

The Minnesota Scholar

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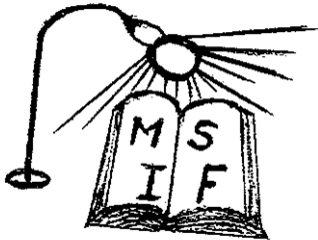


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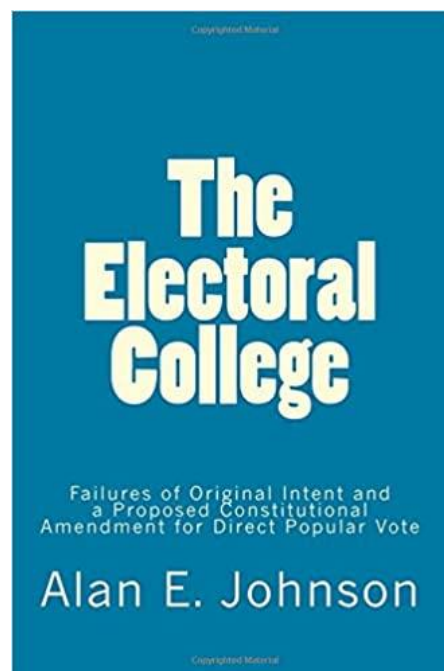
The Minnesota Scholar is published semi-annually and distributed by mail and e-mail to members of MISF and to selected institutions.

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and or Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

In this featured book review
MISF Independent Scholar

Barb W. Sommer

examines and reviews purpose and history
surrounding the Electoral College
as presented in:



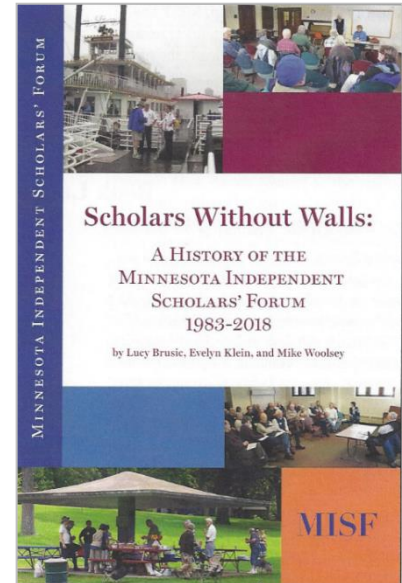
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New Book Chronicles the Struggles and Triumphs of Minnesota’s Independent Researchers

Told through the history of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum, *Scholars Without Walls* is a testament to the value of independent research.

MINNEAPOLIS, May 20th, 2020—In a climate where academic institutions are increasingly exclusionary, the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum has provided a supportive community for independent researchers. *Scholars Without Walls* tells the story of an organization dedicated to providing library access, funds, and other resources to Minnesotans passionate about knowledge for its own sake.

Scholarship has become a pay-to-play game that, too often, disqualifies serious scholars who don’t have an institutional affiliation. The academic job market has been shrinking since the 1970s, unable to support the number of people who wish to pursue a career in academia. For scholars who have spent years honing their disciplines, it is harder than ever to receive recognition and support. Thankfully, that hasn’t stopped independent researchers from making meaningful contributions to their fields. Independent scholarship and the democratization of learning are intertwined.



“Many of the greatest advances in human thought and civilization have come from self-educated scholars, operating on their own or in small, informal groups of their peers, says former MISF President Mike Woolsey. The MISF’s journal, running for over 25 years, elevates their work to address some of society’s most significant concerns. *Scholars Without Walls* includes essays on education and technology, the cultural impact of 9/11, the role of philosophy in everyday life, and of course, the future of independent scholarship.

The history of MISF is one that bends toward interdisciplinary study, creativity, collaboration, and mentorship. As member David Juncker says, “I derive a lot of benefit from people who are free thinkers, who have enough faith in themselves to try to tell the truth on things that they know (rather than someone else’s made-up vision) and who are critical about things that come up.” To this day, the MISF continues to offer financial resources and publishing opportunities to lifelong learners who will continue to redefine scholarship.

Scholars Without Walls is available to purchase for \$20 at www.mnindependentscholars.org and on Amazon. If you would like to feature the authors or book on your platform, please contact Lucy Brusic at lucybrusic@gmail.com

About the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum

Since 1983, the MISF has provided financial resources, collaboration opportunities, and a platform to intellectuals who strive to push boundaries in their fields. They welcome members from all academic backgrounds who want to pursue their projects with scholarly integrity and the support of a community. Over the years, they’ve hosted and supported the work of many accomplished writers, thinkers, and speakers. Go to www.mnindependentscholars.org for more information.



Featured Book Review by Barbara W. Sommer

***The Electoral College:
Failures of Original Intent and a Proposed
Constitutional Amendment
for Direct Popular Vote***
by Alan E. Johnson.

Philosophical Publications: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 2018, 308 pages

For much of United States history, the Electoral College has been at most a footnote in presidential elections—the vote of its electors confirmed the results of the popular vote. The candidate with the most popular votes in a state, through winner-take-all-rules in most states, claimed a state’s electoral votes. The candidate with the majority of electoral votes nationally won the election.

The year 2016 was one of the five elections in U.S. history in which there was a disparity between the winner of the popular vote and winner of the electoral vote. In this election, candidate Hillary Clinton received just under 2.9 million more votes than candidate Donald J. Trump, yet Trump received more electoral votes and won the election. The four previous elections in which this imbalance between the popular vote and the electoral vote occurred were the losses of Andrew Jackson to John Quincy Adams (1824), Samuel Tilden to Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), Benjamin Harris to Grover Cleveland (1888), and Al Gore to George W. Bush (2000). In 2016, candidate Trump won with a strategy of campaigning to the electoral votes rather than the popular vote. His campaign design stands out not only because of its success, but because of the record it set for the greatest disparity to date between the popular vote and the electoral vote. It threw off the voting balance that the framers of the Constitution tried to build into the design of the Electoral College.

With the most recent imbalance fresh in our minds, there is much discussion about the Electoral College these days. It was established in Article II, Section 1 of the United States Constitution as the formal body charged with electing the president and vice president of the United States. Questions about it, seen by some as archaic and a holdover from an earlier, and very different time, come up more

frequently than in past years. Some of the most common are: What is it? Why was it chosen as the method to elect the president and vice president rather than the direct popular vote? What influence has it had on presidential campaigns and elections, and what are possible future election options? Answers to these questions lie in an understanding of why the Electoral College was established and an analysis of how it works today.

In his book on the Electoral College, Alan E. Johnson, a retired attorney whose career focused primarily on constitutional and public law, has written a comprehensive and readable history about the origins and ongoing evaluation of the Electoral College. He provides the reader with information about why it was formed, how it functions, and why it is a different body now than that envisioned by the authors of the Constitution. He ends the book with a proposed Constitutional amendment for election of the president and vice president by direct popular vote. Following the last chapter, Johnson includes a 71-page appendix containing a detailed account of the Constitutional Convention debate on the Electoral College. Written before the rest of the book, the appendix provides a foundation for information in its five chapters.

Johnson begins his discussion about the Electoral College with a clear and concise description of what it is and why the framers of the Constitution chose it as the method for electing president and vice president. Incorporating multiple quotations from notes, letters, and other materials of the framers into the discussion, he offers the reader first-person insight into their thoughts and decisions. The major points he brings out, summarized here, help the reader understand why this compromise election process was developed and

how it fit into the context of the late 18th century time period in which it was enacted:

- The framers reviewed several alternative options for electing the president and vice president and rejected all but the Electoral College option. Among the rejected ideas was the popular option of giving the vote to Congress, which they felt would make the president dependent on that body, undermine the principle of the separation of powers, and could lead to improper collusion between the president and members of Congress.
- The Electoral College was a compromise option. The discussions were complex and involved views about the role of the federal government and state governments, but several points stand out. Among them was the basic task of how to elect a president. A number of framers supported direct popular vote, but others felt “the people” were “too ignorant, uninformed, and susceptible to demagoguery” to be trusted with the responsibility of electing the president (43). The Electoral College compromise recognized arguments from both sides, finding middle ground in the role of the electors.
- The interests of small states figured into the discussion. The formula that set the number of electors and electoral votes per state allowed for a more even voting balance among states, avoiding in part, at least, dominance by larger, more populous, states that could have been the result of a direct popular vote.
- Discussions between southern and northern states also were part of the decision. Southern states, concerned about a population (vote) imbalance in comparison with northern states, lobbied for inclusion of slaves in the population counts. Slaves couldn’t vote, but in the Electoral College, they could be counted as three-fifths of a person for purposes of determining the number of electors and electoral votes a state could have. This decision, which became part of the original Electoral College, gave southern states what they felt was a more equitable representation in the voting process.

- If electors deadlocked or no candidate received a majority vote, the Electoral College offered a fallback position; the election would go to the House of Representatives. Each state could cast one vote for one of the top three candidates; the results of this contingent election would determine the winner.
- The framers felt the Electoral College with its use of wise and knowledgeable electors was the best process to elect the most qualified and ethical presidential and vice-presidential candidates possible.



Johnson next discusses how political leaders responded to the Electoral College during the Constitutional ratification process. Here again, the words of those leading the discussions help the reader understand the time period and issues. Drawing on James Madison’s and James Monroe’s statements at the Virginia Convention to ratify the Constitution and quotes from *The Federalist Papers* among other sources, he describes arguments for and against accepting the Electoral College. Madison, a believer in the Electoral College, felt it was the most impartial and fair process the framers had come up with. Johnson saw it as a “body of wise and knowledgeable electors who would exercise their independent judgment in selecting a president and vice president” (83) while averting corruption and foreign influence and helping the new country elect a president who would be honest, knowledgeable, and wise. Johnson reminds the reader that Madison also acknowledged, if another system proved better as time went on, it could be considered. Monroe supported direct popular vote but was unable to convince Madison of its benefits. The Constitution with its provision for the Electoral College became the law of the land in June 1788.

Putting the Electoral College into practice was not without its frustrations, as Johnson describes in the third and fourth chapters of the book. Electors were chosen by states, with each state allowed a number equaling the total of its senators and representatives. High among the early frustrations was the confusing directive that electors cast votes for two people without office designation. This became increasingly difficult to deal with, especially when party identification began to emerge. Passage and

ratification of the 12th Amendment (1803-1804) with its provision that each elector vote for two people, identifying person and office, corrected the situation. Johnson completes the discussion on frustrations with an analysis of the elections of 2000 and 2016, both of which took place in a time the framers of the Constitution could not have imagined with results they could not have anticipated.

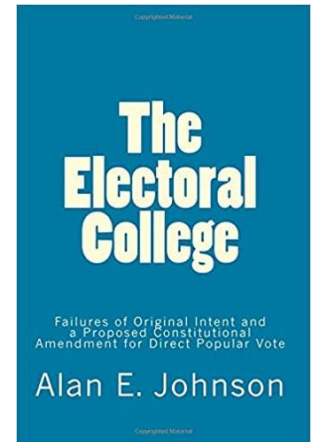


Johnson's discussion of the 2016 election describes what he sees as the flaws in the Electoral College and highlights questions about its ongoing feasibility and credibility. As he writes, "The 2016 election was unique in that it triggered many of the concerns that led the 1787 Constitutional Convention to devise the Electoral College. But the current operation of the Electoral College defeats rather than accomplishes the objectives of the framers and ratifiers of that institution" (112). He provides several examples of what he means by this statement. Rather than protecting the United States from electing a demagogue who colluded with foreign governments, it elected someone who did not fit the framers' description of an honest, knowledgeable, and wise person and rewarded this person's collusion with foreign governments.

Another example involves the role of the electors. Rather than acting wisely, as the founders had envisioned, in exercising independent judgement, especially when faced with the discrepancy in the popular vote and the preparedness and ethics of the candidate who campaigned to the Electoral College, they honored the "winner-take-all" rules and elected the person who, for all practical purposes, lost the election. Johnson summarizes this situation as: "The Electoral College faced its ultimate test and it failed. It elected a man who is the very embodiment of the kind of candidate the founders believed the Electoral College would never allow to become president" (114).

In chapters five and six, Johnson analyzes various options for replacing the Electoral College and then ends the book with suggested wording of an amendment for direct popular vote. His explanation of each section of the proposed amendment clearly defines its purpose; as he notes, the goal of the amendment is to remove the focus of presidential elections from what we now call battleground states in the electoral process to an equal vote for everyone.

Given the upset of the 2016 election and the upheaval and unrest surrounding the presidential election of 2020, Johnson's book is timely and informative. Based on extensive research, it helps the reader understand why and how the Electoral College was developed, the serious concerns and questions its continued use raises, and what a change to direct popular vote could look like. Johnson concedes that any change in electing candidates to the top two offices in the land faces an uphill battle but wonders if, with diligent work, it could occur in the lifetimes of the generation to follow.



~Barbara W. Sommer, M.A., holds degrees from Carleton College and the University of Minnesota and is a public historian and oral historian. She has authored or co-authored 10 books including The Oral History Manual (3rd ed. 2018) and Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota (2008). She serves on local and national boards including the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum (MISF).

The Shift in Education

by Evelyn D. Klein



The year 2020 has been a challenging one for America's schools. In Minnesota it began with equal rights considerations for all students. In a January 9, 2020 article published by the Pioneer Press entitled "Change to education clause is proposed," former supreme court justice, Alan Page, and the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Neel Kashkari, proposed to update Minnesota's article on education by replacing the old clause, dating back to 1857, which required a "uniform system of public schools." The new amendment, by contrast, would guarantee children an "equal right to a quality public education."

By March of the same year, the pandemic changed the way schools have operated and that in an election year. The crises caused a sudden and necessary shift in the delivery of education. Never before has the educational system been impacted so fundamentally in its set-up as with the decision to go to distance learning. In most instances, it requires weeks, months, even years to develop a new teaching program for effective classroom instruction and learning. Yet educators managed to set up this new program within days and weeks. Obviously, it will take time and experience to see where the gaps are, where improvements need to be made, and what works well technologically, educationally, and socially. And as schools switch between in-person, hybrid, and distance learning, opportunities for monitoring growth, usefulness, and shortfalls of distance learning will provide information for improvements, while we try to protect health and well-being of students, teachers, and support staff alike.

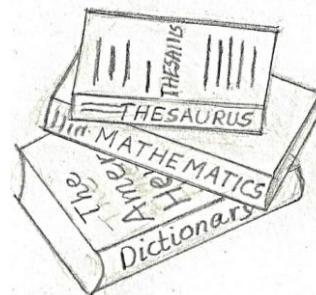
Since its inception, public education has gone through many changes, brought about, in the main, by political, industrial, economic and social considerations and needs in context of a given period in history, creating constant flux in education.

From the beginning, public education has embarked on a long, shifting road, therefore.

Numerous events and issues paved the way in the second half of the 20th century. Increasing industrialization, two world wars, Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, women's movement, the LGBT movement were among major influences making us increasingly aware of our cultural diversity. In the 21st century, the technological revolution has changed the way we see the world and do business. Increasing numbers of immigrants coming from places other than Europe, such as Africa and Asia as well as from south of our border, adding to our existing diversity. They bring varying needs, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and values that add fuel to previous educational needs, all playing out their own individual roles in the classroom. Cultural diversity played a considerable role in mainstream America in the 2018 U. S. elections by bringing increasing numbers of women and minorities, including Native Americans, to Congress and state legislatures. All these influences affect educational directions and practices.

To put these events in perspective, education's arduous journey emerged from a simple model of teaching "reading, writing, and arithmetic," based on a homogeneous notion of society. It included an approach of: 'The teacher will demonstrate; students will complete the task; if they work hard enough, they will get it.' And to a great extent, that was all there was to it.

While for some, this approach may be effective, as a whole however, educators came to realize there are many influences affecting teaching and learning, influences that may not meet the eye of the casual onlooker. In the 20th century, the catchword to capture student participation used to be "motivation." Partly to this end, application of educational psychology to



promote teaching and learning came into practice. It involves consideration of student readiness, stages of development, individual aptitude and interest, conditioning, and learning styles among them. These insights enable teachers to prepare and select materials commensurate with student potential, interest, and readiness to learn. Subsequently, educators found the ability to learn also taps into socio-economic and cultural factors, with home and peer group carrying the greatest influence. Family income and values, work ethic, community, and goals for the future all play important roles. Furthermore, technological advances, applications and changes contribute to changes of curriculum, subject areas, and educational activities and delivery. All these factors combine to make public education an increasingly complex field.

In the second half of the 20th century, education's attempts to deliver a quality education to all students, took on different forms. After the Civil



Rights Movement, it began with busing students to even out diversity. But this did not meet with the expected success.

Then came open classrooms which proved to be more disruptive than helpful. Individual instruction to help students catch up and succeed was popular for a while, until it was deemed discriminatory. Outcome based education seemed a good idea, until school administrations decided they wanted students to graduate on schedule. The four-period day was introduced, requiring major changes in scheduling, creating new problems and was subsequently eliminated. "No child left behind" legislation rewarded schools where students showed the most improvement but, incidentally, penalized other schools for lack of progress, leaving already well performing schools at a major disadvantage.

Probably the most promising results were achieved with open enrollment and charter schools beginning in the late 20th century as an alternative. While this often results in extra responsibility for parents to deliver their students to school, it gives parents and students a choice. And when students can select their program of study and have a choice of classes in their area of interest in addition to requirements, they, more likely, tend to apply themselves and succeed. But charter schools have recently come under dispute.

Another more controversial approach to schooling is privatization, where public funds go to private schools, some of which include religious

schools. However, this model is problematic, because it, potentially, can create a new kind of discrimination and disregards separation of church and state, while still not outperforming traditional public schools.

A third type of innovative school is the language immersion school which focuses on language learning in addition to the required programs of public education, resulting in a kind of bilingual education. This may include, among others, Spanish, Chinese, or German immersion schools. For example, Saint Paul is host to one of the country's largest German immersion schools founded in 2005. Because of its high student success rate, the school has grown to the point where it now has a waiting list for potential enrollees.

Debate and conflict continue the education-go-around, America's favorite political issue. As a result of the Civil Rights Movement, the new aim of schools, after the second half of 20th century, was to cater to a multicultural, gender fair, disability sensitive, LGBT friendly society. Teachers spent hours and days rewriting curriculums and reselecting teaching materials to be more inclusive and representative of the country's diversity. More students could, then, identify with their own racial, ethnic, or cultural groups. Politically correct language emerged and was taught, banning some previously used ethnic, racial and sexual expressions deemed inaccurate, inappropriate, stereotypical, or discriminatory. Words such as 'African American' or 'Native American' were introduced to replace older counterparts, while words like 'humankind' were substituted for 'mankind,' for example. To deal with social and behavioral conflicts, schools turned to restorative justice and non-confrontational problem resolution, new interventions aimed at positive results. Many of these ideas, once new, have since filtered down to the general population, having become part of current politically correct usage and approach.

Other shifts in curriculums and programs have occurred more recently with varying implications. An important step in an updated approach to education is the emphasis of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) in the educational process. Designed to help students succeed after graduation in a technology-oriented world, it also seeks to include more girls in these areas in an important step forward. On the downside, however, absence of many past programs can leave serious gaps in basic life skills of the young. We find elimination of programs like shop and home economics that would offer basic life skills; removal of some world languages in a global society; omission of personal development and brain

stimulating classes like art, creative writing, and cursive writing; lack of student fitness without physical education classes. Most notable in an election year is the absence of civics-oriented classes that educate students sufficiently in the rudiments of a democratic society and such a history. Already 100 years before public schools were officially established in the United States, Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, philosopher and educator said that democracy relies on an educated citizenry.

The shift in education continues as we regard not only changing demographics but changing concepts of family, lifestyles, and working parents in our diverse technological society. Up until the late twentieth century, teachers were designated with the Latin phrase “en loco parentis.” It means the school and particularly teachers assume responsibility of parents while the child is at school. While the phrase was discontinued in the late 1970s, it seems to be making a comeback as we hold schools responsible for protecting students’ civil rights, for example. Furthermore, schools, increasingly, find themselves dealing with social and personal issues confronting their students, including issues previously dealt with in the home, including, personal development issues, peer group issues, bullying, suitable classroom or community conduct, all of which require instructional time. And prompted by varying needs of students, schools have adopted lunch and breakfast programs in the knowledge that an empty belly interferes with the activities of learning. Insufficient sleep by high school age students is also a concern.

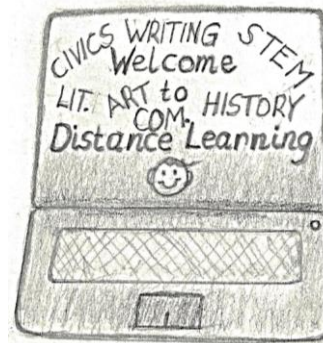
Since these and other issues, not the least of which being class size, affect educational outcomes, the need for support staff, in addition to classroom teachers, is apparent. Reducing class size is important for two reasons. First, the size of the class determines how much individual attention teachers can give each student. Secondly, confining too many students to a limited space, creates an atmosphere of distraction and tension among students, and as research bears out, crowding among people causes conflict.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that educators are dealing with a multitude of needs and issues in addition to teaching subject areas. They are closely related to educational success, and are of a developmental, personal, pedagogical, or cultural nature in this setting of increasing diversity. Consequently, teachers unions frequently find themselves in negotiations with school systems not just for salary increases but on behalf of the students they are serving. In March of 2020 the Associated Press reported the Saint Paul teachers union,

Minnesota’s second largest school district representing 3,600 teachers and support staff, after striking for four days, reached an agreement “that targets resources to areas of greatest need,” according to Superintendent Joe Gothard. The agreement includes more social workers, nurses, intervention specialists, psychologists, and multilingual staff. But this list does not cover all requests. The need for support staff in these various areas is, by no means, unique to the Saint Paul Public schools but reflective of other school districts as well. The Chicago Teachers Union reached a similar agreement relating to support staff in 2019, according to the Associated Press, March 13, 2020, for example.

As we have seen, the role of education keeps shifting and is constantly in flux. But it’s a good thing. Part of the strength of America’s education system is our acknowledgment and regard for the human condition as well as the educational needs of our students. That is something to be proud of. Part of the shift of our schools is the system itself. Gone are the days when the teacher in charge arrived at school to fire up the stove before students arrived, taught the lessons, and cleaned up after students left. However, over the years, schools have become increasingly bureaucratized to the point where the business model has taken over, and teachers’ classroom expertise, experience, and professional considerations are often

lost in upper levels of school operation. And this despite college or university degrees, teaching licenses, continuing education work and participation, and daily classroom experience and management.



The latest shift in education, distance learning, takes us to the next phase. While we will, eventually, overcome the pandemic, aspects of distance learning are surely here to stay, because they offer great possibilities for education’s future. Distance learning can potentially expand on in-person instruction and extra-curricular areas. It can revitalize home schooling, even replace it, be an alternative to physical access, particularly for disabled or students recovering from illness, or even for inclement weather days. It can bring in enrichments from other areas of the state, nation, or world. Possibilities are seemingly endless.

America’s preoccupation with education, always at the forefront, goes to the core of who we are.

The public schools are the headwaters of our identity and culture streaming into the American river.

~Evelyn D. Klein, author, speaker
artist, and independent scholar, has a B.S. in
Secondary Education and an M.S. in the

Teaching of English. She taught in the public schools, at Century College and the Loft Literary Center. She is the author of three books of poetry, prose and illustrations. Two of her books are in the Minnesota Historical Society's permanent library collection.

Inspiration

by Evelyn D. Klein

During this pandemic
Zoom has become
our refuge
our meeting place
the next best thing
to being there
to hold on
to what or who
is needed
to what or who
is dear
while we wait
for magic
of science
to rescue us
from ourselves
and the virus.
~***~

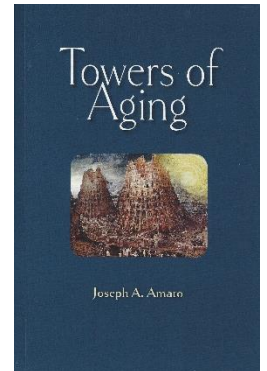
Remembering

Brian Mulhern 1949-2020

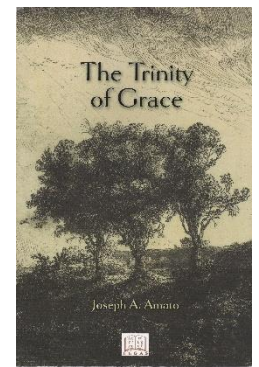
Longtime MISF member, Brian J. Mulhern died August 30. He had been ill for some time, and his death was expected. Brian was active for a long time as the archivist of the Scholars. Our recent book, *Scholars Without Walls*, owes some of its information about early activities to his collection of articles about MISF. Although he had not been active for some years, Brian will be remembered for his quiet voice and wry sense of humor.

Member Publications

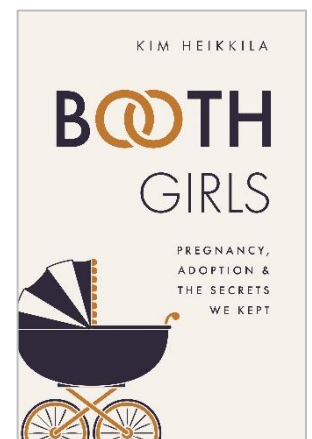
Joseph A. Amato.
Towers of Aging.
Crossings Press:
Minnetonka, MN,
2020.



Joseph A. Amato.
The Trinity of Grace.
Legas: Mineola,
New York, 2020.

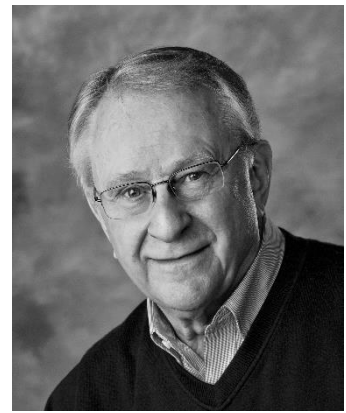


Kim Heikkila.
*Booth Girls:
Prenancy,
Adoption &
the Secrets
We Kept.*



Why Thoreau?

by Dale R. Schwie



As I considered the beginning and evolution of my interest in Henry David Thoreau, I was often reminded of a quote by his friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote the following in his journal in 1873: “Be a little careful about your Library. Do you foresee what you will do with it? Very little to be sure. But the real question is, what it will do with you? You will come here & get books that will open your eyes, & your ears, & your curiosity, and turn you inside out or outside in.” I can relate to this today as I think about my library of Thoreau’s works and the influence his writing had on my life. Why Thoreau?

Several years ago, I was at a social gathering, where I was engaged in a conversation about Henry David Thoreau. Austin McLean, Special Collections Librarian at the University of Minnesota, was curious about my interest in Thoreau, and he asked me, “Why Thoreau?” I don’t recall my answer, but he replied: “He speaks to you.” That was a simple answer and, perhaps, the best one.

Since then, I have given Austin’s response a lot of thought and the following is a longer answer to the question. Like many, whether in high school or college, I was introduced to Thoreau with *Walden* and his essay, *Resistance to Civil Government*, better known as *Civil Disobedience*. Later, in the early seventies, I renewed my interest in Thoreau and began to read his other essays, such as *Life Without Principle*, *Walking*, his correspondence with his friend, Harrison Blake, and what some consider his finest writing, *The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau*, with over two million words which he began writing in 1837 and continued until his death in 1862. Although I have read Thoreau’s travel writings, such as his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, and later works, including *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, and *A Yankee in Canada*, the earlier mentioned are my favorites. I discovered Thoreau’s writings live up to his standard that “...on the first perusal, plain common sense should appear; on the second, severe truth; and on the third, beauty; and having these warrants for its

depth and reality, we may then enjoy the beauty for evermore” (letter to Emerson, July 8, 1843).

Since my first reading of *Walden*, my Thoreau library has grown into a fine collection of books by and about him. It includes first editions of his major works and two manuscript pages. I may not have followed Emerson’s advice about being careful of my library, but I have enjoyed the common sense, severe truth, and the beauty in Thoreau’s writing. The following are some of the ways in which he speaks to me personally.

Saying that Thoreau speaks to me doesn’t mean I live as he did or always live up to his high standards and lofty ideals. I do my best, but I keep in mind that in *Walden*, Thoreau provides a pressure relief valve that many overlook in their first reading. “I would not have anyone adopt *my* mode of living on any account; for beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself.” He continues with what I consider his endorsement and plea for diversity: “I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own* way, and not his father’s or his mother’s or his neighbor’s instead” (*Walden*, 71). In another statement about diversity and finding one’s own way, he wrote: “This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre” (*Walden*, 11). That line applies to the ways in which Thoreau speaks to me, and why it was difficult to decide which examples to use; there may be many, but for this article I chose four areas that are very personal and meaningful to me. They are, small houses and simplicity, where I live, the natural environment, and the people I have met.

Small houses: I have always enjoyed Thoreau’s description of his Walden Pond house: My dwelling was small, and I could hardly entertain an echo in it; but it seemed larger for being a single apartment and remote from neighbors. All the

attractions of a house were concentrated in one room; it was a kitchen, chamber, parlor, and keeping room; and whatever satisfaction parent or child, master or servant derive from living in a house, I enjoyed it all. (*Walden*, 243)



This quote appeals to me because for the first seven years of my life, I lived in a basement home in Richfield. It measured 24 x 26 and had cement block walls and no plumbing. There was a hand pump for water and the outhouse was in the garage. The only walls

were quarter-inch plywood that separated my parents' bedroom from the rest of the area. A curtain hung in the doorway for privacy. There was no need for a lot of storage, because my parents had so little. Before I was born, and my brother was about two or three, they lost all of their possession in a fire that destroyed the Bloomington farmhouse where they lived with relatives. Although today I don't live in what I consider a small house, I still look upon them and think of Thoreau's words. My early experiences in the basement home left an impression on me and are the reasons Thoreau's experiment in simple living resonates with me. Today, the dipper we used for water hangs near the wet bar in our guest room and the small, handed-down oriental rug that was used in the basement, now cleaned and restored, is in our dining room.

Where I live: Thoreau lived his whole life in Concord, MA. He was born there on the 12th of July, 1817 and as he wrote: "in the most estimable place in all the world, and in the nick of time too." Except for seven years of my life, I have lived in Richfield, and since 1971, only five blocks from where I grew up. I didn't plan it that way; it just worked out. As Thoreau's statement on his small house resonates with me, so does this passage about living where you are. It's from his journal for November 1, 1858.

Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from *here!* When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer *here....* How many things can you go away

from? They see the comet from the northwest coast just as plainly as we do, and the same stars through its tail. Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. *Here*, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is all the best and all the worst you can imagine. What more do you want?

To me it's about finding my Walden through, as poet Mary Oliver wrote, "...the slow and difficult trick of living..." and finding it in Richfield.

Nature and the environment: Thoreau's environmental writings have been a significant inspiration for me. His famous quote, "In Wildness is the preservation of the world" is permanently etched in my mind and is the rationale behind my own views of nature and the environment. In the 1970s and 80s, my wife, Kay, and I purchased some undeveloped land near Balsam Lake, Wisconsin. The first purchase was twenty-five acres. Five of those were open land and the rest was wooded. The second property was a nearby forty-one-acre pasture that overlooks the Apple River. Our intention was to keep the properties undeveloped and manage them as wildlife habitats. We didn't consider ourselves owners of the land, just temporary caretakers who wished to see these few acres preserved as natural areas. We planted pine trees and apple trees on the twenty-five acres and later, working with the Wisconsin DNR, we converted most of the open five-acre field to prairie grass. We kept the forty-one-acre site as pastureland and enjoyed it for hiking and snowshoeing. For a while, the neighbor's horses used it for grazing.

In 2016 we sold that property to another neighbor who owns the land abutting ours on both sides of the river-facing portion. With that sale, we accomplished a goal we had planned on pursuing on our own, designating the property as part of the Western Wisconsin Land Trust. Instead, the new owner, who already has over 200 acres in that program, will do the same for the river property, creating over a mile of protected shoreline. We still own the title to the twenty-five-acre property, and our plan to preserve that is in the works. As more development moves into the area, I feel we will have done our small part in answering Thoreau's call for the

preservation of natural areas that he believed "...have a high use which dollars and cents never represent."

The people I have met: I was drawn to Thoreau by his writings, and the benefits I received from reading them extend beyond the intellectual. What else did my library do to me? It introduced me to other Thoreau enthusiasts and scholars. They come from around the globe and all walks of life. Every year in July, the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering takes place in Concord, Massachusetts. My wife, Kay, and I attended them for many years. Our first trip to Concord was in 1976. We went there as tourists interested in the Concord authors and the history of the area, and we returned because of the people we met. We always thought of the Annual Gatherings as reunions, where we got together with old friends and made new ones. In 2006 I served my first of eight years on the Thoreau

Society Board of Directors. That required attending two meetings a year in Concord, one in July after the Annual Gathering and the other in March. I didn't miss a meeting.

Why Thoreau? He still speaks to me with plain common sense, truth, and beauty. That, and the friendship of other Thoreau enthusiasts and scholars have enriched my life in ways I never imagined when we first visited Concord.

~Dale Schwie merged his career in professional photography with his avocational interest in Henry David Thoreau. This combination resulted in the 2017 publication of his book, Taking Sides with the Sun: Landscape Photographer Herbert W. Gleason, A Biography. Dale is a long-time member and past board member of MISF.

Virtual Meeting of NCIS

by Lucy Brusic

September 14, Steve Miller and I were invited to attend a virtual meeting of the National Council of Independent Scholars (NCIS). The meeting, set up by Barbara Ellertson, the Partner Liaison of NCIS, involved eleven scholars from Australia and New Zealand to California, in a cleverly time-shifted gathering that allowed all of us to attend in times that were not the middle of the night in anyone's time zone. It was 4 p.m. in the Central time zone, but 11 p.m. in France and 7 a.m. the next day in Australia.

I represented MISF; I think we were invited because we had recently published our book, *Scholars Without Walls*.

After introductions, we discussed how COVID was affecting our organizations. One of the interesting observations was the way in which Zoom had made it possible for older members to attend meetings remotely. The Australian group had gone so far as to spend three months making sure that all of its members had a Zoom connection and felt comfortable using it. They also make sure they have a Zoom facilitator on-line for each meeting.

Another group has started a collaborative study on "Getting Through a Pandemic."

A third group was encouraging collaborative research projects using Zoom, incorporating members of different ages. Their success was limited, in part, because younger scholars are not necessarily interested in working with older researchers. All the scholars lamented a lack of success in broadening their age appeal. On the other hand, they were glad to see that Zoom had broadened their membership range geographically.

The last part of the meeting was a discussion of how NCIS might help partner groups both financially and

in other ways. This led to a general discussion of the challenges of moderating the boundary between intellectually curious "lay" members and academic members engaged in formal scholarship.

The group will meet again in January. On the agenda will be a discussion of how to appeal to younger scholars.

~Lucy Brusic, MISF Board

The Minnesota Scholar

The Minnesota Scholar welcomes submissions. We are particularly interested in topical issues and current events. We welcome essays, reviews, and memoirs. Articles should be no longer than 1500 to 1800 words. No second parti submissions. For complete guidelines contact editor.

Deadline for the next issue is Friday, May 7, 2021.

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Editorial Board: Lucy Brusic, Evelyn D. Klein

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Programs & Meetings



June 27, 2020, Zoom Meeting

Bold Vision: ERA 2020

Presented by Betty Folliard

The honorable Betty Folliard is a well-known thought leader and founder of ERA Minnesota with a well established record of public service and award-winning work. On occasion of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, she explained that as of 2020, thirty-eight states have passed the ERA. It was big news that Virginia is the 38th state to ratify the ERA in 2020.

It is the first time in years that the national press woke up to the unfolding story of the ERA. It comes with the resurgence of women's rights in recent events, with the MeToo# Movement and the Women's March after the 2016 election. Its scant 24 words mirror the 19th amendment. The ERA states: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

From the early beginnings of the demand for women's suffrage in 1848 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Motts to the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 by Alice Paul and the addition of the amendment in 1940, it passed Congress in 1972 and was subsequently sent to the states for ratification. Congress, then, extended the deadline to 1982.

The question that begs asking is: Why should there be an arbitrary deadline to the passage of the ERA

when there is no such deadline for similar legislation but not involving women? At this time, lawsuits are pending addressing the deadline issue, stipulating that the time limits are unconstitutional and that each requirement has been fulfilled. Putting a deadline on the ERA reveals a double standard.

Betty pointed out that until we pass the ERA, women will be treated unequally, that they were intentionally left out of the Constitution, because patriarchy is where men have the power. But in the end, Betty said "All issues are women's issues." She feels that because laws are fickle and uneven, the ERA will provide consistency. It is interesting to note that most western countries have some equality of sex provision or sex equality on their books.

The speaker noted that suffragists face a system of repression, and the right for women to vote was a one-hundred-year battle. She noted that we are now the suffragists. We are on the right side of justice. Women need to overcome the cognitive bias, because equal means equal. We will prevail; after all, women are 51% of the population.

The presentation was enlightening and well received, answering many of the attendees' questions.

September 26, 2020

Annual meeting

September 26, 2020, MISF held its first "live" meeting since the beginning of the quarantine and the coronavirus epidemic. We met in the Soldiers and Pioneers cemetery located in Minneapolis at Cedar and Lake for an annual meeting and a very fine talk.

The first order of business was our (postponed) annual meeting, over which president Steve Miller presided with dispatch. He gave a brief report of the programs, past and future of the Scholars and concluded with the observation that, in spite of the pandemic, we had managed to publish *The Minnesota Scholar*, maintain the website and Facebook pages, and hold board meetings and general meetings on Zoom.

The treasurer reported that we had \$3,700 in

income and donations for this year, of which \$2,000 was spent on the journal and meeting expenses. Emily Pollack also pointed out that Give to the Max, in which we participate, is coming up soon.

An election returned Lucy Brusic, Evelyn Klein, and Mike Woolsey to the board for another term.

Finally, we voted on a constitutional amendment to make it possible for the president to serve another two-year term in the absence of candidates for this position. The amendment was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously, so that Steve Miller will legally be able to be president for another two years.

Lucy Brusic

Saving Lives: Stories from Minneapolis Pioneers and Soldiers Memorial Cemetery

Presented by Sue Hunter Weir

Sue Hunter Weir, president of the Cemetery Preservation Committee for Soldiers and Pioneers Cemetery, presented her much anticipated talk. Weir has been working on preservation and information for the cemetery for about 20 years. (Only a few of the Scholars in attendance at the meeting had ever been to the cemetery, so attention was rapt.)

First Weir gave us a few numbers. The Soldiers and Pioneers Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in Minneapolis. When it was founded in 1853, it was way out in the country on private land belonging to the Layman family. (The first grave is that of a child and the theory is that the land was given for the burial of the child.) Minneapolis has grown out around the cemetery and it is now on Lake Street in the "heart" of Minneapolis. Twenty-two thousand people are buried in the cemetery, including over 10,000 children under the age of 10. Nonetheless, only about one out of ten graves is marked.

Then Weir described various trends in the history of the graves. Some former slaves are buried here. Four soldiers from the war of 1812 are resident. There are 170 Civil War veterans. Immigration trends become apparent in the 1870s, as Swedes and Norwegians began to emigrate.

There were more Swedes than Norwegians in 1866, but more Norwegians in 1870. Johnson and Anderson were the most common last names.

Weir also said that there were 46 graves of women who had committed suicide, mostly because their husbands had died and left them without support.

Weir explained that the cemetery was closed to new burials in 1919 by members of the Layman family who wanted to develop it. At that time, the bodies of 5000 people were moved out. However, the dismantling of the cemetery was not acceptable to the public. Eventually, a letter-writing campaign raised enough money that the cemetery bought the whole park from the Layman family.

At present, a very few people still hold usable title to lots through family connections but, otherwise there are no new graves.

The cemetery has a caretaker, a city employee, who is on call for six months of the year. The cemetery is also used for neighborhood events such as movies and plays.

Weir writes a column monthly about the cemetery for the local paper, *The Alley*. For further information visit www.friendsofthecemetery.org.

~Lucy Brusic

The following meetings were held over Zoom.

October 24, 2020

Maritime Heritage Minnesota: Who We Are and What We Do

Presented by Ann Merriman and Christopher Olson

Maritime Heritage Minnesota was founded by Ann Merriman, PhD., and Christopher Olson, M.A., in 2005 in Saint Paul Minnesota. They run the non-profit out of their house and are the only underwater archeologists working in Minnesota, winning awards for their work. They hold two underwater archeological licenses from the Office of the State Archeologist in Minnesota.

MHM's mission is to document, conserve, preserve, and when necessary, excavate these finite cultural resources, where the welfare of the artifact is paramount. MHM is concerned with protecting our underwater and maritime sites – our shared maritime history – for their own benefit in order for all Minnesotans to gain the knowledge that can be obtained through their study. MHM's study of wrecks does not include the removal of artifacts or damaging the sites in any way. In the winter, they concentrate on work that does not include diving. A record of their finds can be downloaded on-line.

MHM focuses their archeological projects primarily on Minnesota suburban lakes with six wrecks found just recently and to a lesser extent on outstate lakes. The areas of their finds include Lake Minnetonka, White Bear Lake, Lake Como, among others. In their underwater and shoreline work they use sonar, to locate wrecks. Out of the ninety-one wreck sites identified, they are working on 73. On these wreck sites, they found series of canoes, including some birch bark canoes, the oldest among them 1,000 years old.

Major wreck sites located include a number of fascinating finds:

- The well-preserved steamboat wreck, the Andy Gibson Wreck.
- A probable wanigan, the Red Mill Wreck.
- A vessel that burned and sank in 1898, the Swan wreck.

Among other wrecks, in Lake Minnetonka the archeologists noted 86 known wrecks.

- On the site of the Big Island Amusement Park, they located the steamboat peer, Veteran camp, rubble pile site and park building in the abandoned park. The Casino is still standing but in ruins and many of the old lampposts have been repurposed.
- Other wrecks found were, small wooden wrecks, run-abouts, utilities, a cabin cruiser, an

amphibious houseboat, an aluminum inboard utility wreck, a Ramaley family motor boat, Alumacraft wrecks, a Crestliner, Lund and Larson aluminum fishing boat wrecks, among many other finds.

It takes 50 years for a find to be considered historic. In 1959 finds were designated with registration numbers.

The presentation was received enthusiastically by the approximately 16 people attending this Zoom membership meeting.

November 21, 2020

Sinclair Lewis: The Centenary of *Main Street*

Presented by Patrick Coleman

On the 100th anniversary of the publication of Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street*, the Minnesota Historical Society, under the direction of Patrick Coleman, is preparing an exhibit due to open in spring of 2021.

Born in Sauk Center Minnesota, in 1885 Lewis lost his mother at a young age. But his stepmother nurtured and read to him. He was educated at Yale and after graduation, he worked as reporter and editor for a number of magazines and a publishing house.

Author of 23 novels and short stories, his work is still relevant today. Many of the issues exposed in these books have not been resolved as yet. When *Main Street* was first published, it sold 100,000 copies and became a best seller. The book is a satirical account of small-town life and parallels, in some ways, the kind of thoughts that prevail even today. After *Main Street*, he became rich and dominated the literary world with prizes. However, Lewis refused the Pulitzer Prize for *Arrowsmith*, a novel that contains many parallels to today's pandemic and political

issues, but publishers promoted the book as a winner just the same. The novel *Kingsblood Royal* became the best book of the year. Among his noteworthy novels are *Babbitt* and *Elmer Gantry*. In 1930 Lewis was the first American winner of the Nobel Prize in literature which he did accept.

Sinclair Lewis' life was influenced by strong women, such as his stepmother and wives, women who sought fulfillment in their own right and who found their way into some of his novels. Eventually, he met Marcella Powers, 36 years his junior who became his companion. Lewis died in Rome of complications from alcoholism and was buried with his parents.

Patrick Coleman's presentation was enthusiastically received by 21 attendees over Zoom.

Mr. Coleman is head acquisitions librarian at the Minnesota Historical Society. He served as president of the Library of Congress's Minnesota Center for the Book Arts. He received the Kay Sexton Award in 2009. He serves as Executive Leadership Fellow at the University of Minnesota's Center for Integrative Leadership.

Upcoming Membership Programs

For the coming year, meetings will continue to be scheduled over Zoom, at this time. A link will be provided to members and interested participants the week leading up to the meeting. Meetings are generally held on 4th Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.

January 23, 2021

The Electoral College – Time for a Change?

Presenter: Alan E. Johnson

Alan Johnson will address history of and proposed alterations to the Electoral College. His discussion includes intentions of the 1787 framers of the Electoral College, original intent, adoption of 12th Amendment, the present of the Electoral College, and a proposed constitutional amendment for election by direct popular vote, among other relevant topics.

Alan E. Johnson, retired lawyer and independent historian and philosopher, is author of *The Electoral College*, 2018 and *The First American Founder: Roger Williams and Freedom of Conscience*, 2015, and other writings in the fields of history, law, political science, and philosophy. He is currently preparing a philosophical trilogy with working titles of "Free Will and Human Life," "Reason and Human Ethics," and "Reason and Human Government."

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February 27, 2021

Mapping Prejudice

Presenters: Denise Pike, Marguerite Mills

Denise Pike and Margaret Mills, local historians and researchers, will present their work which builds on the research by The Mapping Prejudice Project to illuminate the history of racial covenants in Minneapolis. Their work and research were funded by the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum.

Denise Pike will discuss creation of the traveling exhibit, *Displaced*. *Displaced* connects the history of racial covenants to a broader conversation about Indigenous and Black displacement, racial housing discrimination, and lasting racial inequities in broader Twin Cities communities. She will also discuss creation of a community workshop guide to assist local communities.

Marguerite Mills will discuss the digital map of the *Displaced* exhibit. In collaboration with Mapping Prejudice colleagues, Mills researched roots of an emerging Black community in southwest Minneapolis. Her work reveals Indigenous dispossession and Black displacement as nodes on the same trajectory of white supremacy. The work grew out of partnership with MISF.

March 27, 2021

Taking the Fight to Parkinson's: Rock Steady Boxing

Presenters: Kim Heikkila, Katie Grove

Recalling former heavyweight champion Muhammed Ali at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, his masked face, shaking arm, and stiff gait, symbols of Parkinson's disease, many people assume his illness was a direct result of years in the ring. Ironically, boxing is now routinely prescribed for people with Parkinson's. Rock Steady Boxing (RSB) is a non-contact boxing program that helps people with Parkinson's through intense exercise, camaraderie, and good fun. Established in Indianapolis in 2006, RSB has 900 affiliate programs throughout the world, including three in the metro area.

Kim Heikkila, Ph.D., has been training people with Parkinson's to box for almost five years and helped establish the first RSB program in Minnesota. Kim is also an independent scholar, oral historian and author. MISF supported her work on the book *Booth Girls: Pregnancy, Adoption, and the Secrets we Kept* (2021) with two Minnesota Legacy grants.

Dr. Katie Grove is coach and program co-director at Rock Steady Boxing, Saint Paul. She was athletic trainer at Indiana University, athletic training program director in the School of Public Health. She was inducted in the National Athletic Trainers' Hall of Fame and received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Montana, where she had completed her bachelor's degree.

April 24, 2021

Program to be determined.

May 22, 2021

Ginny Hanson Poetry Day: The Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke

Presenter: Evelyn D. Klein

A major modern poet, Rilke's poems are still popular, influential, and frequently quoted as they extend to the English-speaking world and the United States. Evelyn Klein will discuss Rilke's life, creativity, and inspirations in his extensive career, that included poetry as well as prose, where he often voiced his religious philosophies in his art-inspired poetry collections. Klein will include a glimpse of the man behind the poetry himself.

Evelyn D. Klein has an M.S. in the Teaching of English and has taught on the secondary level in the public schools, at Century College, and The Loft Literary Center. She is author of three books of poetry, essays, and illustrations, two of which have been placed in the Minnesota Historical Society's permanent library collection..

June 26, 2021

Annual Meeting

Program to be determined.

