At the time, the center was staffed by 250 Eastern students and 15 AP staff. It was the largest of three centers across the country. The center handled election returns from all counties in as many as a third of the states.

Nine general elections later, the success at Eastern has set a high standard, with students continuously earning "great reviews" for enthusiasm, accuracy, efficiency and professionalism.

"Eastern's administration, the Associated Students officers, faculty all across the school and the tremendous support we had from the facilities departments were essential to making the Center work," Blewett says. "It genuinely was a team effort – and a lot of fun!"

"I think Eastern can take a great deal of pride in the more than 4,000 students who have participated – from virtually every college and program in the university – representing the university tremendously well in this program," Blewett says.

Now, at age 82, Blewett was hired by AP to act as a consultant, recruiting colleges and universities from around the country to promote the program to students and help increase the nationwide voter operator pool to 1,000 people, mainly students.

AP, the only news organization that covers election returns across the entire United States – was forced to shift from center-based return staffing to remote operations to cover the more than 100 primaries and primary run-off elections every two years as well as the November General Election.

The expanded system is remote-based with students receiving results from 3,300 stringers, located in communities nationwide, who get information directly from election officials. The students then enter results into AP's reporting system.

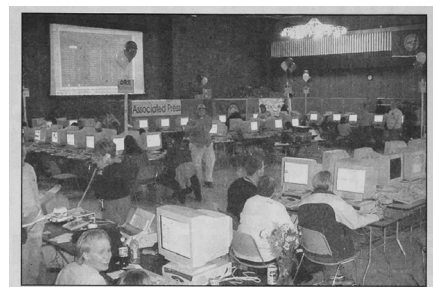
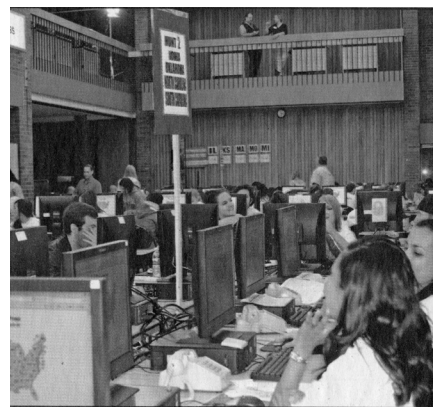
Blewett, emeritus professor, says the work to expand the program began in 2020 when AP realized that, although the election reporting system was reliable, more could be done to improve the process and further instill voter confidence. AP has consistently refined its system to flag anonymous returns and ensure accuracy, Blewett says.

Recently, Blewett was a guest speaker at a College Media Association conference in New York, connecting with 200 students and faculty advisors for newspaper, television and radio programs at colleges and universities. Blewett received commitments from faculty at 15 institutions to promote AP's program within their schools. He also is working with the Center for Community News, at the University of Vermont, which houses the Statehouse Cohort, which facilitates students doing reporting and newswriting at state capitals for publication in community newspapers.

The AP jobs pay \$17 an hour for time spent training and reporting during elections. Students can typically work five or 10 events a year, at their own discretion, Blewett says, with the option to work for AP into the future.

Blewett hopes students will remain integral to AP's election reporting – and that the system will bolster voter confidence and overall democracy.

"That's all the legacy I can honestly say that I want – and it's not a bad thing if it gets remembered that it all started at Eastern. That's pretty cool, too."



Students worked through the night of Nov. 7 tabulating election results for the Associated Press in the MPR.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

AS OF DEC. 31, 2023:

Current Market Value:.....\$174,407.00
Principal:\$127,314.38

AS OF FEB. 15, 2024:

Golden Eagle Scholarships:\$29,729.18
STCU Checking Account:\$2,854.16

DEAR RETIREES,



Spring quarter of the 2023-2024 school year is here, and we are all hoping the winter weather is done for the season. (Our February meeting got sideswiped by the last snowstorm.)

As we wrap up this program year, May will bring a big change. Instead of the annual breakfast for retirees, EWU President Shari McMahan is hosting an afternoon celebration with appetizers and socializing.

The May 9 celebration will be held from 2-4 p.m. in the PUB. The later time will make it easier for retirees (both new and longer-time) to attend. The first hour will showcase a retiree-specific "benefits" fair that includes information about university offerings for retirees and EWURA member benefits. The event will feature an appetizer buffet, so you can sit and visit. Or you can carry around a plate to visit the various information tables and ask questions. (Stay tuned for more details.)

The second hour will feature our annual program. The President and the EWURA will greet and recognize the new retirees, and the President will give a short update on the University. In addition, EWURA will introduce our 2024-2025 scholarship winners. The fantastic news is we have gone from only being able to give one small scholarship, four years ago, to providing four \$3,000 scholarships that help one student from each college.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the EWU Foundation for our Golden Eagle Scholarship Endowment Fund! Last year, a generous member donated \$25,000 to the fund. That gift means that for the next two years, we can provide scholarships without dipping into the endowment. This will allow the fund — now valued at \$174,407 — to further grow.

My challenge to everyone is to help us grow the fund, so that we can continue to provide four scholarships every year. (Remember, a single donation of \$350 to the Golden Eagle Scholarship Fund makes you a Lifetime Member of the EWURA — and you never have to pay annual dues after that.)

My last pitch is for ideas for presenters or presentations you would like to see next year at our monthly meetings. The board has ideas, but we want to make sure we are meeting the needs of our members and offering things everyone is interested in (not just things we think you will like). Let me know your thoughts at repovichw@gmail.com.

Wendy Repovich
EWURA President

JOIN EWURA!

Fill out the enclosed membership form to join our group.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

When: The third Thursday of the month, September through May

Time: Social time with coffee and baked goods, 9:30-10 a.m. Guest speaker presentation, 10-11 a.m.

Where: 205 Monroe Hall, Cheney campus

2024 EWU Retirees Celebration with the President

EWU PRESIDENT **SHARI MCMAHAN** INVITES YOU AND A GUEST TO JOIN HER FOR APPETIZERS AND CAMARADERIE AS WE CELEBRATE NEW AND LONG-STANDING RETIREES.

Thursday, May 9 | 2-4 p.m.

PUB'S NYSETHET COMMUNITY ROOM | CHENEY

(The annual breakfast has been revamped into an afternoon event with informational tables and opportunities to connect with friends.)

REGISTER NOW FOR THE GOLDEN LINKS COED GOLF LEAGUE!

The EWURA Golden Links Coed Golf League 2024 season has started. We'd love to have you join us, so please register right away!

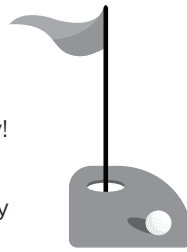
Our inclusive league welcomes players of all abilities for some good-natured play. The league includes university retirees, faculty and staff nearing retirement, spouses and friends.

Individuals can join a foursome or put together their own group. The league plays Monday mornings through Sept. 30 at The Plains, formerly known as Fairways Golf Course.

Members can choose between 18-hole and 9-hole divisions. The season is all about camaraderie and fun, and includes tournaments, special events and an end-of-season awards luncheon.

The tee time is 8 a.m. for 18-holes and 9:10 a.m. for 9-holes. League dues cost \$35 for the 18-hole division and \$25 for the 9-hole division, with dues supporting the EWURA Golden Eagle Scholarship Fund. (Over the years, the league has raised more than \$11,000 to help Eastern students realize the dream of a college education.)

The Plains' greens fees and cart fees apply. Golfers with a season pass to The Plains will only pay registration dues. For questions, or to request an application, please contact Kathy Sawtells, league treasurer, at kathysawtells@centurytel.net.



EWU OFFERING SPECIAL RATE FOR RETIREES

If you're looking for ways to stay fit, especially during those scorching hot or annoyingly cold days, consider joining the University Recreation Center. EWU is offering retirees the same **\$20 monthly membership** deal that was just made available to employees. For questions or information, please contact URC customer service at 509.359.4026.

INTRODUCING A NEW ALUMNI ADVENTURE EXPERIENCE

We are excited to announce EWU Alumni Association's official adventure program, Alumni Adventures! The exclusive travel program is designed specifically for our alumni and friends to explore, discover, and create lasting memories around the globe.

This program is a testament to our commitment to fostering lifelong connections and providing enriching experiences beyond the boundaries of our campus. It's an opportunity for you to embark on captivating journeys, reconnect with fellow alumni, and immerse yourself in diverse cultures while enjoying specially curated itineraries.

2025 Trips Include:

- Wonders of the Galapagos Islands | Feb. 2 - 11
- Village Life Italian Lakes | Apr. 4 - May 4
- Scottish Isles & Norwegian Fjords | June 4 - 12
- Island Life Greek Isles and Ephesus | Aug. 29 - Sept. 6

Reserve your spot on a 2025 trip at ewu.edu/AlumniAdventures



IN MEMORIAM

We'd like to take a moment to honor the outstanding Eastern faculty and staff retirees, and their spouses, who have passed away over the past few months. We extend our condolences to their loved ones and our gratitude for the impact they made for EWU's students and community.

Charles French, retired staff for the EWU Campus Police Department, served the university for 7 years. French passed away Oct. 19, 2023.

Leland (Lee) Graese, retired staff from the Physical Plant, served the university for 28 years. Graese passed away Nov. 17, 2023.

Cecil Jose, retired faculty in Indian studies and urban and regional planning, served the university for 19 years. He passed away Nov. 10, 2023.

Patricia (Trish) Hahn, faculty emeritus in communications disorders, served EWU for 26 years. Hahn passed away Nov. 26, 2023.

Lorraine McMillan, retired staff in dining services, served the university for 19 years. McMillan passed away Dec. 5, 2023.

Arlene Mortensen, retired staff member from admissions, served EWU for 30 years. Mortensen passed away Dec. 21, 2023.

Claude Nichols, faculty emeritus in history, served the university for 35 years. Nichols passed away Nov. 5, 2023.

Vandana Asthana, faculty member in government, served the university for 17 years. Asthana passed away Jan. 16, 2024.

Gene (Skip) Bayley, retired staff from the paint shop, served the university for 21 years. Bayley passed away Jan. 26, 2024.

Martha (Marti) Brzoska, retired staff in undergraduate academic advising, served EWU for 23 years. Brzoska passed away Feb. 27, 2024.

C. Peggy Gazette, retired faculty emeritus in physical education, health and recreation served EWU for 17 years. Gazette passed away Jan. 23, 2024.



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WANT TO HELP STUDENTS FINISH THEIR DEGREES?

Your gift to the EWU Foundation provides opportunities and support for hardworking students, while saving on your income taxes.

TAX-WISE GIFTS INCLUDE:

- Appreciated Assets (such as stocks): Your capital gains can benefit our students and create an income tax deduction for you.
- IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD): If you are 73 or older, your RMD can support scholarships and lower your taxable income.
- Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA): You can fund a CGA that provides fixed payments for life, and possible income tax benefits with the remaining funds, to support Eastern.

CONNECTIONS FOR GENERATIONS



Dear Friends,

Whether you are new to retirement or are a little more seasoned, your connection to Eastern Washington University and one another is the thread that makes our community whole.

This year, Eastern is commemorating 142 years of educating the region's workforce, starting with its early years as a normal school educating the very teachers who shaped our communities.

We've grown and learned a lot over those many years. And it is people like you — our retirees — who helped shape Eastern Washington University and develop its incredible capacity to provide affordable degrees that change lives.

The EWU Retirees Association (EWURA) offers a wonderful means to stay connected

to Eastern and to one another through the bi-annual newsletter, engaging monthly programs, the Golden Eagle Scholarship Fund, and the Golden Links Coed Golf League. We hope you cherish these meaningful connections!

Beyond the EWURA, many retirees delight in the continued connections with Eastern — and our students — by establishing their own endowed scholarships. It's an honor to work with so many retired faculty and staff who remain invested in the university's future and the future of our students.

Please reach out if you are interested in exploring options to deepen your connection to Eastern.

With Gratitude,

Courtney Susemihl

EWURA Foundation Liaison
Senior Director of Gift Planning
509.359.6703 or csusemie@ewu.edu