

The Minnesota Scholar

Journal of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum

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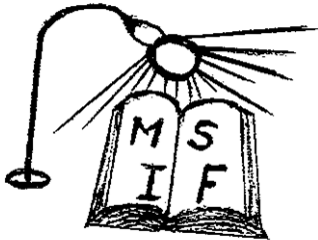


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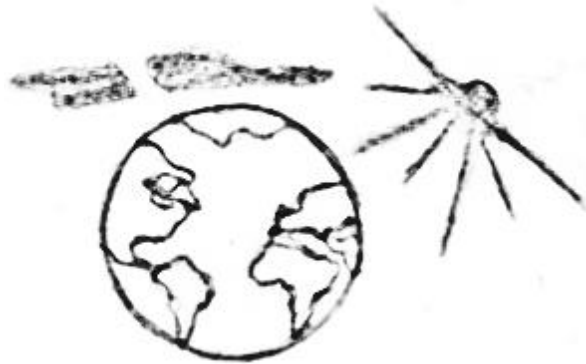
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Editor's Perspective

The Long Wait

by Evelyn D. Klein

After a long absence, approximately a year, *The Minnesota Scholar* has found it wings once more. Well, in a manner of speaking. The long line of would-be new editors has dissipated in the heat and humidity of summer, and we are left with the former editor. Nevertheless, it was agreed, the quality of TMS has to be upheld.

Of course, breaking and fracturing some bones in my right hand in a freak accident was no small matter, particularly when it required two surgeries and was followed by additional problems too numerous to mention. Suffice it to say, I am back as editor with 1-1/2 hands to complete a task that requires two hands. Therefore, I disavow any double letters that I miss in the editing process, not to say anything about missed letters, nor about the length of time it will take to complete this task, considering how far behind I am with all of my work. I am convinced the computer is testing me if I'm still up to the job. But keyboarding is, by far, ahead of handwriting at this point. (Don't you just love that at a time when they no longer teach cursive in many schools?) Until I get the affected fingers to move properly again, handwriting and some other tasks will be a challenge.

Now this gives all members and would-be members the special opportunity to sharpen their pencils or limber their fingers to dance on the computer and write that article or essay they always wanted to write but were too shy or busy to write. The more members contribute their thoughts, discoveries, observations, experiences, research and such, the more variety we present in the journal and to the readership. Remember, this is a membership journal, your journal, so go ahead and write something for it.

We usually like to have an article on a topic of general interest for the Featured Article section, an article on a personal interest or passion we pursue for the Why Genealogy section, and a book review for the Review section.

If you discover some relevant news in a newspaper or magazine on a recent discovery, study, organization or something of scholarly interest, we have a brief At Large section for which you can send in a short write-up. Also, if you have published a book article, or poetry somewhere, we would like to hear from you, so we can include the information in our Member Publications section.

What we prefer to avoid publishing is overtly political or religious topics, unless they are from a historical or cultural perspective.

The remainder of the journal will include write-ups of meetings. This issue will try to play catch-up with the meetings that did not get written up in the intervening time. Fortunately, I had some wonderful scholars who helped me with that task during my most dire time or when I could not be at a meeting, and I thank them for their efforts. Their names will be listed with their write-ups included in this publication.

The last section of TMS will then list upcoming meetings and their meeting places.

Brief guidelines for writing an article are put forward in the TMS information box at the end of *The Minnesota Scholar*. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me, the editor.

Also, to be listed in every edition will be the time and place of our meetings. Since we could not get the Washburn Library location for our meetings next year, we found a place with the Ramsey County Library in Shorewood for the foreseeable future that will also include a new starting time. However, I am confident you will find the same welcoming atmosphere and stimulating programs there as in our previous meeting place.

Evelyn D. Klein, Author/Educator/Artist holds a B.A. in Secondary Education and an M.S. in the Teaching of English. She has been TMS editor for seven years.



A Scholarly Approach to Family

by Ruth Campbell

Rich and I took an Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) class on Stout's Island in Wisconsin during the summer of 2017. The class, led by Merritt Marquardt, was based on Yuval Levin's book, *The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left*. Seats were assigned in a rectangle, and I was seated at one end. Michael Woolsey was seated around the corner from me. We struck up a conversation during breaks. I told Michael that I had done a research project that I called 'Corrections and Connections: Women in the Criminal Justice System and their Families.' I had put a presentation together describing my results ten years out from interviews of eighteen women in the correctional system. Michael told me about Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum. He suggested that I contact Steve Miller if I had interest in giving my presentation to the Forum. Rich and I started to attend the Saturday morning meetings. I gave the presentation, became a member, and have appreciated many interesting programs since joining.

I was born in Wisconsin, lived and worked in Iowa for 38 years, and retired to Minnesota in 2014 to be closer to daughters and grandchildren living in St. Paul and Chanhassen.

The bulk of my career was spent working in the mental health system after earning a Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Iowa. I did individual, couple, and family counseling. In the 1990s and beyond, I focused my interest on Bowen Family Systems Theory and Therapy, participating postgraduate training programs at the Minnesota Institute of Family Dynamics in Minneapolis and the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family in Washington, D.C.

The Bowen family systems theory, developed by Dr. Murray Bowen, a psychiatrist, postulates that the range of human problems can be described in three main categories: physical symptoms, emotional symptoms and social symptoms. Physical symptoms are represented by system imbalances such as colds/respirator

infections, chronic conditions such as allergies and diabetes, and acute medical/surgical illnesses. Emotional symptoms are represented by system imbalances such as mild to severe depression, phobias, psychotic episodes, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. In general, social symptoms represent patterns of irresponsibility in relation to others. Examples include behavior disorders, drinking to an extent that it causes problems for the self and others, drug abuse, and illegal activity. Within each category, all problems can be placed on a continuum from mild to severe.

I made an effort to study a group of women who had exhibited social symptoms as defined by illegal activity that had led to placement in a residential correctional facility. They were court ordered to reside there and complete a program. Their lengths of stay could range from several weeks to a year. They had to work at least thirty-two hours a week, pay rent, participate in appropriate programs at the facility and adhere to a phased system to measure progress.

The women interviewed were between the ages of 22 and 55. Three were between 22 and 35, twelve were between 36 and 45, and three were over 46. Fourteen were Caucasian, three were African American, and one was Hispanic.

Bowen family systems theory was used as the theoretical base of the interviews which consisted of two parts. First, a family diagram was constructed. Then a personal history was gathered for each participant, including additional information about who was in the family when she was growing up, sibling position, moves, education, the manner in which she left home, employment, significant relationships, marriages, children, physical and emotional symptoms, the nature of illegal activity and consequences, thoughts on making sense of her situation, and plans for the future.

One of the concepts of Bowen theory is known as emotional cutoff. The concept deals with the way people grow away from parents and start their

lives in the present generation. I wanted to know how that process worked for these women. One third of the women grew up with both parents in the home. Two thirds of the women experienced separation/divorce or death of a parent while growing up. Two thirds had dropped out of school before completing high school. Two thirds had had three or more significant relationships. None had sustained a marriage/significant relationship over time. These breaks in relationships could be examples of emotional cutoff. My hypothesis was that women who had been in trouble with the law had experienced significant levels of emotional cutoff but would do better over time if there was evidence of contact with one or more family members. This could include parents, other extended family members, children, or a spouse/significant other.

Ten years out from the initial interview, four of the eighteen women in the study had had no subsequent legal charges. Two of the four had grown up with both parents in the home and two had grown up with both adoptive parents in the home. They tended to have stayed in school longer than their counterparts. Although their fathers had died, they were in contact with their mothers and/or children and/or a significant other.

While not totally predictive, sustained contact with parents in the home all the while they were growing up appeared to be an indicator of a better outcome at the ten-year mark. The women who had not had subsequent charges ten years after the initial interviews and who also had children were in contact with their children at the time of the initial interview. Those with subsequent charges were more likely to have been cut off from some or all of their children. While all the women had difficulties leaving home and sustaining nuclear family relationships, those who appeared to have better contact across generations over time seem to have a better likelihood of getting out of the legal system.

Studying human behavior is fraught with challenges, because there are so many variables. This is a study with a small sample and a main focus on one of the eight concepts of Bowen theory. All of the concepts weave together and include differentiation of self, patterns of behavior that can be observed in the nuclear family as well as across generations, sibling position, triangles, and a comparison of patterns that can be observed in the family to patterns in society as a whole.

Dr. Bowen's effort was to move a study of human behavior into the accepted sciences. He asked, "Who, what, when, where?" He did not ask why but

the focus was on what can be observed. What do people do? How does this work?

While my study focused on families other than my own, over the years I have also used my own family as a learning laboratory. I began studying Bowen theory four years after my mother died. My father had died three years prior to the death of my mother. I was advised to visit aunts and uncles and anyone in their generation who would have known them. I made a concerted effort to visit every living aunt and uncle. I connected with a half brother I had not grown up with. I re-connected with cousins. I visited the hometowns of my grandparents in Ireland and Finland and met a few people who had known my maternal grandfather and grandmother. I visited Ellis Island. I joined Ancestry and have had my DNA analyzed. As a result, I have a better understanding of what people in my family were up against and how they managed the challenges and stresses of life. I have a better understanding of what kinds of symptoms tend to develop. I feel more a part of this family where, in my growing up, children were to be seen and not heard.

Studying family is a humbling experience. The effort is toward developing an attitude of neutrality; to get away from viewing people as saints or sinners. Sometimes one's parents are idolized or criticized rather than known as human beings doing the best they can in life. I never think of a family as dysfunctional. There is a variation of functioning among individuals and among families. Some are more fortunate. Some contend with more stress.

A word about family therapy. It is possible to do family therapy with an individual. Questions and the conversation are guided by one's understanding of family theory. The cornerstone of the theory is known as 'differentiation of self.' There is a life force in all of us to be individuals and, at the same time, be connected to others. We have different tolerance levels for individuality and togetherness. It is a challenge to strike a balance. While feelings are respected for the information and energy they provide, the client is encouraged to learn about the family system, observe himself/herself in it, make an effort to engage the thinking system, and focus on functioning. It's common for the therapist to say, 'What do you think about that?' rather than, 'How do you feel about that?' One of my professors once said, "The bitter pill of therapy is that you can only work on yourself." It helps to have a guide, and for me, the study of Bowen Family Systems Theory represents a scholarly approach to family. (*Ruth Campbell, MSW, is a retired clinical therapist living in Edina, MN*)



Book Review

Orwell, Gandhi, and the British Raj

by Michael Woolsey

In George Orwell's prolific literary career, the author of the well-known novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), also wrote three short essays reflective of life in what was then the British colony (Raj) of India. His experience there was first-hand and personal, as he served from 1922-1927 as an officer of the Indian Imperial Police, at one point being "responsible for the security of some 200,000 people" (George Orwell, Wikipedia).

The three essays are *A Hanging*, *Shooting an Elephant*, and *Reflections on Gandhi*. Each of them has been acclaimed as among Orwell's finest, although the first two may be more justly termed autobiographical sketches than essays.

My local Great Books seminar group recently chose to read and discuss the three essays together, as they are each a short read and generally reflective of life under the British Raj. Each of them can stand alone as worthy of discussion, and the seminar group initially treated them severally, not immediately relating them in any significant way; but as the discussion progressed, it became evident that they are linked by the subject of human morality and in especially visceral ways.

A Hanging (1931)

The story depicts the government execution of a native prisoner, "a Hindu, a puny wisp of a man," whose mortal offense is never identified. It is remarkable for the contrasting emotions felt by Orwell throughout the process. As he follows closely behind the condemned man being led to the gallows, he is touched by the

inhumanity of the event, thinking along the way that "... till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man . . . I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide . . . and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone – one mind less, one world less."

"... when the noose was fixed, the prisoner began crying out on his god. It was a high reiterated cry of 'Ram! Ram! Ram! Ram!' not urgent and fearful like a prayer or a cry for help, but steady, rhythmical, almost like the tolling of a bell."

However, following the execution the prison warders gathered for a drink of whisky and became quite jolly. A native warder tells a story about a previous hanging that did not go so well and the prison doctor "was obliged to go beneath the gallows and pull the prisoners legs to ensure decease." As the anecdote was repeated, Orwell recalled he was "laughing quite loudly. Everyone was laughing. . ." the "anecdote seemed extraordinarily funny. We all had a drink together, native and European alike, quite amicably. The dead man was a hundred yards away."

Shooting an Elephant (1936)

This is a recount of another execution and consequent mixture of contrasting emotions in Orwell, in this instance the killing of a large, domesticated elephant. The elephant had been chained to a tether, due to a normal, seasonal attack of "musth" (a significant rise in male hormones). It had broken its chain, and its "mahout" (its owner and keeper) had wandered

off in the wrong direction trying to retrieve it. In the interim the elephant had killed a native who had accidentally surprised it.

Toward the end of his 5-year stint in India, Orwell was the sub-divisional police officer of the town of Moulmein, in Lower Burma, when he was notified that the elephant was “ravaging” the town bazaar. He was asked by the native Burmese sub-inspector at the other end of town to do something about it. He did not know what he could do and did not set out for the bazaar with any intention of shooting the elephant, but he went anyway to assess the situation. Upon arriving, he was met by the sub-inspector and some Indian constables and saw the corpse of the native “coolie” whom the elephant had killed, so he sent for an elephant gun and proceeded to locate the marauding elephant. “As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him and that “it would be murder to do so.” The elephant was just eating grass and acting very peaceably, indicating to Orwell that the attack of “musth” had already begun to wear off. He decided to simply watch him for a while “to make sure he did not turn savage again, and then go home.”

But then he turned around and realized that an immense crowd of natives (“two thousand at the least”) had followed him in the expectation that he would shoot to kill the elephant, and that he would have to do so or lose the respect of the crowd, both for himself and the Raj he represented. It was “at that moment . . . that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man’s dominion in the East . . . I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom he destroys.”

He then proceeded to shoot the elephant several times and from a safe distance. It is still breathing and lying on the ground as he approaches and fires the last of his cartridges into it; but still, it does not die. “In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and

I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.”

Reflections on Gandhi (1949)

It is safe to assume that Orwell never met Gandhi in person. Rather, this essay is based on Gandhi’s “partial autobiography, which ends in the nineteen-twenties,” as well as on “his innumerable newspaper articles” and one publicized interview in 1938. As Orwell avers, Gandhi “was always able to command publicity.”

This essay recalls the two previous ones as it expresses Orwell’s ambivalent feelings about the subject. On the one hand, he shares with Gandhi a condemnation of British imperialism, and admires both Gandhi’s general character and political skill, but on the other hand, he cannot bring himself to accept Gandhi’s ascetic religious practices, including strict vegetarianism and his conscious avoidance of both “close friendships” and “exclusive loves.” Rather, Orwell regards such practices as “inhuman.”

He also observes that Gandhi’s autobiography “makes it clear that on three occasions he was willing to let his wife or child die rather than administer the animal food prescribed by the doctor,” and although “Gandhi always gave the patient the option of staying alive at the price of committing a sin: still, if the decision had been solely his own, he would have forbidden the animal food, whatever the risks might be.”

Another example of Gandhi’s detachment from things generally regarded as “human” was his signature pacifism in the face of violence. In the 1938 interview, he reportedly averred that “the German Jews ought to commit collective suicide, which ‘would have aroused the world and the people of Germany to Hitler’s violence.’” In other words, it was a case of espousing the abstract principle of non-violent pacifism at the price of life itself!

In the end, however, Orwell cannot help but to admire Gandhi both for his strength of character and his political success in achieving “his main political objective, the peaceful ending of British rule.”

Interpretations and Conclusions

There are several themes that unite the three “essays:”

First is Orwell’s eventual disgust with British imperialism, calling it “hollow” and “futile” and oppressing him “with an intolerable sense of guilt.”

Second is his judgement that for the Britons tasked with enforcing British rule over Indian society, the enforcement was as corrupting of the enforcers as it was of the enforced: “I perceived at this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys.” (In this respect, one of the seminar participants perceived that the Raj was analogous to the Southern slave owners in pre-Civil War United States).

In this vein is the stark contrast in *The Hanging* between Orwell’s initial respect for the humanity of the condemned native and his being later induced to laugh along with the natives at the story of a botched, and therefore prolonged, execution. Similarly, in *Shooting an Elephant* is the contrast between his assessment that to kill a domesticated elephant who had escaped from his mullah and accidentally killed a native would be an unnecessary “murder,” and his disgust with himself for having been induced by the native crowd following him to proceed with the killing.

Third, there is the over-arching significance of the clash between two systems of morality, the European white man’s and the native Indian’s. For in each of the essays, the Indian attitude toward the death appears indifferent, even nonchalant, compared to Orwell’s. Likewise, Gandhi appears willing to sacrifice the lives of his family, many of his countrymen, and the German Jews in his

adherence to his moral principles of vegetarianism and passive resistance to violent oppression.

However, as contended in the seminar, this Indian indifference to the death is likely as much, or more, a matter of religious belief than a mark of moral depravity, for the doctrine of Reincarnation is a central belief in the Hindu religion espoused by Indians generally and Gandhi in particular. In this belief, the human soul does not die when released from the body, but is reincarnated in another body, be it human or animal, and continues to repeat the cycle of life, death, and reincarnation until the soul rises above all moral defect and achieves the purified state of Nirvana. So, human/animal death is not the end for the soul, but only for the body.

As Gandhi is reported to have said, “I cannot think of permanent enmity between man and man, and believing as I do in the theory of incarnation, I live in the hope that if not in this birth, in some other birth I shall be able to hug all of humanity in friendly embrace.” (AZ Quotes)

Considering this, the three essays would seem to indicate that there is no one moral code for all humanity, and that different societies may well feel justified in having different moral views, about death in particular. But Orwell never mentions the Hindu belief in reincarnation, and generally dismisses Gandhi’s ascetic religious views as “incompatible” with the European “humanistic ideal.”

His respect for Gandhi is based rather on the latter’s practical, political acumen, neglecting to recognize that the core of that savvy was to turn European morality back on itself, with the result being the end of the Raj when the British public perceived that Indians were willing to be slaughtered in non-violent protest of British rule.

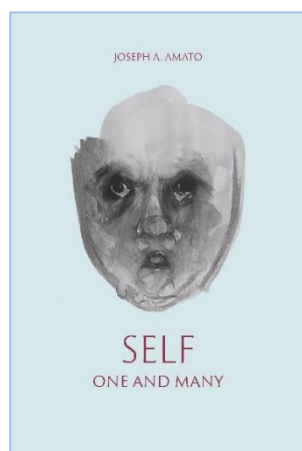
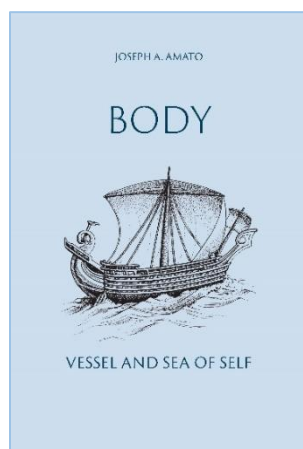
Moreover, although he explicitly declines to argue “whether the other-worldly or the humanistic ideal is ‘higher,’” he ends by acknowledging of Gandhi that “compared with the other leading political figures of our time,

how clean a smell he has managed to leave behind.”

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

Member Publications

Joseph A. Amato, long time member of MISF, has recently published two more books.



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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 the editor at eklein@q.com

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Programs and Meetings

January 288,2023



Systems Change, Not Climate Change

Presented by Tom Abeles and Ken Pentel

Long-time MISF member and avid futurist Tom Abeles teamed with Ken Pentel to present a compelling and sobering account of the deleterious long-term effects of continuing to use the prevalent, world-wide statistical measure of human progress, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), rather than several newer measures that are more inclusive of human welfare as a whole (e.g. Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI)).

The world-wide prevalence of the GDP is actually not that old, as it was only agreed upon in 1944 “as the primary signal to measure and compare the economy for all nations joining the United Nations.” As such, it “sets pricing, interest rates, and budgeting,” and “two negative quarters of GDP in the US is a benchmark for a recession.” In effect, it is “the most powerful statistical figure in human history” (Phillip Lепенies).

The focus of the GDP within the totality of human welfare is thus very narrow, being restricted to a measure of national “income,” measured in strictly monetary terms. Accordingly, Simon Kuznets avers that “The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred

from a measurement of national income as defined by the GDP.”

In its place is proposed that statistical measures of human “wealth” should include besides the merely economic, also categories which pertain to the natural environment and social welfare. Under these two categories are sub-measures, such as “services from natural capital,” “depletion of natural capital,” “costs of pollution,” “services from human capital,” “services from social capital,” and “social costs of economic activity;” and under these last two are sub-sub-categories of “Value of Volunteer Work” and “Value of Higher Education” (hmm, MISF anyone?).

In sum, it was a very captivating presentation, supported by statistical graphs and references to studies and quotations by several international scholars, e.g. “I often say we need to shift from power, profit and patriarchy to people, planet and prosperity” (Sandrine Dixson-Declève, co-president of the Club of Rome).

Michael Woolsey

February 25, 2023

Traveling Without Aggravation

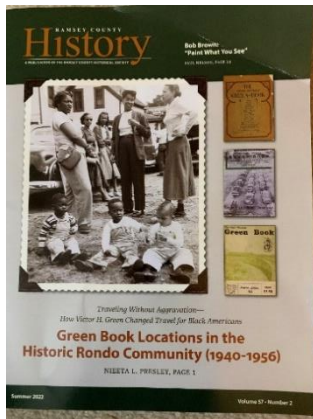
How Victor H. Green Changed Travel for Black Americans:
Green Book Locations in the Historic Rondo Community (1940-1956)

Presented by Nieeta L. Presley

The February MISF program was presented by Nieeta L. Presley, author of *Traveling Without Aggravation: How Victor H Green Changed Travel for Black Americans: Greenbook Locations in the Historic Rondo Community*(1949-1956), published in the Summer 2022 issue of *Ramsey County History* (a Ramsey County Historical Society publication).

Presley is the retired executive of St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, owner of New Life Possibilities, LLC Consulting, coordinator of the Rondo Round Table, secretary of the St. Paul Planning Commission, and first vice president of the NAACP St. Paul Branch Roy Wilkins Memorial Branch 4052. She led and produced the first non-European Historic Cultural Context Study (1837-1975) – the St. Paul African American Historic

Cultural Context Study. A Rondo native, she has won many honors and awards for her work.



compiling information about places that provided safe lodging and meals for Black travelers in the late 1930s and publishing his first Green Book in 1936. The books were popular and used throughout the country until the rise of the civil rights movement and passage of the Civil Rights Act in the 1960s lessened difficulties for Black travelers. The last Green Book was published in 1966.

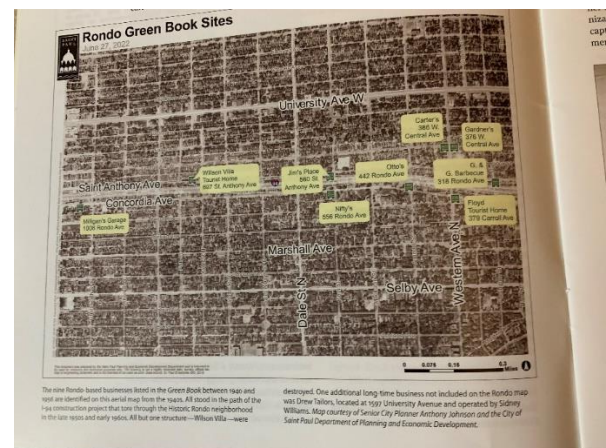
Businesses from Rondo listed in the Green Book included tourist homes and restaurants. All were well-known in the Rondo community and were owned and operated by well-known community members. Presley described the businesses both from memory and from stories she uncovered in the research for her article. She mentioned information about legendary food at the restaurants and people who visited St. Paul but could only stay in the places listed in the Green Book, including well-known

Presley's presentation focused on use of the Green Book – the Black travelers' guide – and its listings in the Rondo area of St. Paul. She began by telling the audience about Victor H. Green, a former mailman in Hackensack, New

Jersey, who began

entertainers Bojangles Robinson and the Harlem Globetrotters. Shortly after the last Green Book was published, the Rondo businesses listed in it were taken out by the freeway construction. Questions during the Q&A covered information about the Rondo community and hope for future plans for the area. Dave Junker shared memories of volunteering with one of the Rondo community clubs during his graduate school days.

Meredith Cummings, editor of *Ramsey County History*, brought copies of Presley's article to give to audience members. More information about the history of Rondo and St. Paul's Black history may be found under the Publications tab on the Ramsey County Historical Society website (<https://rchs.com/publishing/catalog/>).



Rondo businesses listed in the Green Book between 1948 and 1956

Barbara Sommer

March 25, 2023

Restorative Justice: Reweaving the Fabric of Community

Presented by Jean Greenwood

Jean Greenwood's work in restorative justice found its beginning when she served as minister in a small church in Minneapolis. One day, during a church activity, a room, where choir members and others kept their purses behind locked doors, was broken into, and money and checks were taken from purses. It was initially

assumed that someone outside the church had broken in. However, because checks were found torn up in a bathroom, it was concluded that this was an inside job. It turned out the perpetrators were boys that belonged to the church.

Yet because of their juvenile status, Ms. Greenwood and others were reluctant to involve

the police. To deal with the problem, then, a restorative justice session was planned instead. It involved, besides the perpetrators, representatives of the choir, members of the church board, the parents of the boys as well as the minister. Church members in general were not advised of the offenders.

Greenwood emphasized that voluntary participation in the restorative justice session was key to its successful outcome. Then each side had the opportunity to tell their story. This would have to be according to specific guidelines set forth beforehand. That way, both sides could find out how the other side felt and what motivated the misdeed in the first place. Apologies could be made and understanding offered. The session turned out to be a great success and showed hope for future such sessions. The success of this restorative justice session motivated Greenwood to pursue the approach further.

The speaker pointed out that the U.S. has one of the highest incarceration rates in the Western world. She feels the American justice system could benefit greatly from applying restorative justice that gives offenders an opportunity for redemption, particularly those

who come out of circumstances lacking personal support and direction. Incarceration, on the other hand, does not always take the whole person into account and, all too often, fails to offer opportunity for personal improvement. Restorative justice may enhance opportunity for rates of lower recidivism. Restorative justice would balance justice with mercy. She proceeded to relate a number of stories to this end.

She stressed however, that in order for restorative justice to be successful, it needs to be carried out not only on a voluntary basis for those involved in the conflict but also in a carefully laid out plan and approach for all participants before the session.

The presentation was followed by a vigorous discussion with attendees. Twenty people were in attendance.

Jean Greenwood has been involved in restorative justice since 1991 as program director, mediator/facilitator, Yukon-trained circle keeper, researcher, writer, consultant and trainer, and as training coordinator for the Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking at the U of M.

April 22, 2023

A Natural Curiosity: The Story of the Bell Museum

Presented by Don Luce

In this presentation, Don Luce, conservationist, author, artist, and retired Curator of Exhibits at the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum, described the history and development of the museum from its establishment in two rooms on the campus by the Minnesota legislature in 1872 to its current location on Larpenteur Avenue West in St. Paul. The presentation was based on a book about the history of the museum by the same name as the MISF presentation (*A Natural Curiosity: The Story of the Bell Museum*, by Lansing Shepard, Don Luce, Barbara Coffin, and

Gwen Schagrin, University of Minnesota Press, 2022).

The museum was founded to document the state's ecological diversity and to hold materials from the 1872 National History survey of the state. During the presentation, Luce introduced the audience to several people who were instrumental in its founding and development, including ecologist and artist Walter Breckenridge, the University's first woman scientist and algae expert Josephine Tilden, physician and conservationist Thomas

Stadler Roberts, wildlife painter and author Francis Lee Jaques, and James Ford Bell, museum benefactor after whom the museum was named in 1966. He also described how, over the years, the museum has expanded its purpose to include an active educational mission for university personnel and students and outreach and education for visitors of all ages, with emphasis on programs for school children.

In 2018, the museum moved from its long-time location in a 1939 building built with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds on the university's East Campus to its new location on the St. Paul campus. The new building features Minnesota products – an exterior of white pine, wood heat treated, to protect it from insects, iron ore from Minnesota's Iron Range, and landscaping featuring the state's native plants.

Using photographs from museum exhibits, Luce described both new and traditional exhibitions in the new building – a new focus on understanding features that support life on earth, using a bio-diversity wall to provide information about the museum's collections, incorporating a planetarium into the new building, and on the move of traditional exhibits – the well-known dioramas developed by Walter Breckinridge, Francis Lee Jaques, and others – to the new building with added interpretation using new technologies.

Questions following the presentation covered information about additional exhibit development, funding and support for the new building, its relationship with other major Minnesota museums, and ongoing development and use of its collections. The meeting consisted of 21 attendees.

Barbara Sommer

May 20, 2023

The Poet As Historian

Presented by Evelyn D. Klein

Evelyn D. Klein preceded the reading from her new poetry book, *Fear and Promise, Remembering the Year 2020* with an introduction of the "Poet as Historian." She has a B.S. in Secondary Education and an M.S. in the teaching of English, and as such, and with the thought planted by another scholar that someone should write about the pandemic year, she could not resist the idea of writing this chronicle and then bring up the notion, poet as historian. Of course, the fact that three of her poetry books are in the permanent library collection of the Minnesota Historical Society may have contributed to that idea.

We are used to having history written up in prose, particularly in its public and worldly aspects, yet poetry can do its share, from the

worldly to the personal. In poetry, there is a wide selection of references and descriptions but from that can include the ordinary, the every-day in ordinary lives. And it can give us the vicarious experience of times and events that a history book frequently does not.

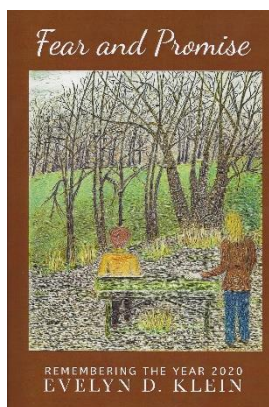
The presenter brought in examples of poets from Longfellow, Whitman, and Dickinson to Frost, Hughes, Gallagher, Alexie, and Bryant. She presented them in pairs and in a comparison of their times.

Klein then read from her latest book *Fear and Promise, Remembering the Year 2020*. The reading included poems about the year's events, such as the progressing pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, the wildfires, and the political climate as well as personal experience. The book is not so much a woe is me depiction

as it is a movement of hope into the future in a chronicle of unfolding events. Nature finds its place here and serves as a stabilizing force. As personal attitudes and relationships change, a new Zeitgeist is born.

The introduction to her book, the following excerpt, explains the urgency of writing it:

For my children,
for the history buffs
and observers among us
and to the creative spirit
that flows and flows
a river of seeing, hearing,
feeling, thinking, and speaking,
always creating
in isolation or in a crowd,
in light and in darkness,
over smooth riverbed
or rocky terrain,
around obstructions,
and through crevices,
a river that flows steadily
to the gulf of delivery
in times of fear and promise alike.



A brief open reading followed, and a lively discussion culminated the meeting. About 23 people were in attendance.

At Large

Poetry Sparks Book Discussion

by Evelyn Klein

On November 4, 2023 I was invited by the Minnesota Humanities Center in Saint Paul to a celebration called *Poetry Sparks*. The evening consisted of a dinner, followed by a program presenting an interview conducted by Heid Erdrich with Minnesota Poet Laureate, Gwen Westerman, both Native American poets. Both interviewer and interviewee wore long, colorfully designed skirts that expressed their cultural connection. It was fascinating and enlightening to hear Gwen Westerman speak of her creativity and the inspiration with her grandmother speaking to her from the past. Attendees had the opportunity after the program to purchase their recently published books, *Songs, Blood Deep* by Gwen Nell Westerman, Poet Laureate of Minnesota, and *Little Big Bully* by Heid E. Erdrich, National Poetry Series Winner, among other titles.

The interview was then followed by an open reading of diverse voices, even one poet reading and visualizing poetic lines about the Ukraine war.

What added to the beauty of the evening was that the table where I was seated was made up of a diverse group of the community members, including Native American and immigrant individuals. So, the discussions we carried on were of writing and inspirations coming from a variety of experiences that we don't regularly have the opportunity to hear. It gave me a better insight of and connection to the community that is Saint Paul.

What struck me about the mission of the Minnesota Humanities Center is that it is so similar to their approach to community and education as the one of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum

June 24, 2023

MISF Annual Business Meeting

The annual MISF business meeting was called to order by President Steven Miller at 10:05 a.m.

President Steven Miller gave a brief overview and discussed the Scholars' programs including monthly membership programs,

additional activities, study groups, the journal, and mediation for grants. He continued by encouraging new members to join.

Treasurer Emily Pollack, then, reported an even balance of expenditures and income of the budget.

Emily Pollack announced the following volunteer openings:

- Promotion and Marketing:
Facebook updates – ongoing
September meeting
Member drive
- Audio/Video Team:
Setup/record meetings
Prep recordings to publish
Team lead
- *The Minnesota Scholar*:
Monthly meeting summary write-ups
Writing articles
Mailing of the journal.

- Website Content Creator
Create member only pages
Update/publish recordings

Emily Pollack then presented the slate of candidates for election:

The following current board members whose terms were about to expire this year agreed to run for re-election:

Lucy Brusic, Evelyn Klein, Michael Woolsey

Members at large who agreed to run were:
Dale Schwie, Ruth Campbell

The slate of candidates presented was unanimously approved and elected by the membership.

Board member terms to expire in 2024 are:

Emmily Pollack, Charlie Roger, Charles Yancy, Carol Rudie

The monthly program followed the business meeting.

Annual Rhoda Lewin Lecture

Dealing with Today's Social Problems Using Systemic Tools Developed in the Medical Field

Presented by David Juncker

David Juncker introduced his topic with the idea of “systems thinking,” inspired by life sciences that shed light on human evolution and eventual present-day existence.

This kind of thinking brings us from the functional to the neurological to the disorder.

One example he discussed was the function of memory. When people are asked to remember random words, no matter how familiar, they are likely

to forget most of them when asked to repeat them later on. When, however, the words are presented in a story, a connection to memory is established, and subjects will remember these words more readily.

He pointed out that “homo sapiens,” along with the rest of the animal world, took billions of years to develop through an ascension of organisms. The speaker produced a large, framed wall chart to illustrate that segmented process of evolution.

The term “homo sapiens” comes from the Latin with “homo” meaning man and “sapien”

meaning wise, rational. He pointed out that children gradually develop the ability to meet their needs from crying to recognizing the world beyond to speaking to using mechanics to developing an awareness of seeking help in the outside world.

Because of our interconnectedness with other creatures, it is not wise to eliminate other beings that came in the evolutionary process before us, particularly in relationship to our ecological environment.

As far as Covid is concerned, David pointed out that it is a living organism that mutates. If it kills off its host, it cannot survive. Yet the body can capture certain organisms that it keeps alive, because they keep the body alive.

The speaker discussed “stacked infinities” and pointed out various S-curves in that regard. He explained that “infinity” is something limited. Once you reach an infinity, you can step into a smaller infinity. Consider for example, city to state to country, each of these has an infinity.

Dave Juncker earned his undergraduate degree at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in physiology. He taught at UWM and was an executive at Medtronic. He is now retired.

Approximately 23 people attended this stimulating lecture.

August 26, 2023

MISF Annual Picnic

The annual picnic was held, as usual, at Cherokee Park in Saint Paul at the small shelter. Everyone was asked to bring a dish to share.

Eleven people gathered for this fun social event to relate stories, experiences, and enjoy the food.

September 23, 2023

Edward S. Curtis: *The North American Indian* *Photo Exhibit*

Presented by Anita Janda and Kathy Mentjes

An Edward S. Curtis book purchase from an airport shop contained a single, life changing, mention of Cordova in Minnesota. This started Anita Janda on a journey to learn, collect, share, and educate, with Kathy Mentjes joining in along the way.

For years Anita thought about the story of Curtis and Le Sueur County, finally taking action in 2018. Anita met Kathy in the local library to discuss her vision. Kathy, a 35-year librarian and family genealogist was a great compliment to Anita's Air Force and major food company experience. Shortly after their initial meeting they connected with the Arts and Heritage Center of Montgomery and by late 2018 were on the calendar for a January 2020 exhibition.

A Michigan Curtis exhibit was contacted to request a loan. The response was positive, 100 pictures would be sent to Montgomery in exchange

for \$10,000, insurance for \$1.5million, and storage in a climate controlled, secure venue. While a bit intimidating, the financial request was manageable.

However, the group was unable to locate a suitable building in Le Sueur County and had to decline the offer.

Anita and Kathy had been communicating with those managing the Muskegon collection. In 1907 Lulu Miller, Muskegon librarian, convinced the board to purchase a subscription to the 20 volumes of *The North American Indian* that Edward Curtis was compiling. Curtis spent almost 30 years, observing, interacting, documenting, and recording 80+ Native American Tribes in Western United States. He traveled from Alaska to Mexico, taking 40,000 images and capturing audio and visual recordings.

Yet only 250 subscriptions were sold, meaning Muskegon is a rare public entity to own one.

While the ready-made exhibit plan was not successful, their perseverance was rewarded. For the cost of a hard drive and postage, Anita and Kathy soon had electronic copies of the 723 images from the subscription series. They also had music and videos that Curtis had collected and permission to use them all.

The group knew they could only display a subset, and Anita and Kathy had the difficult job of choosing. Once they got to 300, eliminating photos became much more difficult, so they established categories, e.g. portraits, housing, food storage, etc. Eventually they identified 99 photos to represent the collection.

Securing grants, they worked with *By All Means* in Northfield, whose enhancement technology produced beautiful high quality 16x20 prints. Simple black aluminum frames without glass keep the exhibit lightweight, allowing portability and accessibility. 16

photos were at the Washburn presentation and were easily setup and packed away. All of the photos have been viewed by hundreds in multiple venues. The group has even covered bus costs for some school group tours.

Anita wants everyone to experience the exhibit but believes its connection to the local community is most important. Curtis and family lived in the Cordova area when he was young. He would often accompany his father, a traveling preacher, to distant locations, sleeping and eating as the land provided. This lifestyle most likely prepared Curtis for his adventures later in life and influenced his appreciation of alternative ways of living.

All 99 photos are being exhibited in Le Center Minnesota through the end of the year. For more information contact artsandheritagecenter@gmail.com or 507-317-1433

Emily Pollack

October 28, 2023

Ranked Choice Voting: A top Reform to Strengthen Our Democracy

Presented by Jeanne Massey

Jeanne Massey, Executive Director of Fair Vote Minnesota and national expert on Ranked Choice Voting posed the question: Can Ranked Choice Voting help address the threats to our democracy?

Massey referred to the fact that there is considerable angst of what is happening to our democracy which many feel is no longer safe. In the ranking scale of the Democracy Index, the U.S. was way down in 2022, she pointed out. People are undermining democratic structures, and we must support minority structures, among others, as well.

Major concerns surfacing around voting are gerrymandering, lack of proportional representation, the U.S. Senate, the fixed size of

Congress, the Electoral College, the U.S. Supreme Court, filibusters, and primaries.

Massey indicated that Ranked Choice Voting provides one of the most significant ways to save the U.S. democracy. The reason is that RCV is a proven arrangement. In Ranked Choice Voting, voters rank candidates on their ballots in order of preference. People vote for their first choice candidate and also for their second, third, and fourth choice, etc. Yet the system works like a traditional run-off, where candidates must earn a majority of votes to win.

Around the country, as of 2023, RCV is reaching 51% of jurisdictions. This system gives voters more choice and more power. It eliminates costly low-turnout primaries, because it

promotes higher voter turnout. It also incentivizes candidates.

In Minnesota the pro RCV bill did not go through. However, the governor and lieutenant governor of Minnesota support RCV. It is already used in the cities of Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and St. Louis Park and was adopted in 20020 by Bloomington and Minnetonka in Minnesota. Republicans have banned RCV bills in Minnesota, and at least five other states have banned Ranked Choice Voting altogether.

On the international scene, countries that currently use RCV are Australia, New Zealand,

Scotland, Ireland, and the city of London, England.

It can be said that RCV has a moderating influence. It elects the candidate that is most broadly representing voters. It is clear that in countries with stronger institutions RCV has a better chance of being adopted. Rank choice votes offer the greatest support to the voting public.

About 20 attendees attended this informative presentation.

November 4, 2023

Fall Social Gathering

The Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum met at a planned social gathering for informal conversation and refreshments. Everyone was encouraged to bring

a treat to share. The group met at 1:00 p.m. at the Nokomis Square Senior Living Community in Minneapolis. About seventeen people were in attendance.

November 18, 2023

The Electrification of the Mississippi River Gorge and the High Dam Controversy

Presented by Erik Moore

Erik Moore, director of the University Digital Conservancy, told the story of the controversy of the High Dam on the Mississippi in his talk to the Scholars, November 18, 2023.

Moore began by saying that a century ago the High Dam Controversy occupied newspapers, legislators, and U of M administrators for several years. Today the only way he could find out what the controversy was and how it played out, was to research the records in the archives which was exactly what he did and what he shared with the audience.

The Mississippi Gorge began about 20,000 years ago with a waterfall in what is now downtown St. Paul. Erosion moved the falls upstream about four feet a year until the late 19th to early 20th century,

when decisions were made to use the falls to build a dam for hydroelectric power. Several plans evolved, and at least one dam (the Meeker) was built, but arguments between cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and then the commencement of First World War, delayed actual construction until after the war.

By the time construction began again in the 1920s, Northern States Power had entered the fray. The competitors for control of the power to be generated by the dam were now Northern States Power, the University of Minnesota, each of the Twin Cities separately--and a newcomer, the Ford Motor Company, who had committed to build an auto plant on the east side of the Mississippi just above the falls.

By the time of the hearing before the Federal Power Commission scheduled for March 2, 1923,

NSP had dropped out of the competition for the site. But the others, especially Ford and the University of Minnesota, were still in the running.

The decisive moment: a letter of March 1, 1923, from Minnesota Governor J.A.O. Preus, to Lotus D. Coffman, president of the University of Minnesota (1920 to 1938), asked that Coffman do "nothing to prevent Ford's chance" (to use the falls). The argument from Preus to Coffman was that Minnesota needed the Ford plant. At the end of the court session, the Ford Motor Company had gained the sole right to use the waterpower.

This incident in Minnesota history is documentable but not extensively written up. Though Erik Moore was very detailed in his reconstruction of the events he described, he had found references to the High Dam in only 5 folders during his research. His talk was an excellent example of what can be achieved by diligent investigation.

The Falls are now controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers. Brookfield Energy leases the water rights.

Lucy Brusic

Acknowledgement: It is with gratitude that the editor of TMS acknowledges the members who helped with the mailing and writing up of meeting notes for the TMS for this and the previous issue. They include Michael Woolsey, Barbara Sommer, Emily Pollack, Lucy Brusic, and Ruth Campbell. *Evelyn Klein, TMS Editor*

Upcoming Meetings and Programs

Our venue has changed. While last year's meetings took place at the Washburn Library in Minneapolis, as they had for a number of years, because of library changes in procedure, MISF had to find a new venue. Ramsey County Public Libraries has agreed to partner with MISF and provide facilities for our Saturday morning programs for the coming year. The library is located close to I-694, 35W, and 35E. Therefore, our Saturday morning programs in the year 2024 will take place 10:30 a.m. at:

Shoreview Public Library, 4560 Victoria Street North, Shoreview, Minnesota

January 27, 2024

Peanuts, Popcorn, and Preemies:

Wonderland Park and the Infantorium

Presenter: Susan Hunter Weir

It was 1905 and Americans were in love with electricity. More than 400 trolley car parks sprang up around the country. But only a handful had an Infantorium, a hospital (of sorts) that treated premature babies. For the price of admission, guests could watch performers like Daredevil Dash and Nervo the Human Comet. There were trained ant-eaters and bears on bicycles. There were rides, peanuts and cotton candy—all at 31st Avenue and Lake Street in South Minneapolis.

Susan Hunter Weir lived in South Minneapolis all of her life. She spent the last 25 or so years researching the residents of Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery, the oldest existing cemetery in Minneapolis. Before she

retired, she was Coordinator of Advising for students in the visual and performing arts at the University of Minnesota. She served on Minneapolis' Heritage Preservation Commission for nine years.

February 24, 2024

The Indigenous Oral History Manual: Canada and the United States (2023)

Presenter: Barbara Sommer

For the past several years, I worked on the *Indigenous Oral History Manual: Canada and the United States*, with authors Winona Wheeler, Charles E. Trimble (posthumous), and Mary Kay Quinlan. The book focuses on the role of Indigenous voices in Indigenous history. As Māori oral historian Nepia Mahuika wrote in 2019, "I argue that indigenous oral histories and traditions cannot be adequately defined by nonindigenous people." This is a straightforward statement, but it also can be seen

as radical. In this book, written as a manual, we discuss support for this work and profile several Indigenous organizations that are active in doing it. In the presentation, I'll discuss the major points of the book and present information about the profiled projects.

Barbara W. Sommer, M.A., has over forty years of experience in the public history and oral history fields. She is the author and co-author of several publications including *The Oral History Manual* (4th edition due out in 2024), the *Indigenous Oral History Manual: Canada and the United States* (2nd edition of *The American Indian Oral History Manual*, 2023), the *Community Oral History Toolkit* (2013), *Practicing Oral History in Historical Organizations* (2015), and *Doing Veterans Oral History* (2015). She also is the author of the award-winning book *Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota* (2008, re-issued in 2022), a history of this Depression-era program based on oral and written sources. She holds degrees from Carleton College and the University of Minnesota.

March 23, 2024

Minnesota Carnegie Libraries After 100 Years

Presenter: Greg Gaut

In the early 1900s, Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of over 1600 libraries in this country, 66 of which were in Minnesota. The first half of the talk will describe the Carnegie library program and its impact on Minnesota; the second half will assess the extent to which the libraries have survived after more than a century. We will touch on themes of philanthropy, architecture, accessibility, historic preservation, and of course, the importance of libraries in American society. Particular attention will be paid to how a Carnegie library has to be transformed so that it can continue to serve the community. It is illustrated by historic and contemporary photos from around the state.

Greg Gaut is emeritus faculty at Saint Mary's University in Winona, where he taught European and Russian history. Since 2012, he has worked as a historic preservation consultant. He and his wife, Marsha Neff, are regular contributors to *Minnesota History*, and two of their articles won the David Gebhard Award for the best article on Minnesota's built environment. A lover of libraries, he has published *Laird's Legacy: A History of the Winona Public Library* and *Reinventing the People's Library*, a history of St. Paul's Arlington Hills Public

Library. The latter, a Carnegie library, is now the East Side Freedom Library. He is working on a book about the Minnesota home front during World War I. One result of this research, the article "Hardware Store Sedition: The Case of Charles W. Anding," won the Solon J. Buck Award for the best article in *Minnesota History* for 2020.

April 27, 2024

Building Community Food Webs

Presenter: Ken Meter

More information to be forthcoming.

May 18, 2024

Poetry Day

Presenter: Joseph A. Amato

Joe will read poems about place (Detroit, Southwest Minnesota, and Sicily), family, memory, aging, death, and hope and gratitude. They will be drawn from some of his published books, *Buoyancies: The Ballast Master's Log*, *My Three Sicilies*, *Poems, Stories, and Essays*, and *Trinity of Hope*, plus poems published in Sicilian and Italian-American and other publications.

Joe Amato taught for forty years, with specialties in European, intellectual, and cultural history, while writing and publishing works on a variety of topics in diverse forms which are summarized on Wikipedia and his website, josephaamato.com

An Open Mic will follow the program.

June 22, 2024

Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum Annual Meeting

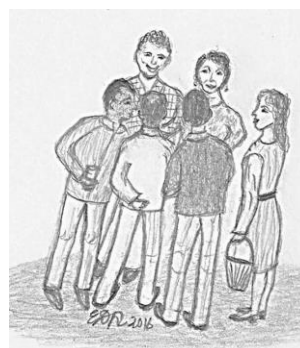
Program immediately following.

Topic and speaker to be announced.

Please note new meeting time & place on p. 18

Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history.

~Plato



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