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THE SIFTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

FINANCIAL AND RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES WEBINAR

The Impact of Demographic Changes on the Economy

BY TOM EGGERT, MEMBER, CFMR AND ROC

Sam Sorenson, creative director of Studio 88, will speak about the role of demographics in so many “big picture” decisions. Shifting demography affects economies and markets (not to mention cultures, politics, religions, and every aspect of society).

From local examples of the never-ending housing boom to the challenges for Japan and many European countries of birth rates that are below replacement value, demographics impact everyone. By some estimates, there are 6.5–7 million families seeking houses in the U.S., and these houses don’t exist. As the Baby Boomers complete their movement out of the workforce, our nation has the largest group of retired people ever experienced. These numbers affect the health care system, existing housing stock, and so much more.

This seminar is co-hosted by the Committee on Financial Matters in Retirement and Retirement Opportunities Committee.

If you have preliminary questions for the speaker, please send to program coordinator Tom Eggert at tleggert@wisc.edu by Thursday, September 14. ■

Sam Sorenson is an Emmy Award-winning producer and owner of Studio 88, a Madison-based production company. He has been producing documentary films about demographics for the last decade. He works closely with Ken Gronbach, a world-renowned demographer and also partners with Mike Williams, a financial expert who has appeared on CNBC, Fox Business, and Bloomberg. Williams and Sorenson produce videos detailing how shifting demographics precipitate economic changes in the U.S. and around the world.



DEMOGRAPHY & THE ECONOMY

Thursday, September 21

10:00 A.M.–NOON Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: September 18

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5194837

Online registration for UWRA Zoom webinars is easy, but members may also email the UWRA office at retireasn@mailplus.wisc.edu or call 608-262-0641 to register for events.

Webinar links and call information are included in registration confirmations and reminders emailed to registrants 7 and 2 days prior to events.

Need help with Zoom? Contact UWRA.tech@gmail.com

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

On Wisconsin!

BY SANDI HAASE

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to the 2023–2024 UWRA year. I hope you have been well and enjoyed your summer.



UWRA had the pleasure of hosting the Big10 Retiree Association Annual Conference in July. This annual meeting rotates among the Big10 institutions. This year UWRA welcomed represen-

tatives from 13 of the 14 schools. Unfortunately, Rutgers was unable to send a delegate. While in many ways our universities are alike, our retirement associations are very different from each other by many measures. (I encourage you to check out the Big10 Comparison posted on the UWRA website under “Resources.”)

This annual conference is an opportunity to share best practices and discuss topics of shared interest and challenges that we all face. In addition, it offers the hosting association the chance to showcase its institution. The conference theme was “The Wisconsin Idea.” We heard presentations from Nathan Jandl, the associate director of the UW–Madison Office of Sustainability, on “Creating a Sustainability Community through Collaborative Partnerships”; Adam R. Nelson, senior associate dean, School of Education, on “Land Grant Universities and the Wisconsin Idea”; and Steven R. Carpenter, free-range scientist with the Center for Limnology, on “Lake Mendota and UW–Madison: The Wisconsin Idea at Work.” The banquet keynotes were given by

the vice provost for lifelong learning, Jeff Russell, on “Higher Education: Serving the Underserved,” and the Honorable JoAnn Jones, retired Ho-Chunk tribal judge, on “Honoring the Ho-Chunk Heritage.”

The participants’ evaluations indicated that the meeting was a success and enjoyed by our guests. This year’s conference booklet is posted on the website under “Resources/Big10 Retirement Association.” The Ohio State University will host the 2024 conference in Columbus followed by the University of Michigan in 2025.

I know you all have heard the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child”. It also takes a village to make an organization successful. Members who volunteer their time, skills, and talents on our committees comprise the UWRA village. Our committees have been working throughout the summer to plan another terrific year of programs. We are continuing our partnership with the Verona Senior Center for day trips. You will find in this issue a wide variety of offerings that I hope you will attend. Our association has so much to be proud of. ■



Above, right to left: Tom Eggart, Sandi Haase, and Sheila Leary from UWRA, and delegates from Minnesota and Indiana. Below, Jeff Russell, UW–Madison vice-provost for lifelong learning, gives a keynote address.



BREAKFAST AT ELIE'S CAFE

909 E. Broadway, Monona, WI

9:00–10:30 A.M. In-person gathering

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Join fellow UWRA members for breakfast (or a cup of coffee or tea) once a month for lively conversation. No registration needed.

FROM THE UWRA PRESIDENT'S DESK

So Long Summer, Welcome Fall

BY TOM BROMAN

As I write these words, we are closing out the first week of August, and soon enough the end of summer will be upon us. I doubt that many of you would disagree that this summer has been a bit unusual and not altogether pleasant. I suppose that I should have known that we were due for a drought back in early May when I ordered 36 prairie “plugs” from Agrecol Nursery



in Evansville. Agrecol processes such orders by starting plants from seed, so by the time I collected my seedlings in mid-June, the drought was already well along. A great time to nurse seedlings!

Thankfully, droughts are not very common in the upper Midwest. Our last serious drought was in 2012, and that one was quite severe, affecting not only us but large swaths of our neighboring states as well. It was hot too, with temperatures reaching into the 90s on a number of days and even topping 100 a few times. Another severe drought occurred in 1999.

Of course, what made this summer memorably unpleasant was the smoke that blew our way from the extensive wildfires that burned throughout much of Canada. The experience of stepping outside in the morning and smelling the smoke from fires many hundreds of miles away is not one I will soon forget. And, as we all know, on some days the air quality was so bad that it made doing anything outdoors hazardous.

All the more reason, then, for us all to welcome the approach of Fall and the renewal of the UWRA's regular schedule of activities. I hope this message finds all of you having come through the past season safely and in good health. I look forward to seeing you soon. ■

TOUR RECAP

Mendota's Ancient Earthworks

BY CLIFF DILLHUNT, UWRA MEMBER

The May walking tour led by Teri Venker on the grounds of the Mendota Mental Health Institute was quite remarkable. The grounds themselves are beautiful and the Indian mounds are incredible to see.

What made the trip even more remarkable was Teri's down-to-earth approach that helped us think about our surroundings with new insight and excitement. I felt as if we were discovering the landscape and its history together. She took us to the site of the original Ho Chunk village, in full view of Lake Mendota and surrounding mounds. I'd been there before but never before had the history of this remarkable culture been so alive for me. Teri made it clear she was discovering along with us. The best part was watching the family of three thunderbird mounds soar out over Lake Mendota. Many thanks to Teri, Sandi Haase, and the UWRA Travel Committee.

Due to its popularity, this tour is being offered again on September 26. See registration details below. ■

 **There's Still Time to Register!**

INDIAN MOUND GUIDED WALK

Tuesday, September 26

10:00 A.M.–NOON Self-Drive Trip

Registration Deadline: September 19

Advance registration is required. See more details, and register online, at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5269286

INSTITUTE ON AGING COLLOQUIUM AND HEALTH AND RESOURCE FAIR

Wednesday, September 27

8:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M. UW Campus

Free and open to the public, but advance registration is required. Details and registration at:

aging.wisc.edu/annual-colloquium/

TRAVEL: DAY TRIP

Excursion to Janesville Rotary Gardens and Lincoln-Tallman House

Join UWRA and the Verona Senior Center for an all-day trip by bus to Janesville on Wednesday, September 20. UWRA participants are limited to 15 slots, but a waitlist will be established if needed. The \$85 registration fee includes site admissions, lunch, guides, transportation, and all tips.

The [Rotary Botanical Gardens](#) are an award-winning 20-acre, nonprofit botanic showcase with 4,000 varieties of plants and 26 different garden styles, including Japanese, Scottish, French formal, Italian, and English cottage gardens.



Lunch will be at the Citrus Café, followed by a guided tour of the historic 1857 [Lincoln-Tallman House](#), Janesville's finest Italianate mansion.

Find further details about schedule, waitlist, and payment at the linked registration page. Questions may be directed to the UWRA Office at retireasn@mailplus.wisc.edu. ■



JANESVILLE EXCURSION

Wednesday, September 20

Registration Deadline: September 5

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5372877

RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES WEBINAR

Contested Black Freedom in Wisconsin, 1725–1968

BY MICHAEL BERNARD-DONALS, MEMBER, RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

Free and enslaved Black people lived, labored, and raised families on the Wisconsin frontier; they called Prairie du Chien, Racine, Green Bay, Lancaster, Milwaukee, and Menomonie home. Yet their stories remain largely untold. Black Americans were a tiny minority in Wisconsin territory and later the state; nevertheless, the practice of race-based slavery and anxieties about Black migrants led white Wisconsinites to dispute abolition and the rights of Black residents. In the mid-nineteenth century, fugitive slaves passing through Wisconsin were often met with assistance, while Black permanent residents were politically and socially ostracized. Black freedom was contested in Wisconsin before the state existed, and Africans were steadfast in the pursuit of liberty from the colonial period through the modern civil rights movements. Join us for a discussion of this history with Professor Christy Clark-Pujara.

If you have preliminary questions for the speaker, please send to program coordinator Michael Bernard-Donals at michael.bernarddonals@wisc.edu by Wednesday, September 27.

Christy Clark-Pujara is associate professor of history and director of graduate studies in the Department of African American Studies at UW-Madison. She is the author of *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island* (NYU Press) and has a forthcoming book examining black history in the Wisconsin Territory from 1725 to 1968. ■



CONTESTED BLACK FREEDOM

Wednesday, October 4

1:30–3:00 P.M. Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: September 29

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5194816

FINANCIAL WEBINAR

“It’s Your Choice” for 2024: What’s New in Health Insurance for Wisconsin Employees and Retirees?

BY KATHY ZWEIFEL, MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT

A team led by Eileen Mallow, director of strategic health policy at the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds, will present a webinar on the health care coverage options available to UW employees and retirees in 2024. The presentation will include an overview of changes to benefits and participating insurers for 2024. Tom Rasmussen will provide an update on supplemental plans (vision, dental, accident) and Arlene Larsen will talk about the Medicare Advantage plan. Molly Dunks will present on Wellness programming and the new Wellness contract. Luis Caracas will provide information on advanced care planning. ETF ombuds staff will explain their role in assisting members with questions or concerns about ETF programs.

The 2024 Wisconsin Group Health Insurance open enrollment period will begin September 25 and end October 20. The *It’s Your Choice 2024 Decision Guide* is scheduled to be mailed by September 18, but may not be delivered until later that week. However, all information included in the *Decision Guide* will be available on the ETF website (etf.wi.gov) as of September 18. Visit the ETF website for the latest information about open enrollment, including webinar offerings.

If you have preliminary questions for the speaker, please send to program coordinators Millard Susman at msusman@wisc.edu and Kathy Zweifel at kazweife@wisc.edu by Tuesday, October 3. ■

IT’S YOUR CHOICE: HEALTH INSURANCE

Tuesday, October 10

10:00 A.M.–NOON Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: October 6

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5340636

TRAVEL: DAY TRIP

Excursion: Tastes of Green County

Green County is the heart of Wisconsin’s (and America’s) dairy and cheese industry and home to brewers and vintners as well. This delectable tasting tour will travel by bus through countryside that is home to



Photo by [turn off your computer and go outside](https://www.turnoffyourcomputerandgooutside.com). Some rights reserved.

400 dairy farms that produce 530 million pounds of milk annually. The trip is in partnership with the Verona Senior Center, and UWRA participants are limited to 15 slots. A wait list will be established if needed. The \$85 registration fee includes site admissions, tasting samples and dessert, and transportation (lunch is on your own in Monroe).

In the city of Monroe, the group will visit the Alp and Dell Cheese Store, offering more than 100 varieties of cheese as well as sausages and condiments, and Minha’s Craft Brewery, the oldest brewery in the Midwest (1845), home of Huber beers and Blumers soda pop. Following the brewery tour and samples, stroll through downtown Monroe for shopping and lunch. Visit mainstreetmonroe.org/ for a downtown map and guide.

After lunch, the bus will head to Bailey’s Run Vineyard & Winery in the rolling hills near New Glarus for a dessert and wine pairing.



Find details about schedule, waitlist, and payment at the registration page. Questions may be directed to the UWRA Office at retireassn@mailplus.wisc.edu. ■

GREEN COUNTY EXCURSION

Wednesday, October 25

Registration Deadline: October 16

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5375939

MEET A UWRA MEMBER

Still Learning and Exploring

BY ABBAS YAGHMAIAN

It seems it was just yesterday that I came to the United States as an international student from Iran in the summer of 1976. What started as a young man’s endeavor for learning, growing, and exploring has not stopped for nearly half a century. I received my education at UW–Oshkosh, while my wife, who grew up in Japan, and my daughter, who was born in Wisconsin, are both proud graduates of UW–Madison.

Since the day that I learned my first word in English, refining my knowledge of the English language has been a passion and a lifetime commitment. One may happily dive into an ocean knowing full well that he will never reach the bottom. I am in awe of the vastness of English vocabulary, its elegance and beauty, as well as the limitless literary works of great writers and poets. In retirement, I have more time to delve deeper into the nuances of this beautiful language.

As I look back, I feel so lucky for all the opportunities I have had. A pivotal decision was coming to the United States to pursue my education. I have worked for Lawrence University, Fox Valley Technical College, State University of New York, and University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh in various professional capacities throughout my career. Working in higher education immersed me in learning, cross-cultural experiences, and service.

I recall one of my undergraduate professors saying, “Nurture your hobbies while you are still young, and they will become a resource for you in your retirement.” By training, I am a counselor. In addition to several decades of service in this field, I have always tried to maintain and develop my hobbies (bicycle touring, photography, and music). The joy of riding my bicycle to the park nearby, observing and photographing a migratory bird, or

trying to learn to play a new song on my instrument is all the gift and richness I may ever look for in a day during my retirement. As a recent retiree, I have found that mastering the steps for the dance between



High Cliff State Park, May 2023. Photo by Abbas Yaghmaian.

“attachment” and “detachment” smooths the transition. Community volunteer work is one of the most meaningful attachments I have found in retirement. Joining UWRA is another. Although I may travel to visit friends and family in other parts of the country, Wisconsin will remain home. ■

May 1–August 1, 2023

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Srijana Batajoo , <i>Health & Human Services</i> | Tracy Greer |
| Ayodhya Batajoo , <i>Facilities Planning & Management</i> | Brenda Kupsch , <i>School of Nursing</i> |
| Judy Bauman , <i>OVCRGE / Graduate School</i> | Richard Lindroth , <i>Entomology</i> |
| Deborah Boushea , <i>Medicine</i> | Valerie Peterson |
| Sally Bowers , <i>UW Hospital & Clinics</i> | Michael Porte , <i>Pediatrics</i> |
| David Brown , <i>School of Business</i> | Shari Porte |
| Howard Fenton , <i>Cooperative Extension Budget Office</i> | Julie Rosenberry |
| Hanna Filutowicz , <i>Pediatrics</i> | Marvin Rosenberry , <i>FP&M Electric Shop</i> |
| Judith Fitzgerald | Ann Schmidt , <i>Internal Medicine</i> |
| Robert Glinert , <i>Dermatology</i> | Kevin Shinnors , <i>Biological Systems Engineering</i> |
| | Jayne Squirrell , <i>Center for Quantitative Cell Imaging</i> |
| | S. Anders Yocom , <i>Wisconsin Public Radio</i> |

{ The UWRA is your network in retirement! }

ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

Building on a Lifelong Interest in Architecture

BY MICHAEL BRIDGEMAN, UWRA MEMBER



Like many children, I spent a lot of time with building toys. There were wood blocks, Lincoln Logs, and plastic building sets (though my childhood predated the Lego boom). I decided I wanted to be an architect, but

that didn't come to pass. Instead, I had a career as a communications specialist while remaining a lifelong enthusiast for buildings, architecture, and other kinds of design.

My opportunities expanded greatly when I came to Madison in 1982 to work as a publicist for WHA-TV (now part of PBS Wisconsin). I connected with the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation and served two stints on its Board of Trustees. For more than 20 years, I've been leading—and sometimes planning—historic architecture walking tours. Retirement has given me more time to expand and deepen my interest in architecture and design. It has also brought new experiences.

MADISON TRUST



for Historic Preservation

Like many retirees, I've audited courses at UW-Madison, mostly on architecture and history. My volunteer work for the Madison Trust has expanded to writing regular web posts about Madison architecture and history (this month's post is number 37). One new experience was being the on-camera host for two PBS Wisconsin programs about architecture.

Mostly I've volunteered, but I've had some part-time jobs, too. I did research and field work for a company that helps developers get historic preservation tax credits. Best of all, I've been a limited-term employee in the State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society. I find architecture and history stimulating, and I hope my enthusiasm sparks interest in others.

But there's more to retirement life than buildings. Just as I'm not a designer, I'm not a musician. I marvel at what composers and musicians can do, and it's important to be part of an appreciative audience. I'm happy to do my part by working on a couple of boards.

As much as I enjoyed and appreciated my 37-year communications career for public television in Wisconsin and elsewhere, my extracurriculars have satisfied and sustained me in different ways. In more than 10 years of retirement they've kept me busy, engaged, and connected with people I'd otherwise not have known. ■

FOOD PANTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

In lieu of registration fees for most UWRA programs, donations are encouraged to the Open Seat Food Pantry that serves food-insecure UW students. The pantry is a project of ASM, Associated Students of Madison. Learn more about it at asm.wisc.edu/the-open-seat/. Checks payable to UW Foundation, with "Open Seat" on the memo line, may be mailed to: UWRA, 21 North Park Street, Room 7205, Madison, WI 53715-1218. ■



WEBINAR RECAP

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

BY TOM EGGERT, MEMBER, AND JURGEN PATAU AND JACK SORENSON, CO-CHAIRS, COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT

In May, the UWRA's Committees on Retirement Opportunities and on Financial Matters in Retirement welcomed Katherine Kuntz, director of the Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change, to discuss Dane County's carbon reduction programs and their relationship to efforts by each of us.



Kuntz's talk, "How to Access Funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) for Home Weatherization, Electrification of Your Home, and Electric Vehicles Purchases: What Every Homeowner Should Know" provided the audience with ways to take advantage of federal, state, and county funds for energy conservation projects for homes, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. One interesting item she shared is that as many as two-thirds of Wisconsin homes may be under-insulated. Two websites Kuntz suggested to obtain more information are daneclimateaction.org and focusonenergy.com.

Economic incentives are available to homeowners and landlords to improve the energy efficiency of homes around the state. Incentives are available for increasing insulation, replacing doors and windows, installing heat pumps and heat-pump water heaters, switching from gas to electric appliances (including ovens), and electric vehicles. Federal incentives can often be paired with State Focus on Energy incentives, making much more affordable what had previously been expensive projects.

Visit the UWRA website (UWRAmadison.org) then select Resources/Presentations/2022–23 Jan–Jun to find a video and a PDF of this presentation. ■

CAMPUS NEWS

Sustainability at UW–Madison

The UW–Madison Office of Sustainability has created an interactive dashboard where users can explore trends, engage with sustainability data, and track the university's progress.

The dashboard incorporates such topics as greenhouse gas emissions, energy use, affordability, research, and campus engagement. For more information, you can read the announcement article at sustainability.wisc.edu/sustainability-dashboard-unveiled/ or access the dashboard directly at sustainability.wisc.edu/sustainability-dashboard/. ■

UNIVERSITY LEAGUE

Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin to Speak to University League

BY GISELL SIRIANNI, UNIVERSITY LEAGUE

Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin will speak at the University League's Fall Coffee event on September 27. Mnookin became chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison in August, 2022, and is the 30th chancellor in the university's 175-year history.

Spending her first months at UW–Madison listening and learning, Mnookin has been deeply impressed by the university's commitment to educational excellence and the ways that faculty and staff incorporate leading-edge scientific research and public service into students' experiences. She is committed to understanding what's working well and finding ways to build on those successes, as well as looking for opportunities to improve so that UW–Madison can make even greater progress in meeting its mission of education, research, and outreach.

The event is Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at 9:30 A.M., Blackhawk Country Club. Reservation Deadline: Sunday, September 10th, 2023. For more information including how to register, visit: univleague.wisc.edu/programs/. ■

CAMPUS NEWS**Benefit and Resource Fair Set**

The 2023 Employee Benefit and Resource Fair will be Tuesday, October 3, 10:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M. at Union South, 1308 W. Dayton St. Health, long-term care, vision, and dental insurance providers will have displays and representatives present. Employee Trust Funds, the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, and other financial organizations that manage 403(b) accounts and deferred compensation accounts will also be on hand to answer questions. Seminars about 2024 benefits will be offered.

Find more information at hr.wisc.edu/benefits/. Open enrollment dates for benefits are September 25 to October 20, 2023. ■

SHARING ACTIVE INDEPENDENT LIVES (SAIL)**Aging 101—Ten Things to Know about Aging**

BY SARAH KRUSE, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, AGE BETTER, INC.

The organization Sharing Active Independent Lives (SAIL) invites UWRA members to an informative workshop presented by Dr. Alexis Eastman. Her presentation emphasizes that aging doesn't mean disease, nor does growing older mean we will become frail. As part of the workshop, small groups will explore and dismantle some of the myths about aging and identify related topics to explore further. The workshop will be held Monday, September 18, 1:00 P.M.–3:00 P.M. at the Catholic Multicultural Center, 1862 Beld St. in Madison. Register by calling SAIL at 608-230-4321 or visit sailtoday.org.

Eastman is an associate professor in the Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Medicine and Public Health.

Additional "SAILing into the future!" workshops are offered throughout the year. More information is available on the events calendar on the SAIL website at sailtoday.org. ■

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**Help Students through SuccessWorks**

UW–Madison's College of Letters and Science SuccessWorks provides advising and career support for graduating students. You can volunteer for Career Panels to share your story and answer questions about a successful transition from college to career. Or, you can connect virtually to mentor students one-on-one through the Career Conversations program, sharing your real-life experience. Or, conduct a Mock Interview with students to give them valuable practice. Or, volunteer at a Career Fair to offer guidance on which employers to speak with, what questions to ask, and how to navigate the event with confidence. Learn about all these opportunities at successworks.wisc.edu/alumni/.

All-Campus Career & Internship Fair

September 20, 2023, 4:00–7:00 P.M.

Equity & Inclusion Career & Internship Fair

October 11, 2023, 4:00–7:00 P.M.

Both fairs will be held at the Kohl Center on the UW–Madison campus. ■

ATTIC ANGEL ASSOCIATION**September Talks at Attic Angel**

The Continuing Education Programs of the Attic Angel Association, open to the public, are held most Monday mornings at Attic Angel Place, 8301 Old Sauk Road, in Middleton. Coffee is served at 10:00 A.M. and the program begins at 10:30 A.M. There is no charge, and no reservation is required. Program attendees will be asked to screen at the front entrance.

September 11 Lake Mendota's Cultural and Natural History

Dr. Marjorie Rhine, professor and coordinator for the Japanese Studies Program, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater

September 18 Wisconsin State Journal Opinion

Cartoons Phil Hands, editorial cartoonist, *Wisconsin State Journal* ■

REFLECTIONS

Words of Wisdom

BY MARY BARNARD RAY

My college roommate, Gwendolyn, was a physical education major. After a semester in architecture, I was an English major. We were perhaps stereotypical: I was introspective and wondered about the purpose of life; she was not and did not. Yet, she once said something to me that has stuck with me over fifty years. She asked me, in utter sincerity, “How can you THINK so much?” I could have



asked her how she could NOT think so much. But I was silent, while she had raised a profound question about my approach to life. I have thought about that a lot over the ensuing years. There is deep irony here.

We were roommates for all four years, turning out to be very compatible. Gwen showed me that it is possible to have a productive and happy life without dwelling on ideas. After graduation, she married her high school sweetheart, moved south, had children, and was doubtless an excellent gym teacher. We are still in touch, and she seems happy. I have no reason to think that her life has been any less meaningful than mine.

Another bit of wisdom surprised me because of its content, not because of the source. An acquaintance of mine is an extraordinary woman who has survived cancer four times—four different kinds of cancer—all before she reached sixty years of age. I expect wisdom from her. Once, when talking about our wonderful adult daughters, she said, “I wish I had known when she was younger to share more advice with her.” At this point, I mentally got out the pen and paper to write down her wisdom. I expected guru-level wisdom. She continued, in a serious tone: “Moisturize!”

I had no response to that one, either. But later I thought, if she could survive cancer four times and

still return to ordinary life, worrying about lines on her face—well, that is a miracle of resilience and normalcy in my book. Now, when I fall into the “slough of despond,” I tell myself “moisturize!” It helps bring me back to the current reality, and there is wisdom in that.

Sometimes words of wisdom come from the mouths of babes. I remember a day when our oldest son, who was three at the time, was particularly demanding. In exasperation, I finally told him, “You just want to have EVERYTHING your way!” He looked at me with the same sincerity Gwen had all those years ago and answered “Yes.” Don’t we all? ■

FRIENDS OF UW-MADISON LIBRARIES

Donate (or Buy) Books for Fall Sale

BY LIBBY THEUNE, FRIENDS ADMINISTRATOR

The Friends of UW–Madison Libraries are calling on UWRA’s well-read community to donate books. We are short on inventory, and your donations offer an environmentally friendly way to redistribute items to others. The Friends hold two high-quality used book sales every year at Memorial Library on the UW–Madison campus. Funds from the sales directly support and give visibility to the world-class resources of the UW–Madison Libraries.



Donations can be made now for the October sale. Learn how at: library.wisc.edu/friends/book-donations-semiannual-sale/book-donations/

Save the dates for the book sale. We will have thousands of books, LPs, and DVDs. Prices drop daily. Come early for the best selection; come later for the best prices at Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison.

Wednesday, October 11 Preview Sale (\$5 entry) 4:00–8:00 P.M.

Thursday–Friday, October 12–13 Regular Sale (no entry fee) 10:30 A.M.–7:00 P.M.

Saturday, October 14 \$5 Bag Sale 9:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M. ■

BOOK MARKS

This Tender Land

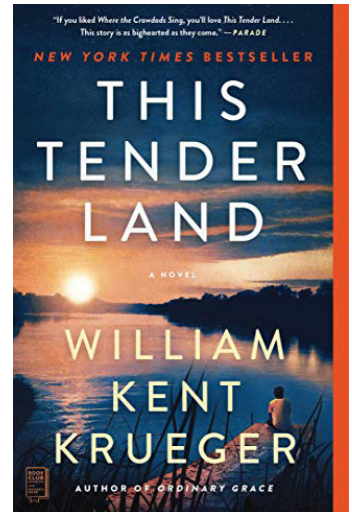
REVIEWED BY MARCY DOELP, UWRA FACEBOOK ADMINISTRATOR

T*his Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger (Atria Books, 2019) is one of the best books I have read in a long time. The story follows the adventures and misadventures of four children, led by 12-year-old Odie O'Banion. Odie and his older brother, Albert, are sent to live at the Lincoln Indian School in Northern Minnesota after they are orphaned in 1932. They are the only Caucasian children at the boarding school, where they become friends with Mose, a mute Sioux boy who is an excellent baseball player. Life at the school is very hard, particularly for Odie, who has a rebellious spirit.

Several staff at the school watch out for the O'Banions, including Herman Volz, a kind German man, and Cora Frost, an equally kind teacher. Events at the school reach a crescendo, prompting Odie to make plans to leave. Tragedy strikes Cora, and as a result her daughter Emmy, along with Albert and Mose, join Odie on a runaway adventure that begins by canoeing down the Gilead River. St. Louis is their destination, where the O'Banions' aunt lives.

Along the way they stop at a downtrodden farm and are "captured" by the owner, Jack, who puts the children to work on his farm. Jack's family has mysteriously disappeared, and there are unsettling clues that something is amiss. The children escape

downriver in their canoe and discover from a local newspaper that the boys are suspected of kidnapping Emmy. Sister Eve, a revivalist, seems to have a big heart and offers them shelter and work. Their good fortune is cut short when Albert is bitten by a poisonous snake and barely survives. Fearful of the police and boarding school authorities, the children once again are on the run.



The story is engaging and at the same time sobering. Although the novel is fiction, it seems to be a very real narrative of life in an orphanage during the Great Depression. The children were treated cruelly by most of the staff in the orphanage, both emotionally and physically. The people they meet on the way to St. Louis are often living hand to mouth, some in shantytowns, and yet many are willing to share what little they have with the children. Is there a happy ending for these four scrappy children? I urge you to read the book and find out!

Please email brief book reviews for Book Marks to column coordinator Laurie Mayberry at laurie.mayberry@wisc.edu. ■

■ UW-Madison Retirement Association Calendar Dates ■

Visit the UWRAmadison.org website for updates and many additional future events.

Virtual events (V), In-Person events (IP)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| • Monday, September 11 | 10:45 A.M.–NOON | Epic Systems Guided Walking Tour (IP) |
| • Wednesday, September 20 | 8:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M. | Janesville Rotary Gardens & Lincoln-Tallman House (IP) |
| • Thursday, September 21 | 10:00 A.M.–NOON | Webinar: <i>Demography & the Economy</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, September 26 | 10:00 A.M.–NOON | Indian Mounds Guided Walk (IP) |
| • Wednesday, October 4 | 1:30–3:00 P.M. | Contested Black Freedom in Wisconsin (V) |
| • Tuesday, October 10 | 10:00 A.M.–NOON | Webinar: It's Your Choice: 2024 Health Insurance Update (V) |

For information on Board and Committee meetings and deadlines for **The Sifter**, visit UWRAmadison.org.

For information on upcoming PLATO trips, visit platomadison.org/page-18561.

THE SIFTER

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