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The Minnesota Scholar is published semi-annually.

In this issue, The Minnesota Scholar will begin featuring, a series of articles under the general heading of Why Genealogy. Since fields of interest and scholarship vary from the sciences to the arts, technology to sports, crafts to trades, business to industry, philosophy to psychology and everything in-between, we are calling for scholars to share with other members of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum the passions in their chosen areas.
Life began with questions: “Why is the sky so blue?” They ascended in complexity as time went on: “Why is democracy a noun and not a verb?” Or: “Why do we say “Gesundheit!” when we could say “Bless you!”? And how does Plato relate to the theory of relativity? Some of us never stop asking questions.

In my family, lively discussions were part of gathering around the dinner table every night. No topic was off limits. My father, a graphic artist with boundless energy, frequently led the discussion. First we listened. He stirred the imagination. Then, with three brothers competing, things got lively, and if you wanted to be heard, you had better speak up. My mother would listen quietly, always the voice of calm and reason in the end. Sometimes I found the answers to my questions, whatever they may have been. Other times I knew I had to keep looking.

In first grade, things began to take shape, when I was introduced to letters. I remember how hard it was to make those first letters on the slate. It got better when I could switch to pencil and later to pen. I liked the way they felt in the hand, the way you could glide over paper in long even strokes when you got good at writing words. Penmanship was fun. I loved calligraphy. I loved writing assignments.

But it was in fourth grade in Berlin when the world opened up. Our regular teacher was out sick, and the principal took her place. We were disheartened, because he was old and serious and not young and cheerful like our teacher. But he proceeded to write the German word “Fenster” on the board, explaining it came from the Latin word “fenestra.” Then he wrote the English word “window” on the board, indicating it came from Germanic roots “vindauga,” “vind” meaning wind and “auga” meaning eye (translated but not used in modern High German as Windauge). I found it fascinating that you could trace the present back to the past. When he explained the word “philology,” I was mesmerized. I decided then: “Someday I will study philology.”

Soon after, in literature classes, I discovered what I considered the secret world of poets, such as Goethe and Rilke. By eighth grade, I was reading novels, inspired by my mother, who was an avid reader. I made regular trips to the library as if novels like those of Pearl Buck and Jack London would prepare me for world travel. Then, sitting on a hill at the edge of the Vienna Woods, looking down on city rooftops, I was sure – someday I would become a writer.

In high school in Milwaukee, reading was my favorite assignment. But when I sat in study hall with nothing more to do, I practiced writing left handed. Shouldn’t everyone? No problem, it just looked different than right handed writing.

At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee I came a step closer to philology when I embarked on the secondary education route with English, German, and Spanish. Over the years of relocation and travel with my family, this thing of languages figured importantly in my life and would do so later in my professional life and writing. My studies at the U added more credence to my discovery that language and dialect are the collective personality of a people who speak it, and give expression to their way of thinking and believing, their very culture, all wrapped up in idioms, figurative language and common expressions, punctuated by its music and gestures. Outwardly, I imagined myself in the respective roles each language seemed to assign. I wanted to write in all three of the languages I studied. And so I worked on it, deliberately, unconsciously, continuously.

In college courses, the technical aspects of language found their place, like grammar and usage. It turned out, grammar was both tool box and building blocks of writing, while usage gave it personality. Teaching world languages in a classroom is unthinkable without a thorough knowledge of grammar. And writing effective papers in English class exposed another pressing need. And you had better put functional as well as traditional grammar to good use not to get lost.

Subsequently, in my teaching positions in Wisconsin, writing was not only part of my instruction but also part of my professional work, something I treasured. I wrote curriculum and teaching materials for my students.
whenever I could not find what I needed. I was assigned publicity articles for the newspaper which I enjoyed and gradually expanded into writing my own newspaper articles. They were all published. Yet something was still missing in my life. I needed to expand my teaching of English – and my own writing.

Consequently, I embarked on a master’s program in the teaching of English. It became the stepping stone fulfilling my original dream about language and writing. First among the research papers was one on the history of the English language. It became the basis for a class I would teach later on.

The most significant effort surrounded my master’s thesis, “Virginia Woolf: The Creative Vision” which was to change my life. Here I researched and discovered the creative process of writing as Virginia Woolf exposed it. Reading her novels, notably To the Lighthouse and Mrs. Dollaway and particularly A Writer’s Diary, I found enough similarities to my own life and artistic outlook that, for the first time, I truly saw myself as a writer. Working on the thesis helped me find direction on how to work on my own writing technique.

At the same time, I concluded that expository and creative writing apply inverse processes to achieve their goals. Suddenly, I saw what had held back my creative writing progress and the writing of so many students. Flood gates opened. I was launched, officially, and as a poet. I published my first poetry in the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Prologue. My philosophy instructor at the time asked me into his office to discuss my poetry, and he then encouraged me also to branch out into story writing.

After completing the M.S., I went to the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis to find a writers group. In absence of one, people there felt I had just the right qualifications to start one, and so I did. I led it for seven years. Afterwards, I published a multicultural anthology of the group’s poetry. It sold out quickly. Some years after that I became a Loft teaching artist.

When I returned to teaching in the public schools, I was initially hired as a resource teacher for both English and German. Again, I wrote curriculum and, increasingly, teaching materials. Assigned a linguistics class for which there were neither teaching materials nor funds available, I wrote the course content as if I had been ordained to do just that right from the start.

Leaving public school teaching, I wanted to focus on writing. My first task was to combine and expand the contents of the linguistics course and other writing classes I had taught into a reference book for writers. It included grammar and sentence structure, the origins and development of language as well as a brief history of the English language and literature. The manuscript is entitled “Power Behind Your Writing,” ready for publication.

All the while, I had been writing poetry in my spare time. Over the years, this has resulted in three books of poetry, the first From Here Across the Bridge, a memoir in verse with woodcut illustrations by my father, Wolfgang Klein. The next two books of poetry, prose, and my own illustrations, Once upon a Neighborhood and Seasons of Desire can now be found the Minnesota Historical Society’s permanent library collection.

I have just completed my first short story collection. This and writing articles for my own newsletter as well as professional organizations provides a welcome balance to writing poetry. More projects are already in the works.

When time permits, I still teach writing at the Loft and other venues. But I primarily speak to groups and organizations about writing and topics I discuss in my writing and books. I enjoy sharing my passion and this, in turn, helps me grow.

I move forward in a circle of events where writing is always the star. I am never sure which part of me wants to speak, because the connections to life are so many. To sum it all up –

What is writing without philology?
What is philology without history of language?
What is history of language without history of literature and writing?
What is thought without reading and discussion?
What is writing without process or structure?
What is the mind without expression?

Writing is a state of mind
which images, events, and language feed continuously.

~Evelyn Klein, author, speaker, artist, is a Minnesota Independent Scholar, writing consultant, and educator. Her poetry, articles and essays appear in various publications, and she has three books to her credit She holds a B.S. in Secondary Education and an M.S. in the Teaching of English.
Finding Family Roots
by Gus Fenton

The question “Why genealogy?” perhaps should better be phrased as “When genealogy?” since at some phase in many people’s lives they become interested in their roots. This may take the form of talking with a fanatical relative whose life’s goal is to document every last scrap of familial history or, in more serious cases, they might actually become that crazy person. It’s time to get worried when they start thinking that family vacations spent walking four abreast through graveyards looking for the tombstone of a fourth cousin, multiply removed (once or twice forcibly) sounds reasonable. DSM-IV codes have not yet been developed for this condition.

Becoming a genealogy freak sneaked up on me. The switch turned on in my 50s while clearing out some files in the attic. I came across an old postcard, written in Finnish, dated 1910, that my mother had given me years ago. It was sent from Vadsø, Norway, by grandmother to my future grandfather who was living here in Minneapolis. Contrary to the postcard, my only awareness of their lives was that they were Finnish immigrants and that they lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Why was my grandmother in Vadsø, Norway, and my grandfather in Minneapolis? I don’t understand Finnish, so I did not know if this was a steamy love note or a “Hi, how are you?” kind of thing. Unfortunately, it turned out to be the latter. But I get ahead of myself. Certainly it was a puzzle. And engineers like me are attracted to puzzles. Moths to a flame is what it is.

I told my siblings I was looking into why Kustaa, my maternal grandfather and namesake, was in Minneapolis for a year or so in 1910 and whatever other information I could find. I naively, assumed it would result in five pages of material, be a quick project, done and done. The reality was otherwise. Telling my siblings of my project also caused them to send me all the stuff they’d been saving along the lines of family memorabilia – boxes of it.

As I looked into Kustaa’s life, I started encountering more and more information about him, all of which was news to me. News because I probably wasn’t paying attention as a kid and nobody thought I needed/wanted to know, all likely possibilities. First, there were the census records where I had to sort my Kustaa out from a same-name, same-aged doppelgänger who emigrated from Finland to the same place (Wisconsin) at about the same time. From that I was somewhat disappointed to learn that I neither owned 40 acres in northern Wisconsin nor was descended from a bigamist.

Then I started reading my mother’s writings, where literally half of her 90 vignettes related to her childhood, speaking volumes about the times. I learned about the five different places my maternal grandparents lived in Milwaukee, each time horse-trading one piece of property for the next, preserving capital since they probably didn’t have any. Then there was another old postcard sent by my grandfather to his relatives back in Finland circa 1911 when he and my grandmother were, likely, just engaged. The picture on the postcard showed my grandmother sitting on a donkey, looking a bit concerned, with my grandfather standing next to her. Kustaa had written in Finnish on the picture, “Oh, poor donkey!” At last, the source of my misbegotten sense of humor was identified.

Needless to say, the writing project burgeoned beyond five pages to become a 234-page book, now safely archived amongst relatives, the Library of Congress and ten other repositories. And that was just the start.

Having finished my mother’s side of the family, I went on to do the same to my dad’s side. Most of his folks had been on this side of the Atlantic since the early 1700s, pursuing dreams or escaping nightmares or perhaps a bit of both. Given no further sides of the family to document, I turned to a journal my great-great-grandfather had written in the late 1860s about his life and times growing up in Vermont, then moving to the “wild west of Michigan.” Three hundred plus pages he wrote and never felt the need for a period or paragraph break. I edited the Jack Kerouac out of him and annotated the historical incidents he cited, which though common knowledge to those of his time, are forgotten to us – a pity.
Where does one go from here? It was obvious to one in the throes of genealogy withdrawal but perhaps not to all that the history of our house, built in 1906, needed to be documented. For this one I learned how Minneapolis property listings work, but the paperwork is still just confusing. With the census data we found that our house, which we view as comfortably full with two people, once held seven people (husband, wife and two daughters, two of the wife’s sisters and a roomer). From the 1934 Minneapolis Building & Housing Survey, we know we had running water inside the house, but whether the toilet was indoor or out is not clear.

And then there are the plats maps and Sanborn insurance maps which draw me in inexorably due to my acute “cartophilia.” (Per the OED a “cartophile” is also one who pursues “… collecting, arranging, and studying cigarette-cards and similar items.)

I’ve now walked all around the “why” of genealogy without providing a direct answer to that question. Having mostly retired from the engineering world, I needed to do a bit more than play guitar, exercise, read Scientific American, and drink beer. The searcher and organizer and finisher within me has emerged, although emerged is too mild a term. More like the thrasher within starts aggressively demanding projects to research, coordinate and complete. What’s the next stop? Who knows? And that’s the great part about it.

~Gus Fenton is a semi-retired biomedical engineer whose other interests include wolves, international travel, history, playing guitar, and writing. His current project is writing a book expanding on historical incidents of the 1800s that appeared in his great-great-grandfather’s journal.

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The Voice of the People

by Mike Woolsey

By all accounts, the government of the United States was founded as a representative democracy. That is to say, its citizens were to choose the officials of the government, but it was to be the responsibility of those officials to formulate and execute the policies of the nation. In doing so, they were expected to use their own best judgment.

Even within the government, there was to be a hierarchy of wisdom and judgment. While members of the House of Representatives were directly elected by the citizenry of each state, in numbers proportional to the population of that state, and for two-year terms, members of the Senate were to be chosen by state legislatures, their numbers not relative to state populations, and they were to serve terms three times as long. In these respects, the Senate was to be more insulated from the will of the people. The Senators were also to be older than the Representatives (with a minimum age of 30 rather than 25), and thus have a “greater extent of information and stability of character” (Hamilton, The Federalist, 1788).

Since then, there is ample evidence that American democratic processes have become less representative and increasingly “direct.” That is to say, the scope of citizen consent and involvement has expanded significantly beyond the simple act of voting for political representatives. Russell Kirk observed that by the end of the nineteenth century,

The election of judges and of executive officials, the abolition of the last exceptions to universal manhood suffrage, the revision of constitutions, the direct primary, the popular election of United States senators, presently the popular initiative and referendum and recall—these instruments of extreme democracy are proposed, praised, and gradually enacted. (The Conservative Mind, 1953).

Kirk might have added to this list the changed role of the Electoral College in presidential elections. This group was originally intended to be a representative buffer between the citizens and the election process. As Alexander Hamilton explained in The Federalist:

It was equally desirable, that the immediate election should be made by men most capable of analyzing the
qualities adapted to the station, and acting under circumstances favorable to deliberation, and to a judicious combination of all the reasons and inducements which were proper to govern their choice. A small number of persons, selected by their fellow-citizens from the general mass, will be most likely to possess the information and discernment requisite to such complicated investigations.

In other words, the original intent was for the citizens to vote for the electors, and the electors to consult their own judgment and conscience in choosing the next President and Vice-President. However, with the rise of political parties in the early years of the republic, and the selection of electors by the parties, the electors were no longer expected to exercise independent judgment. Each elector was expected, and in some states required by law, to vote according to party affiliation. The function of the Electoral College has thus ceased to be representative, in the sense of a select few exercising their judgments in the best interest of the whole. It has become, instead, an organ of direct democracy, virtually guaranteed to replicate the choice of the citizens in each state.

Kirk’s depiction of direct democracy’s evolution dates from the early 1950s. Since then, its emergence has been marked by further developments. One is the increased influence of state primary elections on presidential campaigns.

Up through the 1976 election, which accelerated the number of states holding primaries, the caucus/convention method was the usual method for choosing delegates to the national convention. It was a system easily controlled – and in many cases manipulated – by the party hierarchy. In the Democratic Party of the early 1970’s, the McGovern /Fraser reforms seeking to reduce the influence of “bossism” in the nominating process encouraged many states to change over from this method of choosing national convention delegates to the primary...(Berg-Anderson, TheGreenPapers.com, 2015)

Before then, the few state primaries (16 in 1960) could not be determinative of the parties’ nominees, and the selection process was generally indirect and opaque compared to what we have today. Unless year 2016 proves an exception, gone are the days when the national conventions had some drama, when party Credential Committees played an outsized role in the seating of delegates, and multiple roll-calls of delegates lasted for hours. In the twenty-first century, the party nominees are thoroughly vetted, and generally selected, by direct primaries in the majority of states, well before the national conventions. Even Democratic Party “super-delegates” (15% of the total), those established functionaries of the party who are granted a convention vote independent of primary or caucus results, are now being criticized if they deviate from those results by supporting a candidate of their own choice.

A corresponding development of the past half-century has been the growing prevalence and influence of public opinion polls. They have effectively reduced the representative quality of American politics, to the point where it is not now surprising for the views of a politician to be largely “poll-driven,” and not just in campaigning for election, but in governing as well:

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first American President to use a private polling service to advise him on both election strategy and public policy . . . John F. Kennedy’s 1960 campaign relied heavily on public opinion polls, and every candidate since has had pollsters as an integral part of his campaign team. Dr. Richard Wirthlin became the first semi-official pollster when he joined President Reagan's White House staff as an advisor. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush relied heavily on pollsters in and outside the White House (NOW on PBS, 2009).

Accordingly, one of today’s ubiquitous mantras is “this is what the American people want!” The will of the people is now even being invoked in clear contravention of the US Senate’s constitutional duty to give “advice and consent” to the president’s appointment to the Supreme Court. What was originally intended to be the responsibility of the senior deliberative body of government is now being delayed until after the presidential election, supposedly to more closely reflect the will of the people.

And then you have the phenomenon of Donald Trump, with his surprising level of popular support, much to the seemingly unprecedented consternation of the Republican Party hierarchy. Per Fox News analyst Bill O’Reilly, “History will record that this was an uprising, a movement of the people supporting a

Continued on Page 13
This book is a biography of Rosalie Wahl (1924—2013), the first female judge on Minnesota’s Supreme Court. Wahl’s life is full of many fascinating episodes, and Lori Sturdevant, a reporter for the Star Tribune, does a fine job of detailing Wahl’s rise to prominence as a lawyer, a public defender, and eventually a judge.

Nevertheless, what I found especially fascinating were the stories of the rise of the women’s movement. Quoting Gail Collins, and agreeing that no single thing brought about the Women’s Movement, Sturdevant lists “a collection of something elses” in the 1970s that opened doors for women to step outside their homes. Among the something elses were educated women, whose children had been launched, and who had therefore some independence. Other factors include the pill, which gave women some control over their reproductive lives, and the examples of the Civil Rights Movement and the opposition to the Vietnam War.

In Minnesota the women’s movement was galvanized by the desire of women in Minnesota politics to do something more than “address envelopes” or be “dedicated drones.” The growth and strength of the women’s movement in Minnesota brought a number of prominent women into politics in various modes. Sturdevant, reporter that she is, gives a detailed account of the rise of this movement with many names and examples.

Wahl, by this time a lawyer in the public defender’s office, participated in the women’s movement, but did not consider running for office. Rather she established a legal aid clinic for students at William Mitchell Law School; it allowed students to represent indigent clients under the supervision of an attorney. This experience gave Wahl plenty of exposure to the justices of the Minnesota Supreme court.

From this position, Wahl was appointed in 1977 an associate supreme court justice by Governor Rudy Perpich. She became the first female supreme court justice in Minnesota’s history. An indication of just how far her appointment was from historical precedent was the fact that Cass Gilbert’s elegant statehouse design had not anticipated “the need for facilities for both genders in the judicial or legislative suites” (115). Although a public women’s restroom was located just outside the judicial chambers, she was informed that it was not appropriate for her to “mingle.” A third floor bathroom was designated for her use.

In Minnesota, judges must run for reelection even after they have been appointed. In 1978, Wahl faced Robert Mattson as an opponent for the judge position. Mattson ran a seriously “un-nice” campaign against Wahl—using newspaper ads, innuendo, and distortion of Wahl’s record to try to oust her from her seat on the court. The campaign brought Wahl (and some women’s issues) to the forefront of public attention. On November 6, she took 57% of the vote. Although Wahl stood for election twice more, she never again faced such vitriolic opposition.

In 1982, Wahl was joined on the Supreme Court bench by Jeanne Coyne who had been
appointed by Al Quie. With these two women on the high court and several women in the appeals court, Minnesota’s courts changed in significant and subtle ways. “Sexist jokes [weren’t] told. Hiring decisions [were] fairer to both genders. Childcare concerns among court personnel [were] taken seriously. Cases involving family law and crimes in which women and children are victims [took] on greater significance” (164).

By the time Perpich left office in 1991, he had appointed four women to the seven-member state supreme court. His lasting legacy was to bring women fully into the third branch of government.

In 1990, Wahl was 65 years old. She did not retire but rather took up some new causes. As she spelled out in a series of interviews (fireside chats) with Norma Wikler and Laura Kadwell, she felt that the purpose of the law (as a branch of government) was to make sure things were fair for the disadvantaged—especially impoverished children. She was appalled that so much was spent on prisons and so little on welfare for homeless children (189). She established the Racial Bias Task Force and “became the face of equal justice under law” (192). The Racial Bias Task Force was the third of Wahl’s transformations of the Minnesota judicial system. The other two were opening the door for the appointment of female judges and rooting out the sexism with which women were treated by the courts (196).

Wahl died in 2013, but Sturdevant makes sure that we know the women’s causes Wahl worked for still are unresolved: the women’s movement, according to Sturdevant, sought to equalize the stakes for everyone—not just women but also men and especially children. This goal has only been partially achieved in that many large corporations force women to choose between their profession and their small children. “Altering the American workplace to be friendlier to mothers, fathers and the children they raise together is a major unfinished item on the agenda...” (207)

Because I did not grow up in Minnesota, I found this book a difficult read; it seemed top-heavy with names of women I did not know. Nevertheless, as a story of the women’s movement over the past 50 years, Your Honor is an eye-opener in terms of how far women have come and how far they have to go.

The story of Rosalie Wahl was also documented in a 2012 film The Girl from Birch Creek, produced by Lightshed Productions.

~Lucy Brusic is a writer and hand weaver. She is the author or co-author of five books under her own name and the editor or designer of at least a dozen books written by other people. She is the former editor of this journal.

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**Tribute to Lucy Brusic**

On behalf of the MISF Executive Board, we would like to thank Lucy Brusic for her ten years of dedicated service editing and producing its Journal, *Practical Thinking*. For all this time, she published two volumes annually and kept readers engaged with member articles, book reviews, meeting notes, and listing of events. In addition, she managed to contribute her own articles and reviews at times. When the board voted to rename the journal *The Minnesota Scholar*, Lucy designed the new logo for it. All this, and she also served as secretary for our Forum at concurrent times.

Fortunately, Lucy continues to be on board with the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum. She is currently working as editor on an anthology of independent scholarship in Minnesota by request of and in cooperation with the Minnesota Historical Society and the Scholars Board. Go, Lucy!

As Lucy is turning over *The Minnesota Scholar* to the new editor, MISF recognizes, that we have been indeed, fortunate to count Lucy Brusic’s talents, leadership and contributions among our membership.

Thank you, Lucy Brusic for all the hard work and dedication!

~Evelyn Klein, Editor
Meetings and Programs

January 23, 2016

War and Art:
Russian Artistic Expression during World War I
Presented by Carol Veldman Rudie

Often people think about World War I, in terms of muddy and bloody trench warfare on the Western Front. This impression is fostered, in part, by some historians – as well as visits to the battlefield sponsored by Masterpiece Theater and the BBC. At the January Scholars Forum Carol Veldman, lead docent at The Museum of Russian Art (TMORA), examined “War and Art: Russian Artistic Expression during WWI.” This unfamiliar theater of war proved to be surprising and lethal enough to capture the group’s interest as Russia experienced 600,000 deaths at the Battle of Tannenberg alone.

In her tour of the war, Veldman showed many rarely seen photographs and moving pictures. Her presentation was a précis of a large exhibit at TMORA titled “Faces of War: Russia in World War I, 1914-1918.” She invited the scholars to visit the exhibit, which some subsequently did, to get the fuller picture.

Veldman tracked the war year by year. She talked about the political background and the breakdown of peace negotiations among the various governmental heads, most of whom were related to one another by birth. She raised the question whether the war could have been avoided. Given the pride, jingoism, overconfidence, and intransigence of the heads of state and the military buildup, probably not.

She began her account with the Russian uprising of 1905. Referring to the war’s outbreak in 1914, she mentioned the half-hearted and abortive attempts at avoidance, noting especially the correspondence between Tsar Nicholas of Russia and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, cousins who eventually fell out. She traced the outline of war as it unfolded year by year, noting the Battle of Masurian Lake in 1915; the Brusilov Offensive in 1916; the reappearance of Lenin from exile and the contribution of the women’s brigade in 1917; and the peace process in 1918 when the Russian Empire had become the Soviet Union.

Veldman gave a thumbnail history of Russian painting through period photographs as well as illustrations of work by many Russian artists of the first part of the twentieth century. Artists like Kandinsky, Chagall, Popova, and Repin all played a part in limning the tumultuous cultural upheaval of the period.

The war years in Russia were brutal, costly, and in many ways earth-shattering. The political and cultural conditions fractured Russia, making way for the 1917 Revolution. Thus, WWI altered the course of Russian – and world – history.

This exhibition of Russia’s role in WWI could easily alter our perception of Russian history. We have been brought up with the idea the war was fought mostly if not entirely on the western front. But the TMORA exhibit indicates that this is not so. We can see things for ourselves in the handsome and richly illustrated catalogue: Faces of War. It contains ample commentary, documentary footage, photographs, and artifacts. The tragic war and its consequences for Russian history were considerably more extensive than most of us have thought and been taught.

~Robert Brusic
Trip to Cuba
Presented by Gus Fenton

It’s fine to bring cigars back from Cuba but you can only smoke them yourself because giving them to another American is a violation of U.S. Treasury law. It’s that darn embargo.

That’s one thing that stands out about the trip my wife and I took to Cuba in October 2015. It is the only sanctioned way for an American to get to an embargoed country which they did on a people-to-people tour. The rules are loosening up with the U.S. embassy reopened in Havana, but Americans are still not allowed to roam freely. The two million plus Canadians and Europeans who went there in 2014 are not under such restrictions, but they tend to stay in the resort areas. Cuban-Americans, 260,000 of them in 2014, are able to travel to Cuba on special visas, allowing them to visit about as often as they like. They bring with them goods difficult to obtain in Cuba, e.g., tires, TVs, air conditioners.

Cuba’s history was tied tightly to the Spanish empire for four hundred years which is obvious in the Spanish and Moorish architecture seen in many parts of the country as well as the Catholic churches and roadside shrines for saints. After Spain was ousted by the Cubans in 1898, the heavy hand of the U.S. was felt in the form of the 1903 Platt amendment that allowed the U.S. to intervene in Cuban affairs until 1940. Fidel Castro succeeded in overthrowing Batista in 1959. This marked the end to Batista’s era of drugs, prostitution, gambling and corruption. While U.S.-Cuban relations looked promising at first, events cascaded downward reaching their nadir with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962. Since then interactions between the U.S. and Cuba have been limited at best.

These days, about the only restriction on travel, other than having to obtain a visa, is that Americans must stay with their tour group during the day’s activities. In the evenings they could join the tour group at a dinner or wander about the city on their own. For $30 they could hire one of the iconic 1950s cars to take them on an hour-long tour of Havana. Accommodations were fine as were the restaurants. Pork, beans and rice were standard fare with few, if any, vegetables. Mojitos were almost obligatory.

The embargo is definitely a factor in the poverty you see in Cuba, but blaming the embargo may be covering for government inefficiencies. Few vehicles are seen on the roads. Buildings are in disrepair. Organic farming is done not by choice but by necessity due to lack of fertilizer, pesticides and farm equipment. Food is handed out monthly in ration stores but it’s only ten days’ worth. Most citizens are on a low government salary, about $100 per month, which mostly goes to pay for the rest of the month’s food. Despite the lack of money and resources, music and the arts are flourishing. Literacy is close to 100% and healthcare, though basic, is available to all.

The recommendation is to visit Cuba now, even under embargo restrictions, then plan to return in five years to see the changes.

~ Gus Fenton

Sad Stories of the Death of Kings
Presented by James Hart

Considering England’s long and distinguished history as a monarchy, its past is replete with its share of royal intrigue, mystery, and gloom. When succession to the throne was questioned, ambivalent or contested, it
held its own particular ramifications for the royal involved.

In his research Hart consulted the “Anglo-Saxon Chronicle” which was a panel wound up on a roll. It was begun by Alfred the Great and later continued by clerics. He pointed out that the kings who bestowed the greatest endowments to the church received the most favorable treatment in the chronicle.

Hart stated that anyone of royal blood could be king. Therefore, the king had to be crowned and consecrated right away. If there was no male heir to the crown, a woman would not likely be able to succeed unless the deceased royal left a will or some documented indication that the daughter or woman in question qualified as successor. It is easy to see how these situations could lead to all kinds of intrigue.

James Hart, who was inspired by Shakespeare’s play, Richard II, introduced the subject thus:

> For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground
> And tell sad stories of the death of kings,
> How some had been disposed; some slain
> in war,
> Some haunted by gods they have
> disposed,
> Some poisoned by their wives; some
> sleeping kill’d;
> All murdered.

Act III, Scene 2

Hart examined twenty-two kings and four queens, giving an abbreviated history of their circumstances, such as accession to the throne, reign, intrigue at court as well as circumstances surrounding the royal’s death. His research spans 600 years, from the year 1003, with the birth of Edward the Confessor, to 1603, with the death of Elizabeth I.

Edward the Confessor was born 1003 and crowned in 1043. He was nicknamed the “Confessor” because he gave confessions all the time. He reigned twenty-three and one-half years and is the builder of the first Westminster Abbey. He died probably of a stroke, in 1066 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Of the twenty-two kings fifteen died of natural causes, including dysentery, stomach disorders, tuberculosis, and other health related causes. Henry III, 1207-1272 died of natural causes. He had the longest reign of 56 years and was most interested in the arts. He tore down the first Westminster Abbey and erected the present one, where most of the royals are buried. Of the four queens, three died of natural causes.

Two kings died in accidents; three died in war. Four kings were murdered, including Edward II, 1284-1327 and Richard II, 1367-1400. Henry VI was deposed and murdered. Of the queens Jane Grey, was arrested, deposed and murdered.

Since during this period no set rules concerning the rights of succession applied internally, the one who got to the coronation first was crowned. Internationally, the same held true and the outcome was often based on treaties, so that the conqueror could rule the conquered.

~ Evelyn Klein

April 23, 2016

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World without Genocide

Presented by Ellen Kennedy

As part of Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month, April, Ellen Kennedy, Executive Director of World without Genocide gave her audience an inside look on this topic so frequently brought up in the news in modern times and affecting various parts of the world.

She began by explaining the term “genocide” as coined by linguists, composed of the Greek *geno-* meaning race or group of people, and the Latin suffix *cide*, meaning to kill.

After the events of World War II, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide set forth a set of definitions of genocide which were then adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 9, 1948. The basic definition of “genocide” now refers to the attempt to exterminate in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. It also includes killing members of a group or causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a
group; inflicting conditions to bring about the group’s physical destruction in whole or in part; and preventing births within a group. Even intent can be considered part of genocide.

After the resolution on genocide was ratified by the United Nations, Senator Proxmire asked to ratify the resolution in Congress. In 1988 it was finally ratified by the U.S., 40 years after it was first ratified by the United Nations.

Between the years 1960-2006, it is estimated that there have been 21,129,000 deaths attributed to genocide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Estimated Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>1915-1918</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust</td>
<td>1933-1945</td>
<td>11,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>1992-1996</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darfur</td>
<td>2003-today</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kennedy further filled in details surrounding events of the genocides.

When asked about the genocide of American Indians, the speaker responded that there is a separate program on this topic. At the same time, she pointed out that the second Monday of October is Indigenous Peoples Day in Minnesota in response and supported by Clyde Bellacourt and the American Indian movement.

Generally, conditions that tend to generate genocide include challenging political and economic conditions, including droughts, food and water shortages, and disputes over land. Historically, however, these events were often underestimated in their significance by politicians and the public alike, even though genocide often made the front page in the news. Yet the danger of this kind of violence increasing is real.

Today, perpetrators are often prosecuted, influenced by the Nuremberg Trials, 1945-1046, relative to the Holocaust, and Judgement at Istanbul in more recent times. International military tribunals are also held to bring to justice those involved.

At present, there are four refugee camps in Rwanda, and the crisis in Syria is not about to abate any time soon.

The answer to resolve these crises, according to Kennedy is to –

Prevent - Through global coalition  
Strengthen - Through civil society  
Protect - Through humanitarian aid  
Rebuild - Through redevelopment of economy

Kelly closed by saying that we need to make a world without genocide our legacy.

~Evelyn Klein

May 28, 2016

Poetry Day

With poetry day, dedicated to Ginny Hanson and moderated by Evelyn Klein, MISF observed the occasion with four very different poets who presented their comments and work.

**Featured Poets**

First to read was Shirley Whiting, longtime member and membership chair who has a B.S. in library science and an M.S. in adult education. Her special interest is childhood education. It is her belief that it is important to teach poetry in the schools. She feels with emphasis of STEM, the arts are left out, and we should be looking at STEAM, the “A” for arts instead, as the arts are beneficial to brain development.

Shirley read from journals and publications, and her poetry was engaging and insightful, such as the poem “Sand Thoughts.” In one of her poems, she tried to connect with her artistic father, “Something in the Wind.”

Elizabeth Irwin, poet, mother, and grandmother has an M.F.A. in writing. She has four as yet unpublished manuscripts of poetry. She is an advocate for writers with emotional challenges who choose to heal through the art of creative writing and has just completed teaching a six-week creative writing course for People Inc. She has been a finalist in the Mentor Series of The Loft Literary Center, where she is a member.

Libby, as she prefers to be called, has had a lifelong love affair with writing. In her education, she always felt encouraged to write. She likes to write poetry about
love and family as well as about poetry. Her poems were compelling.


Joe paid tribute to Memorial Day by reading poetry for his uncle, a veteran, and then continued by reading tombstone inscriptions. He invited the living to conjure the past. Among the readings, he shared a poem written for his wife and about family. He titled his poetry book *Buoyancies,* because there are times when we are buoyant. His poetry is full of energy.

Evelyn Klein, author, speaker, artist, having taught in the public schools, Century College and The Loft Literary Center, she is author of three books of poetry, essays, and art. Among the poems she read were selections from *Seasons of Desire* and *Once upon a Neighborhood.*

Evelyn agreed on the importance of poetry in the schools. She saw in her own teaching how the writing and sharing of poetry brought about growth and positive change among students. Evelyn’s poetry selections reflected her thoughts about life, people, family, and the future. She finished by reading her prize-winning poem, “Destiny,” first place winner with the Minnesota Jung Association on the topic of “Future.”

**Question and Answers**

A question and answer period followed. One stimulating question that resulted in various answers from the featured poets was, “What is more inspiring: reading another poet or writing?” Another question centered around “How are poets inspired?” You had to be there to appreciate the various answers.

**Open Mike**

The open mike followed the formal reading. First to read was Gus Fenton, MISF board member, who enjoys humor in poetry.

He was followed by Michael Dean who read from his book *Sea Shells.*

Third was Dave Juncker, longtime member and former board member, who talked about his three interests – research, music, and writing. He began writing when he first went to college.

Finally, a visitor, who lives close by shared poetry he enjoyed.

After the stimulating reading by all involved, the group milled around well beyond the allotted time, testimony that all enjoyed this interactive program.

~Evelyn Klein

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**The Voice of the People** continued from Page 6

Do you notice a trend here? And is it “progress,” as was long-ago expressed by the leading lights of the French Revolution, in their use of the phrase, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei* (the voice of the people is the voice of God); or is it a devolution to “mob-rule,” as the ancient philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle) warn us of?

In the spirit of the age, you decide!

~Mike Woolsey is president of Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum. Mike has a B.A. in Liberal Arts, an M.A.T. in Secondary Education, and an M.A. in Liberal Studies from the University of Minnesota. He retired from 3M in 2004, as a Lead Analyst in Information Technology.

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**On Poetry**

Poetry is finer, and more philosophical than history; for poetry expresses the universal, and history only the particular.

Aristotle

Tell me what it is you plan to do with your wild and precious life.

Mary Oliver
The Minnesota Scholar
MISF Submission Guidelines

Layout
- Use Times Roman font, size 12.
- Indent paragraphs; no space between paragraphs.

Submission of article or essay
- The author’s name should be on the submission.
- Submission should have a working title.
- All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, etc.

Sources
- Content of the submission should be the author’s.
- When making reference to sources, particularly in research writing, a list of sources should be included at the end of the document, unless the source is specifically stated in the essay or article.

Illustrations
- If there are illustrations for the article, they should be submitted right along with the article.

Length of Submission Content
- Feature Article – 1,500 words, 1,800 maximum
- Why genealogy – 1,500 maximum
- Book Review – 1,000 words, approximately
- Program Notes – 500 words maximum

Author Information
- Include a brief author bio, approximately 50 words, in a separate Word document attachment marked “bio.”
- For a feature article or book review also enclose a headshot photo of yourself, if possible.

How to Submit
- Submissions should be made by email and in a Word document attachment.
- Photos and illustrations can be submitted as jpps.
- Submissions and inquiries concerning submissions should be addressed to the editor, Evelyn Klein, eklein@q.com.

Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.

Stephen Hawking
**Upcoming Programs 2016**

**September 24: My Three Sicilies, stories, poems, and histories of the Old Country and the New**  
*Speaker: Joe Amato*

The Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum is always pleased when one of our members publishes a new book. We hope to please our audience with Joe’s latest book which tells of his families coming to America from Sicily in stories and poems and histories that he will share with us.

Joseph A. Amato received his B.A. in history from the University of Michigan in 1960, his M.A. from the Université de Laval, Québec in 1963, his PhD from the University of Rochester in 1970. He did post-doctoral study in the history of European cultures at UCLA in 1975-76. In 1969 Amato began teaching at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, Minnesota, where he was founder and chair of the History Department. Amato has written over twenty books as well as numerous reviews, essays, and poems. His book *Dust: A History of the Small Invisible*, won the *Los Angeles Times* Best Nonfiction of 2000. He also won the Minnesota Humanities Prize for Literature in 2005.

**October 22: Using Nonviolence to Protect Civilians**  
*Speaker: Marna Anderson*

Hear how unarmed civilians are making an impact in conflict zones around the world. Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is an emerging practice for the protection of civilians caught up by violent conflict. The program will include a brief video presentation, examples of impact of Nonviolent Peaceforce around the globe and the opportunity to discuss with others how we can use nonviolent strategies to resolve conflict.

Marna Anderson is a nonprofit leader with expertise in organizational effectiveness and major donor fundraising. She has served organizations focused on human rights, conservation, and violence against women and children. She traveled extensively in Central America during times of conflict and lived in El Salvador for four years after the Peace Accords were signed. In El Salvador she lived in a repatriated community on economic development projects for women and helped establish a program educating women and girls on domestic violence. Marna holds a B.A. in Communications and Anthropology and an M.A. in organizational leadership.

**November 19: Political Polling and the 2016 Election: An Insider’s View**  
*Speaker: Scott Perreault*

Here’s a chance to hear from someone embedded in the political machinations which the rest of us just periodically endure. Scott Perrault has his own Minneapolis-based political consulting company and has been doing political polling and advertising for the last fifteen years.

Scott was educated at Hamline, Harvard, and Bradley Universities. After seven years of coaching and teaching high school, he entered the radio industry and eventually started Gold Medal Media Group, creating radio commercials for political candidates. This expanded to television commercials, media placement, Internet commercials, and polling. Scott has been recognized as one of the nation’s top creative political minds and often judges the American Association of Political Consultants’ (AAPC) “Police Awards.” He has worked with candidates for President, Senate, and the House of Representatives, as well as many local races, including PACs. Scott is non-partisan in his approach to politics and polling.

All programs will be held in the meeting room on the lower level of the Washburn Public Library, 5244 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN, on the fourth Saturday of the month. The library opens at 9:00 a.m. We begin gathering at 9:30, and meetings start at 10:00 a.m. with a short business meeting first. All programs, meetings, and events sponsored by the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum are free and open to the public.

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