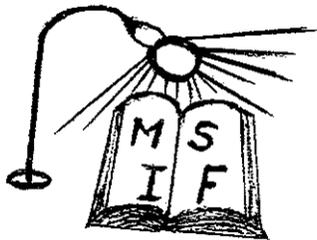


# The Minnesota Scholar

Journal of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum

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## Reading Writing Discussion



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**We the People** of the United States, in order to  
form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic  
Tranquility, provide for the common Defence, promote the general Welfare . . .



*This is my letter to the world  
That never wrote to Me –  
The simple News that Nature told –  
With tender Majesty*

Emily Dickinson

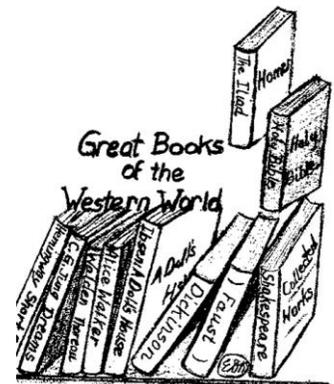
*The Theory of  
Relativity*  
Albert Einstein



There is a  
real danger  
that  
computers  
will develop  
intelligence

and take over.  
We urgently need to develop direct  
connections to the brain so that  
computers can add to human  
intelligence rather than be in opposition.

Stephen Hawking



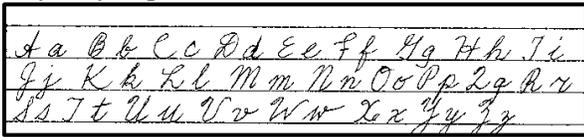


# Cursive Writing: An Essential Part of Ourselves

by Evelyn D. Klein

Is our love affair with technology making cursive handwriting as obsolete as the horse and buggy, the yard stick, and the typewriter? While this myth is still in the developing stage, it seems to be gathering momentum, even internationally, as our love affair with technology progresses in our frenzy to keep up with the new and discard the old, in a sort of “updating” game.

Consequently, the Common Core State Standard, established 2010, requires only that cursive writing be taught in kindergarten through first grade and may, then, be dropped, although the choice whether or not or how intensively to teach cursive, may vary at present from state to state.



Of course, there is no question that technology and electronic devices are a way of life and here to take us places, as necessary modern work tools, conveniences, and entertainment devices. Business and industry on every level depend on the expedience of the computer to design, compute, correspond, advertise products and services, and so on. As author, I would be lost without a computer, not only for convenience of research, writing and preparation of manuscripts, but also for the process involved in publishing, such as submitting manuscripts and illustrations, editing, examination of proofs, and so on. Yes, computers are here to stay.

Probably one of the most significant aspects that contributes to our humanness is the ability to communicate with others, to record and develop our thoughts and ideas, experiences and experiments, scientific findings and information, history and literature, and whatever else we think of. Modern technology certainly has made communication instant

and easy. But does it really matter how we go about it?

For the sake of discussion, let’s, briefly, look at the history of handwriting, from its early beginnings when people sought to capture characters, letters or words in visible form, from cuneiform to hieroglyphs, pictographs and ideographs, Phoenician to Greek alphabet to Roman script and on. Earliest findings of a recorded nature point to Cro-Magnon cave art that predates any traces of writing 30,000 years ago. Systems of writing began to develop about three-thousand years ago. Early on, Sumerians inscribed pictographs on clay tablets. Egyptians used hieroglyphs and introduced papyrus on which to write. Phoenicians introduced an alphabet, and the ancient Greeks derived their alphabet from them. The Romans, in turn, derived their alphabet from the Greeks, initially consisting of twenty-three letters. The Roman alphabet eventually evolved into the one the western world uses today with minor stylistic variations. Parchment was generally replaced with papyrus as writing became more widespread. But already in ancient Greece, cursive writing found favor because it did not require lifting the writing instrument so frequently and hence allowed for the easier flow of writing.

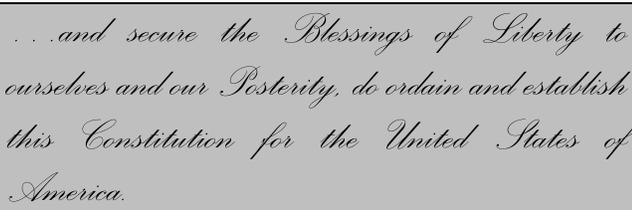
Around 700 A.D. writing was standardized in Europe, and the Romanesque and Gothic style of writing evolved. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the alphabet contained twenty-six letters. Gutenberg created movable type in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, allowing books, such as the Bible, to be printed rather than written by hand. Along the way, cursive writing gained in favor, making handwriting easier, more fluid compared to writing individual letters, increasing, also, writing speed. It continued to evolve further until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when it began to take on its current form. Then, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the typewriter first came into use. Subsequently, by the 1930s and 1940s

cursive writing began its descent, when colleges dropped cursive writing from their instruction.

Nevertheless, in western countries, writing style continues to be developed further with the aim to simplify, streamline and standardize cursive writing, tending to a more universally uniform version. By today's standards, we can consider western hand writing and cursive writing as having a multicultural or international heritage.

When the computer came onto the scene in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by other electronic communication devices in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the push for using technology in the schools became a must. With the proliferation and use of technology, some parents and others, now found cursive writing as a school discipline superfluous, and recently Finland also dropped cursive writing from school curriculum.

The most immediate thought that comes to mind when dropping cursive writing is that subsequent generations will lose their ability to connect historically, both on a personal and intellectual level, unable to read old documents and letters.



*...and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

There are many compelling reasons why cursive writing is useful even in the technological age. Surprising as it may seem, the usefulness of cursive writing goes well beyond its immediate purpose of communicating on paper or developing its artistic style.

As educator, I have discovered some important pros and cons of computers vs. handwriting. While the computer is a convenient tool, I see cursive writing as much more than a mechanical activity, although it is that, too. It appears that human ability to communicate finds its source in our mental images which early humans first transposed into cave art, then language which the ancients, subsequently, began to represent with written symbols that carry us into the present.

As writer/poet and artist many images come to me visually, even thoughts surface not just in words but in visual images. Since they usually pass very

quickly, they can be illusive. I best express these images in the hand movements that transpose the mind's images onto paper, whether in words or sketches, without the distraction of computer screen and keyboard. For words, cursive writing is the indispensable mind to hand connection, vehicle of notes or that first, or even second draft, whether poetry or the beginning or entire draft of an essay.

Apparently, the hand/mind connective is stronger than we suspected, as mind/body research shows. Neurologist Frank Wilson, author of *The Hand: How Its Use Shapes the Brain, Language and Human Cultures*, explains how hand movements are related to the development of thinking and language capacities. He asserts that even though hand writing drills seem outdated, "these activities stimulate brain activity, lead to increased language fluency and aid in the development of important knowledge."

While technology is more efficient in getting words down, the benefits are primarily mechanical. Again, educationally speaking, learning to write by hand has cognitive benefits, as it has been shown to improve reading and spelling skills. Ann Mangen in her essay, "Handwriting versus Keyboard Writing: Effect on Word Recall," *Journal of Writing Research*, 2015, found that children who wrote out words by hand rather than on the computer learned new words more effectively. Cursive note taking has been associated with better retention on part of those college students who used it as opposed to others who took notes on their computers. Cursive writing apparently engages parts of the brain that are not engaged when typing. Additionally, students with dyslexia or brain injuries can benefit from cursive writing, even if they have difficulty with print, according to "How Cursive Can Help Students with Dyslexia Connect the Dots," *PBS News Hour*, 2015. Cursive writing also helps develop hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and memory.

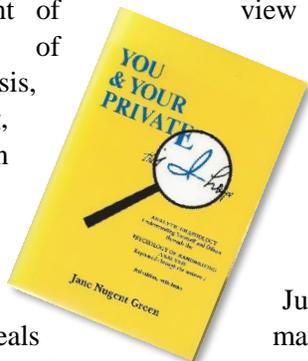
As in so many scientific and technological advances, the consequences of changes brought about by these developments, aside from immediate benefits, are frequently not obvious. While many advances have made life easier, such as cranes for construction, automobiles for travel, washing machines for households, phones for communication, etc., industrial production has led to pollution which, many years later, led to the necessity of environmental protection to safeguard not only the

health and well-being of people and creatures alike but that of the ecosystem as well. A mechanized life style may make work easier, but it also cuts down on physical activity necessary for good health.

We are only beginning to discover how early exposure to electronic devices influences the health and development of children and how adults can find their information over the internet compromised and hacked. The problem comes in when we act on an all or nothing philosophy. The psychological and physical effects of total immersion in technology documented by scientists is slowly emerging as they sort out the effects of total immersion in technology on the body, mind, and social consciousness.

In a strictly practical approach, a recent article in *Time Magazine* pointed out, one compelling reason for learning to write cursive concerns the fact that printed signatures are easier to forge than cursive ones. The reason is that the latter represents the writer's unique writing style which is much more difficult to copy than printing. And if signatures on checks are any indication, these look increasingly more like unintelligible scribbles than signatures, according to one bank employee.

From the point of view of the psychology of handwriting analysis, cursive handwriting, according to Jane Green in *You and Your Private I* as well as the psychologists Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Alfred Adler, reveals many things about the writer in a Gestalt kind of fashion. Thus, cursive writing with its individuality, its artistry can be as much a part of individual identity as a finger print.



While interactions between people and between places of work in the world are increasingly by means of paperless technology, there still remains an important place for cursive writing right alongside it. In the world of business and industry, as an engineer pointed out recently, there are times when computers crash or are not permitted and informational notes need to be hand written and passed along. At other times, a white board may, spontaneously, serve at a presentation for explanation of ideas written down for benefit of attendees at the meeting. Even at home, sometimes a quick handwritten note is preferred over emails or texting with family members. In addition, the mastery of cursive writing will continue to allow us to read historical documents like *The Constitution of the United States* or personal correspondence loved ones and friends send us or, as in the case of historical figures, leave behind rather than relegating it solely to the interpretation of historical scholars.

The alternative to replacing cursive writing with technology altogether is that we will, likely, move into a new kind of illiteracy distinctly of our own making. Keeping both cursive writing and technology side by side, each for its own purpose, we allow ourselves flexibility and a richer experience. ~

*~Evelyn D. Klein has a B.S. in Secondary Education and an M.S. in the Teaching of English. She taught in the public schools, at Century College and is a Loft teaching artist. A writer/speaker/artist and independent scholar, she is author of three books of poetry, essays and art, From Here Across the Bridge, Once upon a Neighborhood, and Seasons of Desire.*

*A version of this article was first published in the RFAREA newsletter in 2016.*

## Words to Ponder

A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.

Alexander Pope





## Why Genealogy

# Great Books Seminars

by Michael Woolsey

I became enamored of the Great Books seminar approach to education at an early age, my junior year in high school to be exact. My sister, who was a University of Minnesota senior at the time, brought home a book she had been assigned to read in a class led by renowned poet and English professor Allan Tate. It was *How to Read a Book: The Art of Getting a Liberal Education*, by Mortimer Adler (Simon and Schuster, 1940). The title appealed to me, as I was at that time feeling a need to get to the bottom of everything, to understand things fully. High school textbooks, especially science textbooks, both enticed and frustrated me, as I felt they left me with an incomplete understanding.

After authoring that book, Adler had become famous as co-editor, with University of Chicago President Robert Hutchins of the Encyclopedia Britannica set of the *Great Books of the Western World*, a 60-volume set of the written works of 100+ of the most famous thinkers of western civilization.

*How to Read a Book* was intended for a general, non-academic audience, to help it understand the seminal works of western culture. It recommended reading each such work three times: first, to understand its overall structure and key terms; second, to interpret its thesis; and third, to judge that thesis. Again, as one who had a predilection to thoroughness, that all appealed to me, notwithstanding the dedication it would take to follow the program in detail!

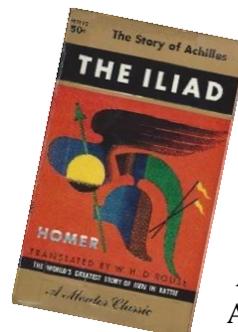
The book also included a short description of the only liberal arts college in America that Adler thought was true to his idea of liberal education: St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, a college whose "New Program" had been modeled upon the ideas of Adler and Hutchins at the University of Chicago. Interested, I sent for the college's catalog, read it, and became completely sold. Fifty-seven years later, I still regard enrolling there and staying

the four years to graduation as one of the better decisions I've made.

The St. John's program is radical, compared to the norms of higher education. First, it regards the Great Books as the teachers. The college's professors, who are called "tutors," are to be considered as simply more advanced learners. Consequently, formal lectures are a very small part of the program, only one each week; and each lecture is always followed by a question period, where the lecturer is subjected to questions by the entire student body. Similarly, the reading of "secondary" sources (i.e. synopses, exegeses, and critiques) are actively discouraged, as being no substitute for students' grappling with the original works of the great authors in their own words. You have no time to read anything else anyway.

All classes are highly interactive, on the seminar model, even math, science and language classes, which are called "tutorials." Seminars on the Great Books of philosophy, literature, history, theology, and political science are the core of the program, occurring twice weekly in the evening. These are each led by two tutors, sitting at each end of a large rectangular, combination of tables which are surrounded by fifteen to twenty students. The tutors do little more than ask an opening question and moderate the ensuing discussion. Limited to this role, they adapt to leading seminars and tutorials on all the Great Books, regardless of what specialization their own academic training had required of them.

I can still remember my first seminar, on Homer's *Illiad*, and what an eye-opener it was. We had read the first part about the Greek tribal leader Agamemnon and his jealous quarrel with the demigod warrior Achilles. As the quarrel ensued, Agamemnon "pulled rank" on



Achilles' and took his concubine slave-girl for his own, with the result that Achilles sulked in his tent and refused to fight any more. Achilles had been such a dominant warrior that his absence from subsequent battles allowed the indigenous Trojans to push the invading Greeks nearly back into the sea, and thus end the ten-year siege of Troy.

The opening question was "*How could two grown men do such a silly thing?*" Now, I expect you are unimpressed by the simplicity of that question, but the idea that we eighteen-year-olds were to frame an answer to it, with little or no help from the tutors, over a period of two hours, was something of an awakening.

Ever since then, I've participated in countless Great Book seminars, both in my years at St. John's and as a member of the college's Twin Cities alumni group, and I've never lost my enthusiasm for this kind of learning. From this long experience, I've formed some principles of my own about Great Books seminars:

1) The best opening questions are simple but get to the heart of the written work; and they are characteristically unresolvable in the space of two hours. Another example is one from a seminar for which we had read both a short story of Henry James and a psychological essay by his brother William James, each famous in his own field. The dominant question, actually raised by one of the students,

was "*Which brother was the better psychologist?*" – a question that requires one to reflect on the efficacy of formal, scientific psychology compared to the intuitive wisdom of the novelist. Unresolvable? Pretty much!

Yet another one, asked to begin a seminar on the Old Testament *Book of Job*, was "*Why did Job, at the end of the book, change his daughters' inheritance?*" What makes it so good is that, after Job's suffering so much at the hands of his God and being rewarded at the end for his faith and perseverance, the question relies on an easily-missed fact at the story's end that has no obvious relation to the rest. Why indeed? What did Job learn in all his sufferings, that

caused him to raise his daughters to a level with his sons at a time in human history where women were regarded of vastly lesser importance? Again, unresolvable in the space of two hours, but forever intriguing!

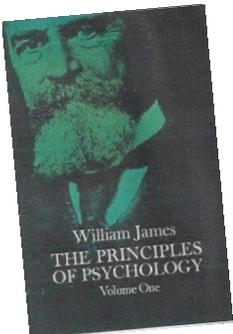


2) Among well-behaved interlocutors, the conversation usually takes on a life of its own, resisting control by any one person. That's what the St. John's tutors know, and why they minimize their efforts to control the conversation. It becomes a joint-learning exercise, where no one person's learning experience is any more important than any other's.

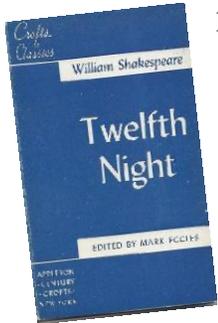
Incidentally, no one has to raise their hand to speak in a St. John's seminar. You just react to the conversation as it happens, taking some care not to be unduly interruptive. Among a group of serious learners, it works!

3) Occasionally, you'll get a seminar attendee who's given to long speeches, or lectures, and the group has to dissuade him collectively from doing so. It's a problem that Socrates famously dealt with in his conversations with the ancient Greek Sophists. He gently admonished them to give shorter answers to his dialectical questions, to their usual discomfiture and eventual submission and/or retirement. Although lacking a Socrates among us, our experience has been similar, with the lecturing types either changing their tactics or eventually becoming discouraged and dropping out.

4) You can learn a lot by listening, but you can also learn by articulating and expressing your own ideas. It's like writing in that respect. You don't really know what you know, or don't know, until you try to express it in words to a group of your peers.



5) Great Book seminars are not the end-point in learning, but rather the beginning. They raise issues that intrigue the mind and demand the application of more dedicated scholarship. At the least, they urge one to reread the book discussed, as Adler



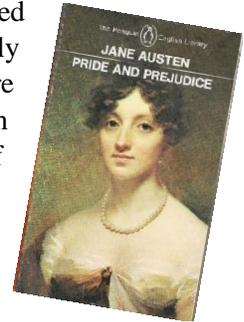
prescribed in his *How to Read a Book*. Accordingly, it's become a defining characteristic of a Great Book, that it is virtually inexhaustible, that you can find something newly intriguing in it every time you revisit it. Shakespeare's plays are good examples of that phenomenon.

Of course, interactive learning on the seminar model is not solely the province of the Great Books program. Many are the instances of seminar-based learning in main-stream academia and elsewhere, where the topics discussed originate from other materials than the Great Books. However, there is nothing quite like one of the recognized Great Books to spark a deep and engaging conversation that cannot be completed in the allotted time.

On the other hand, I've several times experienced the opposite phenomenon in other academic settings, where the subject was one of the Great Books. But the class leader seemingly had no idea of how much more educative the book would be if he followed the process of asking a single opening question and then letting the conversation take on a life of its own, each participant addressing the whole of the group rather than just him. One of these was in a graduate seminar in Political Science, where the well-meaning and erudite professor wrote four to six different questions about Hobbes' *Leviathan* on a blackboard and invited the class to discuss each one in sequence, allowing only 20 minutes or so before cutting the discussion off in order to get to the other questions. His priority was broadness, not depth, at the cost of superficiality.

More recently, in some Osher Life-Long Learning (OLLI) classes, I've noted several instances where an experienced professor has attempted to make interactive a class of thirty or so participants by

raising questions and choosing various respondents in succession, but always having to comment on, and qualify, each answer as it was given, as if the respondent were addressing only him. One of these instances was recently in a class on a great work of literature, in which the retired professor had praised the elderly class as having a more mature perspective on the book than was possible with a group of undergraduates. I agreed, wanting to hear more of what the other attendees had to say, but he kept the focus on himself.



These instances were disappointing, knowing as I did how much more engaging and vital the class participation would be if the professor were to recognize that he was only one student of the Great Book, although perhaps a more long-term and dedicated one.

Now, I fully expect other recipients of Liberal Arts education can relate memorable educative experiences that had nothing to do with the Great Books seminar program; but for me, there has been nothing quite like the Socratic method of interactive dialog on a Great Book, based on simple, probing questions, and equal opportunity among all participants to contribute to the conversation.

There is even something appropriately "American" about it. Not only is the "American Experiment" recognized as an end-product of western civilization's greatest thinkers, but such a seminar approach is essentially democratic. ~

*~Mike Woolsey is a Board Member and past president of MISF. He holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Annapolis, MD; an M.A.T. in Secondary Education from the University of St. Thomas; and an M.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Minnesota. He retired from 3M in 2004 as a Lead Analyst in Information Technology.*



## Taking Sides with the Sun: Landscape Photographer Herbert W. Gleason

by Dale Schwie

Minneapolis, Nodin Press, 2017, 228 pages, illustrated

Dale Schwie has taken his love of photography and interest in history and combined them into the first biography ever written of the photographer Herbert Wendell Gleason (1855-1937). This book is based on research in Concord, MA, and Minneapolis, MN. The story is carefully and clearly told and is a pleasure to read.

Gleason, who was born in Malden, Massachusetts, educated at Williams College, at Union Seminary, and at Andover-Newton seminary, intended to become a Congregational minister. He graduated from Andover-Newton in 1882 and took a first call in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, in 1883. He married his childhood sweetheart, Lulie Wadsworth Rounds, and traveled with her by train to Fergus Falls, arriving in March of 1883. Gleason worked hard and even managed to construct a new church building but by the end of two years, it was apparent to the Gleasons and to the congregation that Gleason was not as interested in the church as he was in the natural surroundings—local rivers and woods—and in musical performances. Lulie Gleason was a talented pianist and performer. Gleason resigned from the church in Pelican Rapids in early 1885.

In the spring of 1885, the Gleasons moved to Minneapolis, where Herbert was called to the Como Avenue Congregational Church in Saint Paul and again took on a construction project. He assisted in fund raising (possibly by soliciting funds from national Congregational organizations) for a church building for the Como Avenue Church. The Gleasons seem to have been relatively happy at this church—where they had access to the culture of Minneapolis and to the birds of the north woods—but the salary was inadequate. Basically, once the construction was complete, the Gleasons did not see why they should spend great amounts of time on church business, and the church responded by denying him a salary increase. In 1888, Gleason announced his resignation from the Como Avenue Church.

Having had experience in editing the Williams College newspaper, Gleason was a logical choice to become the new editor of the *Northwestern Congregationalist*, a regional denominational newspaper with editorials about the church and other society and political issues. (Minnesota had been in the Northwest Territory before it was a state and was regarded as a prime area for church building and upbuilding—hence the name of the publication.)

In addition, Mrs. Gleason took a position as organist and music director at Westminster Presbyterian Church and began giving piano lessons at the Northwestern Conservatory of Music. These two sources of income gave the Gleasons the stability and freedom to do what they wanted to do, which was traveling.

In 1894, as world politics developed, the leaders of the Congregational Church felt that it would be appropriate to change the name of the paper from *Northwestern Congregationalist* to *The Kingdom*, with Gleason remaining the managing editor. The scope of the newspaper turned from local Congregationalism to a larger world view (sometimes called “applied Christianity” or “Christian socialism”). Most of the political and theological writing in *The Kingdom* was done by other people, leaving Gleason free to pursue his interest in nature and birds in particular. Beginning in the 1890s, he started to experiment with photography of birds. He wrote articles about his bird outings for *The Kingdom* and for the *Minneapolis Journal*. Photographs were a feature of these articles.

However, in 1899, the Kingdom publishing company was closed as the result of a libel suit by the American Book Company against the company. Gleason was again out of a job.

Herbert Gleason was never down for long. He and his wife returned to Boston, where he briefly supported himself as a court stenographer. But the courtroom was confining, and Gleason now turned toward photography, an interest he had been

exploring. As Schwie says, “his love of the outdoors and a craving for travel and adventure made landscape photography the natural choice” (p. 87).

He combined his love of photography with his love of travel and began to visit and photograph mountainous places, such as Alaska, the Cascades, and British Columbia. Then he began a career of illustrated lectures. He presented his first illustrated lecture to the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston in 1902, using lantern slides. Again, in 1903, he presented another lecture to the Appalachian Mountain Club, this time using slides he had made himself. Both lectures were enthusiastically received with audiences of 800 to 1000 people.

At some point during his time in Minnesota, Gleason had developed a considerable interest in and knowledge of the writings of Henry David Thoreau. In April 1903, Gleason presented his first slide lecture on Thoreau to a Concord audience. Eventually, Lulie Gleason assisted by hand-coloring many of the slides.

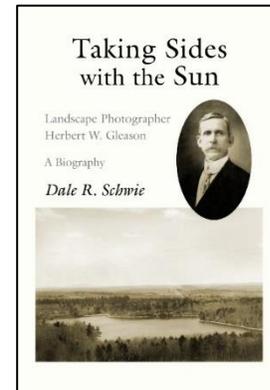
Gleason also photographed national parks and proposed sites for national parks and in 1919 was appointed inspector for the National Park Service. “...Gleason’s wide-ranging knowledge of individual parks and dedication and skill as a photographer, public speaker, and writer combined to make...him a logical candidate for a position with the organization” (124). Gleason continued to work for the National Park Service until the middle 1920s and continued to lecture for several years after that.

This book is generously illustrated with photos by Gleason and every photo is a testament to Gleason’s talent as a photographer. One of Gleason’s dreams was to publish a book of photos of Thoreau sites—a dream he realized in 1917. Schwie is also a photographer and Thoreau scholar and describes Gleason’s discoveries and process.

Schwie concludes with an Afterword on Gleason’s legacy: his photographic negatives. Seven thousand negatives were saved from destruction in 1945, when the company that had developed the film

needed to empty its warehouse. Some negatives went to the Concord Free Library; others, featuring Canadian scenes, are in Canada. Nonetheless, others may be in private collections or archives and are yet to be recovered.

Dale Schwie has written the first biography of Herbert Gleason, an important person in American photographic history. While Schwie acknowledges that he does not know everything about Gleason, he hopes that he has provided “the impetus to a new phase in Gleason scholarship” (177).



Gleason deserves to be better known, both as an example of an American life and as a recorder of scenes we can no longer see. We should all hope to have such a fine biographer discover us. ~

*~Lucy Brusic is a writer and a 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.*

Editor’s Note: *Taking Sides with the Sun: Landscape Photographer Herbert W. Gleason* by Dale Schwie was a finalist in the Midwest Independent Book Publishers’ “Midwest Book Award.”

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## Remembering



**Rhoda Gilman** died on May 9, 2018 at 91. Born in Seattle, she came to Minnesota in 1952. She earned an M.S. in economics at Bryn Mawr. Gilman was a Minnesota historian at the Minnesota Historical Society.

In 1992 she became a political activist and founding member of the state’s Green Party. She received the Vincent L. Hawkins Foundation award for her work toward peace and social justice. Gilman was also founding member of Women Historians of the Midwest and the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum.

# Programs & Meetings



January 27, 2018

## Minneapolis' Underworld in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Presented by Beth Johanneck

**A** graduate of Southwest University, Beth Johanneck, is an independent scholar and author of a number of books on Minnesota historical events. She spoke about her book *Minneapolis' Murdered Editors: A Look at Investigative Journalists and the Underworld in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

She related that in the 1930s, as a result of prohibition, Minneapolis was dominated by mobsters and gangs who frowned on newsmen trying to expose what was going on. At the same time, Saint Paul was a safe-haven for criminals. In all, three journalists were killed within a few years of each other.

At the time, collusion between criminals and politicians was not usually reported in the paper. One journalist, however, took it upon himself to report on the issue and threatened to expose the Minneapolis underworld. At one point assaulted, a second attempt on his life in 1934, resulted in his death when shots were fired into his car. Some people were later identified and indicted but were never prosecuted. Some politicians condemned the journalist for his reports. The murder was never solved.

Consequently, the paper for which the journalist was reporting was to be shut down. Another

journalist of the paper, then, wrote about the topic. Uncovering evidence, he launched an attack against a politician and organized crime. In 1935, this journalist was also killed. A reluctant witness was found. A \$25,000 reward was posted. It led to the arrest of the assumed perpetrator, who was eventually acquitted.

The next journalist wanted to expose conditions in Minneapolis, where gambling was protected, and illegal enterprise was robbing the city of income. He featured exposés on racketeering and the underworld's ties with the city. Subsequently, the government wanted to shut down the publishing operation. The journalist was accused of blackmail and sentenced to four years in jail. After that, in 1945, the journalist was shot. A reward was offered in the capture of the perpetrator.

But generally, the killings were downgraded. Criminals were selling liquor during prohibition to make big money.

The author is currently working on a fictional history of Henry Sibley and a book of fiction about a Minnesota farm family during the Great Depression, tentatively entitled "Bittersweet." ~

February 24, 2018

## From Winnipeg to New Orleans: the Route of the Jefferson Highway in Minnesota

Presented by Carol Ahlgren

**C**arol Ahlgren earned a B.A. in history from Beloit College and an M.A. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An architectural historian in the Twin Cities, she received a 2017 Legacy Fellowship from the Minnesota Historical

Society to study the Jefferson Highway history and route through Minnesota.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, before numbered highways came into use, roads were referred to as auto trails. Some of these highways were named after

American presidents, one of them the Jefferson Highway which ran through Minnesota. Initially, three routes were proposed for this highway, but in the end, a central route was chosen, going from Winnipeg, through Minnesota, and ending in New Orleans. Today the Jefferson Highway is numbered variously throughout its route through different states.

In its day, trail markers were placed in strategic places along the highway. Originally the route passed a number of significant landmarks, such as Saint Paul's Cathedral and the Charles Lindbergh house at Little Falls. At Itasca State Park, the headwaters were crossed by a Jefferson Highway bridge. But the bridge was eventually removed to restore the headwaters to their original state. Remnants of the old Jefferson Highway can still be found in the area at Bemidji with the Paul Bunyan statue along the highway.

Some of these auto trails had highway associations, like the Jefferson Highway Association. These may have supported small stretches of the auto trail in their areas. In November 9, 1922, a Little Falls Paving Celebration was held, the road being paved to Faribault. Most of the rest of the road, as were most other auto trails, was done in gravel.

The governors of Minnesota and Iowa dedicated the Jefferson Highway in their areas at one point.

Sinclair Lewis, who had crossed the wooden bridge across the headwaters at Itasca made fun of Minnesota roads, at one point, saying they were horrible roads. Sinclair Lewis did serializations for the *Saturday Evening Post*, at the time.

A bus company, the Jefferson Highway Transportation Company, was established taking tourists to their destinations. The company is still in existence today, renamed the Jefferson Lines.

Sociability routes were established between Winnipeg and New Orleans and back. Along the route, before the days of accommodations and motels, sociability rooms were offered, some in the form of cabins, where people could stay overnight. There was one such tourist park at the outskirts of Minneapolis, among them.

Business guide books, like *The Land of 10,000 Lakes* soon emerged. Most of the guide books promoting accommodations were written for the white tourists. Eventually, however, guide books like *The Negro Motorist Green-Book* and the national travel guide 1961-1962, *The Bronze American* came out.

March 24, 2018

## **The Weight of Silence: Unwed Mothers at the Salvation Army Booth Memorial Hospital in Mid-Century Minnesota**

Presented by Kim Heikkila

**K**im Heikkila addressed the Scholars in fulfillment of her second legacy grant which was administered by MISF. She had previously researched the history of the Salvation Army Booth Hospital under a legacy grant and reported on the first project in January 2015.

For this current grant she set up a project to interview nine women who had had babies at Booth in a project called "The Oral Histories."

Briefly, Heikkila's opening remarks explained changing societal attitudes about unwed mothers and their babies. In the 1920s, as Heikkila explained it, the goal of the social workers at Booth was to retain the "mother-child" bond and to encourage mothers to keep their babies.

But after World War II, the notion of the ideal family (father-mother-child) came to the forefront and it seemed that the better solution was to have women who had children out of wedlock give them up for adoption. Actually, by 1957, Heikkila said, illegitimate births increased more than the national birthrate. Birth control pills were not available until 1960 and were not legally available to all women (married or not) until 1972.

As Heikkila said, "The social workers were no longer seeing the mother-child bond. They were trying to protect the child and seeing the mothers as from dysfunctional families. Case workers were counseling women who were unwed mothers to become "good" young women in what Heikkila

described as a “white solution.” Most of the unwed mothers were Protestant, working class women.

In this period, 72% of the women who delivered their babies in the Salvation Army Home signed away their babies and most felt that they had no other options. As Heikkila said, “these were difficult circumstances in a difficult time.” Many kept their hidden motherhood secret for years.

Heikkila brought with her a guest, one of her interviewees, a woman who had given up a baby boy at Booth in the late 1950s or early 1960s. She described her circumstances, including the fact that she waited until “her water broke” to take a taxi to Booth. She had learned about Booth from social service agencies and articles in the newspapers. If she hadn’t known about Booth, she probably would have

killed herself. After the birth, she was given no option other than to give up the baby.

In a continuously moving account, she described her subsequent life, including the fact that after fifty or so years, she filled out papers so that her son could be permitted to find her. Which he did. Her son “always knew” he was adopted, and his adoptive family has accepted his mother as part of their family.

Heikkila and her guest answered many questions from members of the audience, several of whom had also been adopted or knew a close family member who had. ~

*~Lucy Brusic*

April 28, 2018

## **The Muslim Experience in Minnesota**

Presented by Tamin Sadi

**A**bout 1.8 billion Muslims populate the world, concentrating in southeast Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. Currently, approximately seven million Muslims live in the United States, where they constitute about 17-18% of the population. In Minnesota the Historical Society has documented Muslim immigrants as far back as the 1880s. Among them, the Somali population constitutes the largest group.

Sadi pointed out that worldwide Muslims themselves are the prime target of terrorism. And while killing civilians is never justified to Muslims, their denouncing of violence is not generally publicized. Consequently, ignorance, fear, and hate marginalize them to the point where they experience religious and social discrimination.

The speaker hopes education will help build a bridge with the community. Muslims have shared values and a love of God. The word Islam refers to religion. The word Muslim refers to people. Here peace is achieved through submission to the will of God. Their monotheistic belief sets forth that God created the universe and that it is important to follow faithfully all the rules of the Koran. Belief rests in God, angels, prophets, the Holy Book, Day of Judgment, and divine decree. The five Pillars of

practice are: Declaration of faith, prayer, mandatory alms, fasting, and pilgrimage.

To dispel the stereotype that all Muslims are terrorists, the speaker explained Muslims are mainly middle class and mainstream, working in all areas, including professions and businesses. Also, Muslims in the United States are involved in relief efforts. For them, life is about personal connection with other people before their connection with God.

Some prominent Muslims include Representative Keith Ellison, who is African American; Ilhan Omar, Minnesota House of Representatives; Ferial Abraham, retired teacher of American Lebanese descent; Elvis Budimlic, computer scientist, of Bosnian American descent; Ziad Amra, vice president of U.S. Bank, of American-Palestinian heritage, Dr. Oz of television fame, among numerous others.

Well known businesses include Abdallah Candies in its 4<sup>th</sup> generation, with headquarters in Burnsville and Holy Land Restaurant serving Arabic, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean food and attached grocery store.

Some organization of note include The Islamic Center of Minnesota founded in 1970. It operates as a weekend school, food shelf and free medical clinic. The Somali Museum of Minnesota is

located on Lake Street. Al-Amal School is Minnesota's full-time Islamic school since 1994.

Some misconceptions about Muslims and Islam prevail. Sadi stated Muslims are not a monolithic community. Also, the Nation of Islam is not considered practicing Islam according to Muslim belief.

May 26, 2018

## Poetry Day

**A**t the Ginny Hanson Poetry Day, about 22 attendees were welcomed to the reading. Also welcomed were publisher Norton Stillman of Nodin Press and his sister Beverly. He had published books by MISF members Dale Schwie and Evelyn Klein and also by Emilio DeGrazia.

The meeting started with a brief introduction on the use of metaphor in poetry by Evelyn Klein, poet and Loft teaching artist. After defining the word 'metaphor' which came to English over French and Latin from the Greek, she noted the term was discussed already by Aristotle, carrying various interpretations for use over the centuries and regarded in modern times as an essential part of poetry. Metaphor, with its comparisons, etc., not only clarifies the thing talked about, but, according to Jacques Derrida, layers philosophical meaning in the process. Klein read examples of poems by Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes, and Carl Sandburg.

The first featured poet was **Joseph Amato**, long-time MISF member and author of several books on history and philosophy. He read from his book of poetry *Buoyancies: A Ballast Master's Log*. He alluded to how "we float through life" and talked about the fear of falling from infancy on – how the fear of falling returns to us when we get older. His reading of poems included "Soft Days." Amato then explained that a ballast master is the one who keeps the weight of a ship in balance. His position can, therefore, be compared in importance to that of the captain. In tribute to his uncle, Bill, who survived the sinking of the navy ship "The Bliss," he read verses of his poem, "Buddy Afloat." Joe enjoys writing about his Sicilian heritage which he describes in detail

Tamin Saidi has worked with the Islamic Resource Group, is on the resource board to CAIR-MN, and president of a mosque in Plymouth. He is doctor of pharmacy and works as a consultative pharmacist. ~

in his book of poetry and essays, *Diagnostics, Poetics of Time*.

The second featured poet, **Lee Landau**, emerging, prize-winning poet published in numerous publications is currently putting the finishing touches on her first book-length manuscript of poetry. She stated she will not explain her poems, but just read them. And so she did and with fervor. She read poems with such appealing titles as "Digesting My Poems," "Wild Flowers," "Home Schooled," and others. These were poems about writing poetry, writing at Starbucks and about a troubled life, with tributes to such poets as Maxine Kumin, Muriel Rukeyser, and Ann Sexton, who helped, with their own lives and troubles, inspire Landau to write about her own life.

The third featured poet was **Emilio DeGrazia**, from Winona, Minnesota, poet laureate and prize-winning author of short fiction, novels, short stories, essays, creative non-fiction, and poetry. His book of poetry is entitled *Seasonings*. He stated that as poet laureate he is asked to explain what they do. He said "Poetry is the window through which we look at the world. We need to pay attention. Poetry can take us back to concrete things." He mentioned William Carlos Williams as his inspiration. He further stated that "Language is the veil that covers the strange unknown." Among the poems DeGrazia read was poetry about trees, their communication and support for each other.

The featured readings were followed by a lively question-and-answer period where many questions were asked including when the poets began writing and their inspirations. Poets had their books available for perusal and sale. An open reading concluded a well received, lively program. ~

## Upcoming Events

All Scheduled meetings of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum, unless otherwise noted, take place at the Washburn Public Library, 5244 Lyndale Avenue, Minneapolis, MN.

We begin gathering at 9:30 a.m. Meetings start at 10 a.m. with a brief business meeting first. Note meeting time and place of special events.

All MISF meetings are free and open to the public. This may not apply to some special events, as noted.

**Thursday, July 12, 2018**

***Women in Art***

**With Mia Docent Bob Brusic**

Until the Brooklyn Museum mounted an exhibit in 1977 entitled “Women Artists, 1550-1950,” little attention had been paid to women in the arts. In general, that is still the case. Nonetheless, one can find examples of women both as artists and as subjects. Docent at the Minneapolis Museum of Art, Bob Brusic will attempt to locate some women of History and mystery in the galleries of Mia. The tour will begin at the museum’s first floor coffee shop at 7:00 p.m. and last about an hour.

**Saturday, August 25, 2018**

**11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Annual MISF Picnic in the Park**

We meet at Cherokee Park along the Mississippi River at the small shelter. Bring a dish to share. Help us celebrate summer by socializing and getting to know fellow MISF members in a more informal setting and in adventures in eating!

**Saturday, September 22, 2018**

***F. Scott Fitzgerald in Minnesota***

**Presenter: Dave Page**

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul on September 24, 1896. Although his family left for Buffalo, New York, before his second birthday, he returned to St. Paul in 1908 and lived there during his teen years, a very formative period for the young writer. Come hear how the wealth of the Midwest, the Catholic Church of St. Paul and the romantic notions of the Civil War his Maryland father planted in his head while living in St. Paul influenced F. Scott Fitzgerald’s life and writing. In addition, take a slide show tour of some of the sites associated with Fitzgerald in St. Paul and nearby cities.

Dave Page has been involved in the publication of five books about F. Scott Fitzgerald, either as an editor or a writer, including this year’s *F. Scott Fitzgerald in Minnesota: The Writer and His Friends at Home*. A retired English instructor at Inver Hills Community College, Page also cochaired the 2002 International Fitzgerald Conference and was a member of the 2017 International Fitzgerald Conference planning committee. He has lectured on Fitzgerald around the world and is currently working on a book about Fitzgerald and the Midwest.

**Saturday, October 27, 2018**

***Scholars without Walls***

**Presenter: Lucy Brusic**

We will introduce our new book, *Scholars without Walls: The History of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum*. This book, due out October 2018 tells how a group of unemployed academics became a current-day organization with monthly meetings, study groups, a regular newsletter, and fiscal agency assistance. In addition to a history of the organization, this new book includes examples of writing by independent scholars – on subjects from health insurance to history.

Lead author Lucy Brusic, support editors Evelyn Klein and Mike Woolsey, will introduce the book. We will talk about what inspired us to write the book and what we hope to accomplish by publishing it. Copies of the book will be available for sale.

Lucy Brusic is a writer and editor; Evelyn Klein is a writer and editor; Mike Woolsey is an independent scholar and grant writer.

*Events continued on page 15*

## Events continued from page 14

(The following two events on psychological type by the Minnesota Jung Association will be held in memory of Shirley Whiting and is open to all those interested:)

**Friday, November 2, 2018**

**7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**Lecture: *Psychological Type: Jung and MBTI***

**Presenter: Stuart Potter, Jungian Analyst**

Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, MN  
Non-member Minnesota Jung Association fee.

**Saturday, November 3, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

**Workshop: *Psychological Type: Jung and MBTI***

**Presenter: Stuart Potter, Jungian Analyst**

Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, MN  
Member and Non-member Minnesota Jung Association fee.

**Saturday, November 17, 2018**

***Minneapolis and the Tangletown Neighborhood Landmarks***

**Presenter: Tom Balcom**

What makes a neighborhood and how does change make it better, lessen it, or make it a different world? Step into the past with a presentation illustrated by maps and photographs of historical interest. The maps show what most of south Minneapolis looked like prior to urban development. The photos are of early downtown Minneapolis and the Mississippi River, as well as historical and current-day images of Tangletown. These maps and photos provide a sense of place, identity, and pride in the city where we live.

Tom Balcom grew up in Minneapolis, majored in Geography/Urban and Regional Planning at the U of M and worked in planning and environmental protection programs at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In retirement, Tom enjoys doing historical research and writing, as well as giving bus, bike, and walking tours of the city and south Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Return address for this publication is listed below.

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*The Minnesota Scholar* welcomes member submissions. We are especially interested in topical issues. We welcome essays, reviews, and memoirs. Generally, articles should be no longer than 1500-1800 words. Please submit articles electronically. Use as little formatting as possible. All submissions will be acknowledged, although the editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article deemed unsuitable. For guidelines and queries contact editor.

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