

The Minnesota Scholar

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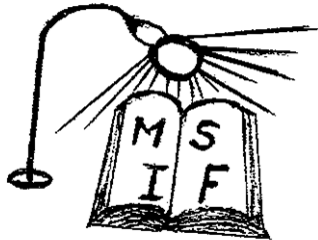


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Perspective

What Will Be New Normal?

by Lucy Brusic

Between 1918 and 1920, the Spanish flu killed 675,000 people and rearranged the world. In the United States, schools were closed, and people stayed home, just as they have recently. However, since the world was focused on the First World War, which seemed to be a greater threat than the Spanish influenza, the influenza epidemic of 1918-1920 disappeared from conversation and eventually from collective memory.

I wonder if the same thing will happen with the Coronavirus. Will we remember it in ten or twenty years? Or will it pass into history leaving a few restrictions and some new learnings about disease...and many people in graveyards.

I suppose I heard about the "Spanish" flu when I studied American history, but I assumed (as most of us did) that medical science had taken us well beyond such devastating illnesses with polio shots, flu shots, and pneumonia shots. It seemed that we had found the path to continued health.

Then came the Coronavirus.

The past

My parents were both alive, though teenagers, during the 1918 influenza epidemic. Neither of them ever talked to me about it.

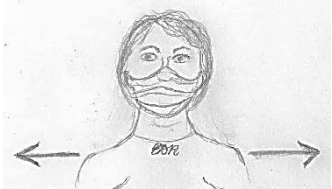
My mother lived in Monett, Missouri, in the Ozarks, not far from where the "Spanish influenza" was first identified in an army camp in Kansas. She was 11. I have a small album of her school pictures. I am guessing that two of the photos, probably those from which she is "missing," were taken during the flu year, but there is no mention of the disease in her scrapbook.

My father, who grew up in the Smoky Mountains, was 13-14 in the flu years. He never mentioned the flu to me at all.

On the other hand, my husband's grandmother (Mary Brzuszek) in Derby, Connecticut, died in 1918 (age 28) after an illness of one or two days leaving a five-year-old boy and a two-year-old boy (who became my husband's father). I have a "funeral" picture of the father and the two boys. Mary was a recent immigrant from Poland; she is buried in an unmarked grave in Derby. No one in my husband's family seemed to connect Mary's death to the epidemic until I started to research it.

The present and the future

So my question is how long will we remember the events of 2020/2021 when we tell the stories of our lives to our children and grandchildren. How long will we remember that more than a half million people died before we got a vaccine? How long will we remember the intense—even violent—resistance to wearing masks and social distancing? How long will we remember the public refusal to believe that we had to protect ourselves to protect others or the indifference that this flu has caused and continues to cause in economic and social spheres?



Right now, looking forward, we can also ask if we have learned anything from this year of isolation. Bob and I have walked in our neighborhood almost every day since the epidemic began in March 2020. Although we are wearing masks as are most people walking toward us or past us (we don't walk fast), people are more aware of us and we of them. Many smile (a mask does not hide a smile) and move into the street so we do not have to get off the sidewalk. Motorists are watching walkers and have developed a habit of indicating by a hand wave that the pedestrian should walk first. These are good things.

On the other hand, I sense a terrible impatience to "get back to normal"—a general impatience to meet in person, or to shop, or to sing. I am not so impatient. I am finding that I do not want to hurry back to the old way of life: I like the relaxed pace, the fact that I do not have to get dressed up; the fact that I do not have to rush from one meeting to another; that I can attend a class on Zoom without having to drive across the city. I like the fact that if I am "zooming" a meeting that becomes slightly boring, I can just turn off the computer

Now, I wonder if we will ever get back to the old normal. It sounds as though the threats of new viruses and the difficulty of getting a significant portion (80+% of the world population) vaccinated will mean that the threat of illness will hang on into next year and perhaps longer. Here, it is worth remembering that the Spanish flu had several surges as apparently will Covid.

Setting aside the question of when it will be over, I am wondering what we will have learned when it is all over. Cue speculative history, which historians

avoid, though commentators can indulge.

What institutions will survive? Will the pace of life speed up or stay relaxed? Will we go back to year-round school? Will people come back to church? To meetings? To stores? To plays or concerts?

Right now, it seems to me that the American way of life is very resilient. We have developed some pretty good coping mechanisms in the past year. We have developed a greater sense of the community we live in. I am much more aware of the routines and habits of my neighbors, as I assume they are of mine.

Still, in my research about the flu of 1918, I found many articles about medical effects, but only one about psychological aftereffects. This article cited is a doctoral thesis "A Cruel Wind: America Experiences Pandemic Influenza 1918-1920" by Dorothy Ann Pettit. This thesis was written in 1976; complete citations are prohibited. I have paraphrased the parts I find instructive.

The author cites the psychological effects of the influenza. Victims were likely to be argumentative, grumpy, and hopeless. She suggests that the Red Scare of the 1930s resulted from this common quarrelsomeness. She goes on to wonder whether the race riots and strikes in the 1930s were an after-effect of the irritability left over from the flu. She goes so far as to suggest that minds as well as bodies need to heal from massive communal illnesses.

I wonder if we are in such a place right now — quick to pick fights because we have not recovered from the flu and unable to move forward without some conscious healing exercise. Time will tell, especially if anyone takes the time to look back and reflect.

Reflections

I began writing this article in February 2021, revising it weekly according to the waves of hope or despair in articles I was reading. My conclusion changed about once a week. I realize now that we have no idea how our lives will settle down after this pandemic. How long will we be masked? Will we ever use cash again? Will Zoom remain part of our lives? Are new political initiatives a response to the threat of Covid? What change will come as we rebuild after Covid? I leave these questions for the reader, knowing that by the time this article appears, there may be a whole new set of questions and possibly new problems to be solved.

Incidentally, an excellent resource on the 1918 epidemic is *The Great Influenza: The Story of*

the Deadliest Pandemic in History by John M. Barry
(Penguin, 2004).

*Lucy Brusic is a writer and a hand weaver.
She is the author or co-author of five books*

*under her own name and the editor or
designer of at least a dozen books written by
other people. She is the former editor of this
journal.*

Nine Pandemic Ways of Thinking

Evelyn D. Klein



The lockdown turns home into a fortress,
With only virtual admittance, where we rule.

Essentials allow us access to the once public domain
For the sake of food, healthcare needs, maintenance.

We wash hands of the virus, like of our world,
Family, friends and every outside activity and more.

Face masks accord stylish new accessories,
Insuring our mystique in public places.

Social distancing introduces a new dance,
Three side steps mean I do, no steps I don't.

Elbow bump tempts our connection replacing
a handshake in the dance's whirlabout maneuver.

Large gatherings celebrate super spreader events
Among the entitled, the believers, the fun seekers.

Covid-19 does not discriminate between parties,
religions,
It just circulates between countries and mutates.

Vaccine to the rescue, can open the country again,
But not minds of disbelievers, doubters, skeptics.

*Evelyn Klein, editor of TMS, is an author,
speaker, artist and prize-winning poet whose poetry
and articles appear in numerous publications. Her
books include From Here Across the Bridge, Once
upon a Neighborhood, and Seasons of Desire. Her
poem "Quarantine Companions" will appear in the
RCL anthology This Was 2020.*



The more you lie the easier it gets

(Ancient adage)

by Mary Treacy

Yes, lying gets easier – while those who hear, read and are influenced by lies try desperately to keep up with the deluge. Lying by any other name (e.g. disinformation) is rampant in this Era of Prevarication. Young people are overwhelmed – often ill-equipped to cope, much less counter disinformation with the Truth.

Scholars, whose intellectual life depends on truth, are in a unique position to help students learn their way through the maze of misinformation and distortion of facts, aka lies. Scholars have the experience to show young people the ways in which truth is a powerful tool in the ongoing war with disinformation, falsehoods, outright lies by any other name. Independent Scholars, working with individuals or groups of young people, can breathe life into the abstract concept of truth. By direct confrontation with individuals, advertisers, politicians and other overt purveyors of misinformation, Scholars can shed light on the danger of disinformation. Young people can equip themselves with tools that ferret out the lies by focusing on facts – facts that elude those individuals and entities that purport to speak for a host of institutions ranging from advertisers to government of, by and for the people.

To their credit, educators have struggled desperately to shape a curriculum that encompasses the many facets of truth. Perhaps the most common term in education is “information literacy.” Another frequently used pedagogical concept is “critical thinking.” Articles on these and related topics abound in the literature; a selection is included in the appended bibliography.

Heavy, but essential stuff. Here’s one snappy proposal to lighten the load: Recognizing that young learners might find the philosophical foundations of prevarication overkill, there are pedagogical strategies that border on “fun.” Consider, for example, the game of “Liar,

Liar Pants on Fire” a time-honored game that gets at the same universal truth. In fact, young searchers for truth may discover that their elders identify with the originators of the phrase itself.

To bridge the generation gap, Scholars might introduce young learners to a short but informative essay cited below. The brief article suggests that the “Liar, liar” term has been around a long time. It quotes Barry Popik, a linguist who specializes in slang and proverb. Popik writes that “as early as the 1400s people would search each other out using the phrase “liar, liar, lick-dish?” the idea being – according to one proverb dictionary – that the accused will “lie as fast as a dog will lick a dish.” When Popik delved into the complete phrase in June of 2010 for his etymology blog, *The Big Apple*, he found a collection of English naval ballads from 1840, featuring a short poem that seems to come from this lineage. The ditty links two of the main aspects, lying and fire: “Liar, liar, lick spit/turn about the candlestick,” so that it reads. “What’s good for liar? Brimstone and fire.”

Thus, the appropriate phrase for young truth-enthusiasts who encounter mistruths comes to its modern form, the furtive call out to the purveyor of misinformation – “Liar, liar, pants on fire”. If the charge is unfamiliar to the prevaricator, it will soon be playground parlance for the young learner. If the charge is unfamiliar to the prevaricator, it will be playground parlance for the young learner.

The true role of the Independent Scholar is to understand the history of the “Liar, liar” charge and, even more, to share with the young learner the implicit implications of the characterization. It’s safer than trash talk, scholarly in tone, equally satisfying to the learner who recognizes and values truth – and who has little time and few words for the liars whose pants (or other outerwear) may well be metaphorically on fire. The young person has had his or her say; the liar is called out; and with any luck the truth will out!

The fire is metaphorical – the truth is in the charge *per se*. The falsehood is silenced in words that an Independent Scholar has taught a young learner for whom “Liar, liar, pants on fire!” is simply a shorthand way of stomping out misinformation, the insidious threat to scholarship and to those who would prefer the truth. Lies distort truth, often for corrupt purposes. It takes a degree of perceptive skepticism to spot a lie, courage to call out the liar, and strength to call out the liars.



Calling out liars and recognizing truth is the challenge of the Information Age. Independent Scholars are experienced seekers of truth. Scholars recognize the power of truth and thus share wisdom, touched with a bit of perceptive paranoia gleaned from experience. The goal is to share with young learners the power of information – and the danger of lies by any

other name. The cryptic "Liar, liar" charge makes it a game for young learners to exercise their own power to identify and silence flagrant liars. As a plus, the sassy verbal tool will empower the learner with a convenient phrase guaranteed to put a liar in her or his proper place.

As for the Independent Scholar, the plus is the chance to exercise the skill of critical thinking, to recognize the power of Truth, and to understand a convenient phrase guaranteed to put a liar in his or her proper place.

Cara Giaimo: "All the lies about the origins of 'Liar, liar, pants on fire: a common phrase with a long, deceptive history.'" *Pants Week*, September 18, 2017.

Bonus factoid: Should the Scholar wonder? Yes, there is a Greek god of truth – Aletheia was the spirit of truth and sincerity, her Roman name was Veritas. Aletheia’s opposites were Dolos, the god of trickery, Apate, the goddess of deception, and all the Pseudologpoi, the gods of lies. In Greek mythology Apate was the personification of deceit; her mother was MYX, the personification of night, whose Roman equivalent was Fraus (as in “fraud”) and her male counterpart was Dolos, demon of trickery.

Mary Treacy, writer and researcher, has an M.S. in Library Science. Now retired, she was Director of Metronet, a coalition of 600+ libraries in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, MN Coalition on Government Information, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and library supervisor at Zayed University, United Arab Emirates. She served as volunteer on the MN State Board of Education, with St. Catherine University Alumnae Council, and Minneapolis City Council Advisory Committee on Aging.

Scholarly Reflections

Discovering the Future: A Minnesota Independent Scholars Exploration

by Tom Abeles

In recent times, some not so clever apes broke into the cookie jar filled with fossil fuels and have been having a party ever since. But it’s not just the fossil fuels; today, it’s the entire resources of a finite resourced planet.

It has been stated that for humans, intelligence may not be a survival characteristic. Thus, for the future of the planet, there is no “Plan B.” Currently, most of the approaches to “Plan B” have

been “present/past” oriented. This effort will have a “present/futures” focus, covering both bio/physical and socio/economic perspectives.



The Explorations

There is a general understanding that the planet and its inhabitants are facing multiple issues, such as the biophysical, for example, climate change and resource destruction woven with geo/political and economic issues. While these are interdisciplinary, the United Nations has parsed these into 17 areas that need addressing: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The corporate world has come to the table with the general areas; environment, social, and governance (ESGs). The SDGs are philosophical and pragmatic, tied together with policy and analysis. The corporate sector has not been at that table yet and is responsible on the ground for both, many of the problems and investing in solutions.

What is important to understand is that the SDGs have been largely policy-oriented, as have most of the conferences, such as the “Paris Agreement” on climate change. The corporate sector has been noticeable by its absence. Recently, there has been movement to turn the SDG theories into actionable practices. Also, with pressure from investors and other parties, the corporations are advancing beyond “green washing” their statements. There is now a cross matrix between the SDGs and the ESGs as all start to realize that a “Plan B” is needed.

The number of “Green New Deals” around the world, including that of the current U.S. administration, is increasing. Conspicuous by its presence are the issues of “jobs” and “growth” with a complex dance between those in the “growth” in opposition to those who are in the “de-growth” camp. This raises many issues, such as the “universal basic income” and the definition of work and jobs. And there are issues, such as the increasing spread in incomes, both within and across geo/political boundaries, the ability to recycle (the circular economy) as well as the future under artificial intelligence and life outside of planetary bounds.

The Independent Scholars Forum

How should the future be addressed or explored? This forum will draw from the interests of the participants to structure a series of discussions based on selected publications, art or other presentations that are recommended and which are readily accessible as a discussion focus, either on the Internet or other sources. Each topic will be bounded by a time and number of monthly or bimonthly meetings. The number of explorations will be determined by the participants. Sessions will be moderated using Zoom as the general format.

There will be one monthly meeting for introducing topics and an initial discussion. Ongoing exchanges will be developed between monthly meetings. There will be one core book: Kate Raworth’s *Doughnut Economics* and the numerous accessible reviews on-line. Other volumes will be added as well as on-line materials. Searchable databases, such as *Shaping Tomorrow* will be used as well as foresight tools. Neal Stephenson’s *The Diamond Age* is a good entry into the world of science fiction.

Subject matter will range from the humanities to science/technology. Is there a “Plan B” hidden in this rich matrix and can MISF point to a path?

Tom P. Abeles has a doctorate in chemistry and physics. A former tenured professor in environmental sciences and humanities, he was the cofounder and editor of On the Horizon, a future focused academic journal. He consulted internationally in areas ranging from the future of education to renewable energy and agricultural policies in South and Central America, Southeast Asia and East Africa. His current consulting focuses on sustainability and development in public and private sectors. tables@gmail.com

Words to Ponder

Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.

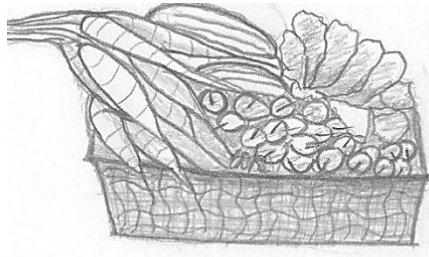
Albert Einstein

Garden-in-a-Box: Giving the Season a Right Start

by Jerry Shannon

If you are among the many Americans dreaming of growing your own produce during this second year of the pandemic, the time has come to prepare your garden beds and plant the early spring crop. The use of raised garden beds is recommended for most backyard gardeners because they make gardening easier and more rewarding. The soil will be richer, drain better and warm more quickly, aiding growth. A classic raised bed is 4 x 8 feet, made with rot-resistant lumber and able to hold at least 6 inches of soil. Purchase the soil from a local dealer and request a mix of topsoil and compost. Before shoveling it in, spade or till the existing ground. This simple tip increases the rooting depth.

When you pick a location for your plot, pick somewhere flat, but avoid low-lying areas, such as the bottom of the hill where rainwater collects. Vegetable gardens require at least six hours of direct sun each day, so tree shadows will fall come summer. Also, make sure you are near a garden hose, because raised beds require frequent watering. If you have existing garden beds, spread composted leaf mold and aged manure which are free of weed seeds and fluff up the soil with a three-pronged roto tiller or a garden fork. The tiller can be rented at most hardware stores. Water the newly prepared garden bed and wait a few



days for the soil to settle before planting seeds or transplants.

As soon as the frost comes out of the ground, you can start planting. In Minnesota, lettuce cauliflower, broccoli, kale, carrots and beets can go in the ground now. Summer crops such as peppers, tomatoes should wait, and if you wish to start them from seed, you can start them indoors. Consult the University of Minnesota Extension or their website to find “Planning for Indoor Seed Starting”. Follow the directions on the back of the packet, as each species has its own requirements. Use fluorescence lights sixteen hours a day. You will have work to do throughout the growing season. Expect a raised bed to require a thorough watering every two to three days, whether by hose or an inexpensive drip irrigation system. Growing your own vegetables is good for the body as well as the soul.

Jerry Shannon, with his wife Lee, plant and maintain a show garden in Highland Park. Both are members of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society, whose GARDEN-IN-A-BOX program brings vegetable kits to underserved children, giving our youngest gardeners the chance to experience the benefits (and joys) of growing plants.

Member Publication News

Evelyn D. Klein, long-time MISF member and editor of TMS, reports that her poem “Quarantine Companions,” has been selected by the Ramsey County Library for inclusion into their anthology *This Was 2020*. It is due out at the end of June, online and in print. See the library’s website at <https://mlpp.pressbooks.pub/thiswas2020/>



Book Review: by Libby Casey Irwin

TOWERS OF AGING

by Joseph A. Amato

Crossings Press, Minnetonka, Minnesota, 2020, 68 Pages

Joseph A. Amato's book of poetry, *Towers of Aging* calls to mind, somehow, the words of Carl Jung from his *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*:

...and that was the beginning of the
"Tower," the house which I built for
myself...
...the second tower became for me a place
of spiritual concentration.

Arranging from "Prelude" to "Afterword", Joseph A. Amato writes the poems of *Towers of Aging* in four main sections (backdrop, being a senior home named Ridge Pointe). Joseph meets and greets and writes about his living and aging and his old, new neighbors.

Part I. Suddenly I Am Old and Lonely

He poetically inures his new neighbors to these new readers, you and I becoming guest, with a tour of life from ensuing voices of the poem-worthy tales about their lives and Joseph's impressions of living in a senior residence. It is a chronicle of the coming of age – old age –

"Seventy-Seven/my family's favorite age for dying" becomes a universally significant punctuation of a life. His transformative family tree is x-ray and daemon shrouded in inherent likelihood. This becomes a sentient slice where this poet grows "ever aware/That I am three years older than seventy-seven."

Part II. The Towers:

Like two pyramids' rise in some desert of time two towers rise, claim their air space with a sun-cloud yellow, in-between. We'll call it Towers

zipping up the fallow blues of sky. They are two, new retirement home buildings and the other newness is that Joseph lives here, a destination of this stage of life gathering into the process of aging.

Housed in the two identical towers within, each window purges its leftover light. Each window well, becomes a poem of introspection and individuality where "Better days were gone forever/and only the worse lay ahead." Residents seem to morph into conformity, each with their own maladies – alike as bones. A tower, a frigate, an encounter with life stages (maybe) but certainly, accepting age as just one page at a time taken to air, as falling leaves hush into the dust on the ground do, with wind.

Part III. We [All] Fall Down

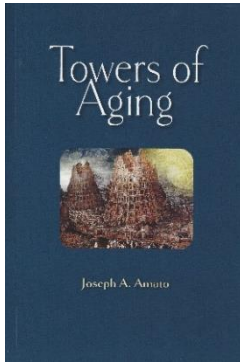
Amato's poems, charged with literary acumen, blink on through the aging process like each window lit and captures the senses and maybe even accomplishes the acceptance of poet peers.

And then –its beauty emerges and the reader is drawn into aha. The tones of words he uses are to teach, confide, relate and align our probing perceptions. The reader's attitude and victuals of words and their tones resonate off the page and into the literary heart and mind producing deeper understanding.

It is what communication does; what poems tell. "All family memories/Are full of falls." Choice is the trunk surviving dry dusty attics in summer heat. In "The fall trembling/leaves/in the lilt of breeze/fall, twirl, zigzag, float/to earth's/dark/ floor."

You can feel the rhythm and cadence this poetry provides, in the placement of the words on the page and in our imaginations stirring. We make room in our minds and hearts to hold the meanings of his

words. Their placements are important as stacked stones of the home we all build, stone on stone.



Part IV. We Fly Up

And this acapella piece mutes and throngs and engages our poetic trek and ensuing experience. Concurrent themes tread towards assimilation. And poetic expression is rendered and chosen by the reader's impressions and the journey is

one "towards life again".

Familiarity is churning but still there has been a transference. Again, the dialogue comes down and up again as we observe the wounds and sorrows, born is the question. "Will I betray love? ...simply to please? ...an egotistically transcendent me?" There is resolution into process and the persona's self-discovery, and we see all these things in an abundance – and an esprit de corps of American poetry.

The creative process is seen through poets who spawn sensual guidelines into this new dialogue which is the triumph of this collection and which enters in this process of whirring into interpretations where dialogue creates a writer and reader who are sympatico. "After taps were played/The old man went home." Alone.

I appreciate this volume of poems by Joseph Amato. Other readers may share and see their own new world. That is the magic of poetry-to-be-created and re-earthed in lamplight shine as it is begun in an afternoon that culled me into knelling in nights of recalling my own words of introspection and discovery of the whole book in the wonder of really good poem-making like Joseph Amato's in *Towers of Aging*.

Libby Casey Irwin earned her MFA in Writing from Hamline University. A prize-winning poet, some of her poems have been published in various literary journals. Libby has collected four manuscripts of poetry (as yet unpublished). She is an advocate of writers who suffer with emotional challenges. She was a finalist in the Mentor Series of the Loft Literary Center, where she is a member.

The Minnesota Scholar

A subscription to TMS is a benefit of membership in MISF. Subscriptions can be obtained for a \$15 annual fee. Single issues are \$7.50. Send subscriptions and address changes to MISF at the return address *below*.

The Minnesota Scholar welcomes submissions. We are especially interested in topical issues, current events, and memoir in the form of essays, articles, and book reviews. Articles should be no longer than between 1,500 and 1,800 words. Use as little formatting as possible. Please submit your work electronically and in a word document attachment with an explanation in the body of the e-mail. All submissions will be acknowledged. The editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article deemed unsuitable. No second party submissions. For guidelines and queries contact the editor.

The editor has the right to edit manuscripts. *TMS* assumes no responsibility for contributor errors. Opinions expressed by the contributor may not reflect the opinions of the editor or MISF. Copyright reverts to the individual author after publication.

Submission deadline for the next issue is October 15, 2021.

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Programs & Meetings

January 23, 2021



The Electoral College

Presented by Alan E. Johnson

Alan E. Johnson, retired lawyer, is particularly versed in constitutional and public law. As independent historian and philosopher, he discussed his recent book, *The Electoral College*.

He indicated the notion of the electoral college came about at the constitutional convention in 1786, even though many preferred the popular vote. Yet there seemed to be a problem with the popular vote, since originally people did not want political parties. But without political parties no one can nominate a candidate. Each state would put a name on paper and large states would have an advantage.

During this time, the public was not very well informed concerning these matters, as there were few newspapers. Consequently, people were ignorant of the facts and fell prey to demagogues. Some delegates expressed strong opposition to the popular vote. The idea surfaced that Congress should appoint the president. The idea became an intrigue, where deals would be made, corruption as well as foreign influence followed.

The argument ensued to lessen the influence of the parliamentary system. There had to be separation of power. Delegates arrived at a compromise with the Electoral College. In 1788 Monroe opposed the electoral vote, while Madison held the electoral college was more expedient, as strong debates over the subject took place. The Election of 1800 resulted in the 12th Amendment because of a tie. Jefferson and Burr tied in electoral votes. Burr was anti-slavery and Jefferson and Washington were slave owners. After the 12th Amendment in 1804, there were few problems with the Electoral College.

After the Civil War, readjustments had to be made. And some corruption followed. In 1870 the 15th Amendment gave black males the vote, which, however, was followed by Jim Crow laws. In the elections in 1876, only two states had popular elections. In 1888 the plurality of the popular vote was the loser.

The idea of having the popular vote thrown out was resurrected by Trump. In the election of 2016 Clinton won the popular vote, but Trump won the electoral vote. In the 2020 election Trump, instead of conceding, fought to overcome "election fraud," a move which did not succeed. All lawsuits rejected Trump's claims, including Republican judges. In recounts, Trump's votes came up less than before, in some instances. Institutions stood up against the challenge. Pence had no constitutional power to overturn the election. Subsequently, Donald Trump gave a speech that encouraged supporters to storm the Capitol. While Capitol police were greatly outnumbered, militants broke into the Capitol and formed a noose to hang Vice President Pence and get Speaker Pelosi. National Guard members had to be called in and eventually cleared the Capitol.

Johnson indicated that bias had been taken to a whole new level, and future elections will have lawsuits. And here the author proposes the notion of a constitutional amendment to abolish the Electoral College with suggestions in an updated book on the topic on how statutes need to be reversed which is probably impossible.

This compelling lecture was attended by approximately twenty-six people.

Evelyn Klein

February 27, 2021

Mapping Prejudice Project

Presented by Denise Pike and Marguerite Mills

Denise Pike and Marguerite Mills are public historians who did research for their Mapping Prejudice project under the auspices of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum with funds presented to them by Mary Treacy.

Marguerite Mills is a geographer, artist and cartographer who did considerable research on establishing roots and community in the South Minneapolis, namely the Linden Hills neighborhood and the area of newly renamed lake Bde Maka Ska. With the displacement of indigenous people, the Ojibway and the Dakota, the ensuing coming of Europeans, communities were established with real estate development. It is noted that by 1908-1912 whites were in arms over black people owning property. Subsequently, blacks were prevented from owning property by establishing a connection between real estate value and racial property. Racial covenants were established that lasted for over a century.

In Minneapolis in 1910, less than 1% of the population was black, and emerging black communities were not that segregated. In 1940 a greater shift in segregation took place. By 2010 the demographic of racially restricted covenants came into use and persist today. Minneapolis home ownership of whites is 75% while that of blacks is 25%. Today, this 50% gap is the worst in the country. The risk of being unhoused for whites is one in 1,250, for blacks one in 100, and for native population one in 50.

Denise Pike, with a Masters Degree in Public History, has done considerable work in the area of racial housing discrimination, as great disparities still exist and carry over into other areas. Denise feels their work is not only about putting together a book on the subject but also giving public presentations which have been well attended.

This topic is important, she feels, because Linden Hills was considered a Jewel of Minneapolis. The displacement of indigenous people, the Dakota, in 1863 set the stage for how we think about property and set value, resulting in the setting of racial covenants in Minneapolis. In 1930 the redlining of the city occurred with areas color coded and deemed “hazardous” or “declining,” with areas indicating where black people could live. Mortgages for blacks were restricted, and they were displaced from white neighborhoods after they attempted to live there. Racially restricted covenants reserved land for white residents. Violence exists even today in Minneapolis against blacks who disregard them.

Marguerite ended by concluding that in southwest Minneapolis there existed an emerging black community of cooperation that was displaced. This is significant already because what happened to black people then had happened to indigenous people 100 years earlier. Historically, the Bde Maka Ska area moved from indigenous to white concept of space, as Linden Hills emerges as a Norman Rockwell painting.

Denise indicated they have different programs and displays about the project. Both presenters are involved in community workshops to provide dialog and understanding, increase awareness, and inspire action. They are intended for both the black and white community and need to be contextualized with the death of George Floyd. Marguerite Mills also teaches classes in the public schools on the subject.

This presentation was most enlightening and insightful with its considerable research and resources.

Evelyn Klein

March 27, 2021

Rock Steady Boxing

Presented by Kim Heikkila and Katie Grove

Kim Heikkila, Ph. D., and Katie Grove, Ph.D., co-directors and coaches of the Rock Steady Boxing program in the Twin Cities, presented a fascinating program to members of MISF. Kim Heikkila introduced the program stating that exercise is important in dealing with Parkinson's disease and that non-contact boxing has become a popular program to this end.

Katie Grove explained that Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive neurological disorder which worsens over time. The cause may be a chemical imbalance, or it may be related to genetics. There are about 1-1/2 million people in the U.S. affected by it. Individuals affected are more commonly men over 60 years of age but can also affect younger men as well as women. Current treatments are medications and deep brain stimulation surgery, the latter not a treatment for everyone. Early diagnosis is important. When patients see their physician with early motor type symptoms, they may be referred to a neurologist with movement disorder specialty. However, there is no cure.

The best medicine for Parkinson's is exercise, such as bicycle exercise on a voluntary level, or a more intensive bicycle exercise on a forced-rate level. These exercises result in significantly improved motor function. Then, Scott Newman, diagnosed at age 40, founded the non-contact boxing program with 6 boxers with focus of young-onset Parkinson's. He found marked improvements in the function of those afflicted, and the program has now expanded to an international setting.

Kim Heikkila indicated the Rock Steady Boxing program came to Minnesota in May of 2016. She was interested in the program because of her father, who had Parkinson's. There are programs across the state now but only one in the Metro area. World-wide there are now 43,000 boxers, 870 affiliates, and 4 levels of classes.

All coaches are trained or have a boxing background. Katie Grove comes from a professional background as athletic trainer at Indiana University

and professional athletic training director in the School of Public Health, from which she is now retired. But, in addition, earned numerous honors in her field. Kim Heikkila has been boxing for 15 years, teaching boxing for 10 years and training people with Parkinson's for 5 years. She helped establish the first RSB program in Minnesota and brought it to St. Paul, where it eventually merged with Element Gym.

There are four levels of classes in the program, depending on advancement of symptoms. Participants in the program are called "boxers." The non-contact boxing programs support participants by recognizing the individual, offering a sense of community, providing hope and fun, and fighting back against perceived limitations of people with Parkinson's. The reason that boxing, the most demanding sport of all, is so successful is that its training addresses motor and non-motor training, and the benefits of the boxing program align closely with the needs of Parkinson's. They include eye-hand coordination, speed of movement, flexibility, dynamic balance, core strength, agility, rapid muscle fire, and mental focus. The aim to those with Parkinson's is that they walk and fall better, get up and down safely, increase rotation, balance, voice activation, find happiness and fun.

To give members attending a better idea of what is involved, the presenters asked people to participate in a brief engagement of boxing exercises. First, Katie led the initial part, with stretching and warm-up. Kim followed up with actual boxing moves. Both of these activities were instructional and fun. Members were also privileged to hear from Jim Hunt, a boxer in the program, who explained how the program helped him deal with Parkinson's to the point where he was able to return to his swimming program due to the boxing workouts.

People with Parkinson's interested in participating in the program need a referral from their physician. For more information see <https://pdwellnessworkshops.com/> and <https://www.elementgym.org>

Evelyn Klein

April 24, 2021

Celebrating Earth Month - Learn, Do, Make an Impact Presented by Brenn Fromm

The subject of the April meeting was Earth Day. We were fortunate to have Brenn Fromm, self-proclaimed master recycler and advocate for Planet Earth to speak to us. Fromm is a long-time supporter of environmental initiatives, having started her career in the recycling and waste management field. She spent seven years working on environmental programs for Anoka and Dakota Counties, and earned her Certificate in Solid Waste Management at the University of Minnesota.

Her talk on April 23 took place on Zoom. First, she told us how she got interested in planet interactivity. When she was 12 years old, living in New Prague, a landfill was proposed in the immediate vicinity of her family farm. The reaction of the residents was NIMBY (not in my backyard). This event inspired Fromm to wonder what happened to garbage, which ultimately led her to the question of how to reduce garbage.

From this biographical note, Fromm walked us through the five types of pollution that we face: water, air, food waste, plastics, and everything else.

Water pollution affects about 40% of small lakes to the extent that they are unsafe. The most common cause of water pollution is nitrates used in agriculture and lawn fertilizer. Sadly, while we do have the knowledge to prevent water pollution by using fewer chemicals on our lawns and by using less salt on our streets, water pollution is a serious problem.

Air pollution is another problem: air pollution kills about 800 people every hour. It results from indoor burning of fossil fuels, industrial pollution (including coal), transportation, open burning of waste, and livestock. Her suggestions for lessening air pollution are to use nuclear power and to plant trees. House plants also help to reduce pollution.

Food waste is another contributor to pollution. One third of food produced for human consumption is lost or not used. (Enough to feed three billion people.) When we overbuy food and have to throw it away, we waste all of the resources that were used to produce the food; this is a particular problem for people who have to produce food for large groups of people. She suggested donating extra food to food shelves and reminded us that the expiration date on a package simply means that the food is best served by that date--not that it must be thrown out by that date.

Plastics are a big problem in recycling. A new problem is that the microfibers from synthetics (like Spandex) are ending up in the ocean. People are beginning to figure out how to reduce this kind of pollution. Fromm reminded us not to buy single use items.

Buy recyclable items; there are numerous ways to recycle items--such as bringing them to clean-up days and to organizations like Buy Nothing which brings people together to share. Especially, she said, you should carry your own water bottle. Plastic individual use commercial water bottles are a large polluter.

Cans and glass bottles, milk jugs and plastic jars, newspapers, and magazines can all be recycled. Putting other things into recycling bins, so-called "wish recycling," is not good. It often causes whole loads of recycling to be thrown out because it is too expensive to separate the non-recyclable material from the recyclable. If in doubt, throw it out!

The talk was a good reminder that we must all care for the earth. Fromm was a welcome and lively speaker in spite of the limitations of speaking on Zoom.

Lucy Brusica and Barb Sommer

May 22, 2021

Ellingtonia, The Great Migration, and The Promised Land

With Philip Bryant

Philip Bryant is a prize-winning poet and author of four collections of poetry. He has been involved in the literary community, served on various art organization boards in Minnesota and is currently Professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College. He introduced the program by indicating he wished to carry on a conversation about poetry with his audience.

In his global studies of modern poetry, he came to conclude that the most important modern American poet is Walt Whitman. Bryant called attention to the fact Whitman dealt with democracy in his poems, the first American poet to touch on the subject. He proceeded to read from Whitman's "Song to myself." Bryant, like Whitman, felt it important to link poetry with democracy and acknowledge the people who make up America.

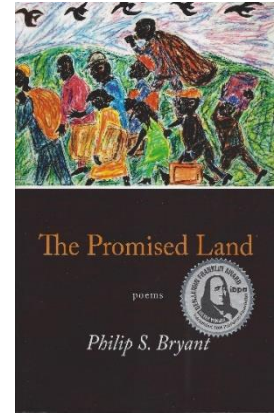
He indicated, further, that poets of different generations carry on a conversation with each other. So did Langston Hughes with Walt Whitman, particularly in speaking about democracy. Bryant, then, read Hughes' poem "I, Too" whose first line begins with the words "I, too, sing America" and ends with the words "I, too, am America." These words, of course are reminiscent of Whitman's poem of "Songs" of a diverse people. Certainly, Bryant feels, one can include Carl Sandburg in this conversation, as well, because he, too, wrote about America.

He, also, included the poet Thomas McGrath in this conversation. He was born in North Dakota but among other places, also lived in Minnesota and taught, for a time at Minnesota State University. He wrote primarily about social concerns and mentioned his best-known work entitled *Letter to an Imaginary Friend*.

Bryant then read three poems from his latest book, *The Promised Land*, beginning with the poem of the same title. It was based on a real event in his life, a trip to the deep South, where he had concerns about his racially mixed family being accepted. But

at the place where they stayed, he found a congenial racial mix already present, peacefully enjoying the day alongside each other in the dining area and considered it "a brief moment" in the "Promised Land."

The poet presenter also considers himself a music junkie, particularly when it comes to jazz which connects African American culture with democracy and with so many, not only in our country but world-wide. This is because of the universal nature of feelings and thoughts expressed in jazz. He noted a large portion of American culture comes out of slave quarters and culture, letting us know who people are. Whitman was on to that, he continued, and wrote not so much for his own time but for the times to come. He then read "Ellingtonia" and "The Great Migration."



He pointed out the slave culture was gone, because today the work is done by tractors and machines. Yet he felt African Americans are the nucleus of the country, even if it is hard to talk about it. America was born in the plantation, in the South, the slave quarters.

Philip Bryant concluded the program by reading selections of his poetry from Twin City's Rain Taxi, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*.

Philip Bryant kept his audience of about seventeen people inspired with his ebullient personality and creative approach. His other collections of poetry include *Blue Island*, *Sermon on a Perfect Spring Day*, and *Stomping at the Grand Terrace*, a jazz memoir in verse.

Evelyn Klein

Upcoming Programs and Meetings

Study and Discussion Groups

History Group

The History Group meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. over Zoom. Books and topics are chosen by participating and attending members. It is facilitated by Curt Hillstrom.

Philosophy Group

This group meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. over Zoom. Books and

topics are chosen by participating and attending members. It is facilitated by Curt Hillstrom.

Discovering the Future Group

This is a new group that Tom Abeles is interested in forming. Day, date, and time are still open for consideration for those who want to join the group. For more information see Page 5 of this journal. If interested, contact Tom at tabeles@gmail.com

Programs

All meetings will be held over Zoom until further notice, when library space opens up again.

June 26, 2021

Annual meeting, followed by program.

Cass Gilbert's White Bear Cottages

Presenter: Rheanna O'Brien

Well known Minnesota architect Cass Gilbert spent much of his early career designing homes and other buildings around the White Bear area. Join the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society for this illustrated program as we discuss some of his early works, some of which still stand, while others have not survived or were never built.

Rheanna O'Brien is the Associate Director of the White Gear Lake Area Historical Society. O'Brien has conducted extensive research on Cass Gilbert and his local connections including a fascinating trip to the Library of Congress, where a collection of Gilbert manuscripts are held. Her prior experience as an educator makes her presentations engaging and informative.

September 25, 2021

**Resources of the Minnesota State Law
Library**

Presenter: Erica Nutzman

Erica Nutzman will give a brief overview of the history of the library as well as describe the

unique resource collections available for research at the Minnesota State Law Library. In particular, there are a number of different resources about court personnel, particularly oral history resources and other materials about specific judges. There are many historical sources as well, such as legal briefs, lawyer roll books, books on court history, and other unique resources.

Erica Nutzman has been a librarian for over twenty years. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and a Masters in Library Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has experience working in nearly every type of library and position, starting in public libraries, spending many years as an academic librarian and for the last six years has been Head of Technical Services at the Minnesota State Law Library, where she oversees the collection, including the rare books and the archives.

October 23, 2021

**Tentative Topic: Sherlock Holmes and
Copyright Interests**

Presenter: Nancy Sims

November 20, 2021

To be determined.

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