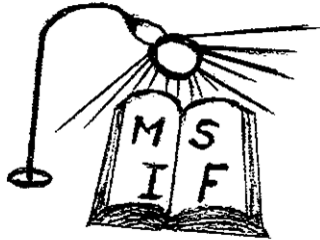


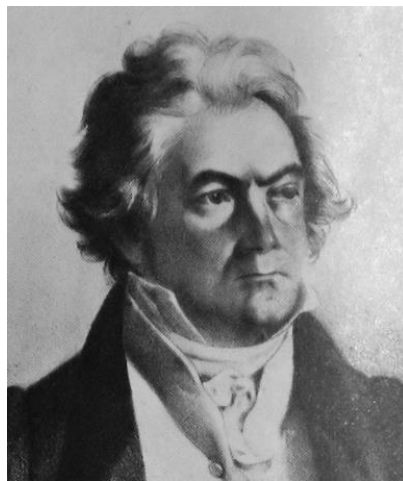
# The Minnesota Scholar

Journal of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum

Volume 19, Number 2, December 2024



## Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 200 Year Anniversary



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) completed this long-time in progress symphony in the year 1824. The symphony distinguishes itself from the usual symphonies by a major composer of its time not only in its length but also by the inclusion of vocal parts. The fourth and final movement of the symphony known as the “Ode to

Joy” features vocalists and a chorus. The text for it was originally written by the German poet Friedrich Schiller, “An die Freude,” and later revised by Beethoven to reflect his own feelings.

Much sought after already in its time, the symphony was premiered in 1814 on May 7 in Vienna. It was originally commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London to be premiered in London. But a group of his supporters convinced him to do the premier in Vienna. Today, because of its beauty of musicality and uplifting text, the “Ode to Joy” is particularly popular and can also be found in church hymnals. It has been considered a significant expression of culture and humanity. Hence, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was placed on the World Programme Heritage list by the United Nations and was adopted by the European Union as its anthem.

(See Page 5 for the English version of the revised lyrics.)

~Evelyn D. Klein

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## Return of the Buffalo

by Evelyn D. Klein

**S**o much of our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being is dependent on the environment in which we live. Nature, the area where we live and how we live influence our existence and that to a greater extent than we often realize. In the larger world, these influences may surface in the culture of a country, community, or traditions of a family. And sometimes we forget, while we are entrenched in development, technology and progress that this is because we, as humans, are also a part of nature. In our elevated state and abilities, we are able to harvest, for our benefit, what the earth has to offer, often without considering the long-term effects of our actions on the environment. Increasingly, we have discovered that we need to treat nature with regard and care not only for a promising, sustainable future but also for one that can support all life. We have become increasingly aware the ecosystem plays an important role.

In many of today's cities and housing developments, people have created green spaces by planting boulevard trees, developing green spaces, city and area parks for the health, well-being, and enjoyment of the population. We have become aware that some chemicals, which initially were viewed helpful in industrial production and extermination of pests in soil and on vegetation have turned out to be harmful to people and animals.

A problem for wildlife is the encroachment of housing developments on the natural environment of birds and other wild creatures, developments that often disrupt the ecosystem. But there are some measures we can take to share the environment. In the area where I live, houses have been built around a lake. But the shoreline and surrounding area of the lake have been designated a park. More recently, the city decided to let the natural prairie grasses return and mow only a narrow swatch along the walking path of the park. Not

only are the prairie grasses and flowering plants returning and beautiful to behold, but they have also reattracted birds and wildlife to an area that was previously only marginally accessible and hospitable to them. At the same time, it gives residents a place to watch birds, enjoy vegetation, and in the process, recharge their own needs for communion with nature and outlook on life. It is a small step but a significant one.

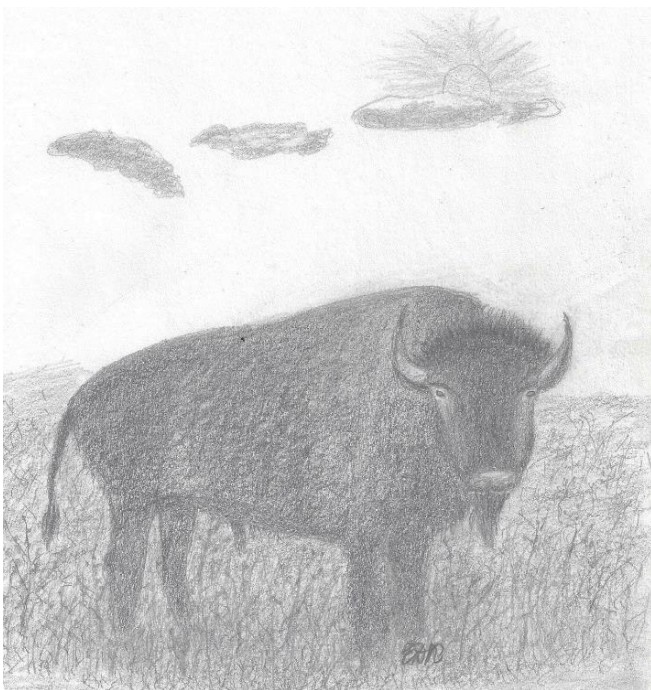
Historical and recent disastrous events, natural and human-made, have at times, affected areas of the U.S. and other places in the world in the course of centuries. More recently, climate change increasingly created by human footprint is changing the delicate balance that is life, no matter how we see it. Climate change has its skeptics, conflict, and opposing sides, particularly in face of economic demands. Yet passage of time frequently renders its own outcome and disposition of environmental damage, as we walk the path of research and science and connect with the road of newfound findings, conclusions, attitudes, beliefs, values, and hence new approaches to deal with these problems.

Yet threats to environment and ecosystem remain. How we deal with soil and land matters for wildlife and humans alike, even if it is not always obvious at first glance. Certainly, extinction of species in the industrial, technological ages are no longer a mystery. Sometimes, threatened species make a comeback through environmentalist efforts, such as with the American bald eagles, peregrine falcons, wolves, to name a few. Yet wildlife remains threatened the world over, whether it concerns tigers in Asia, elephants in Africa, songbirds in Europe, or certain species of owls in the U.S., for example.

In the human domain, since the state of the environment influences our overall well-being, it is

obvious that when we move through communities, cities, and countryside, that not all people have equal access to nature in their surroundings, depending on education, income, and race.

To address the issue of a healthy environment for all, National Wildlife, an environmental magazine ran an article advocating for wildlife in its October 1991 issue about the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held in Washington D.C. Here Jacqueline Gray Miller reported that the purpose was “to eradicate environmental racism and bring into being true social justice and self-determination.” The summit was an important step in internationalization of the movement which was supported by President Clinton’s Executive Order at the time. The action was then carried forward in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for example, where a program began in an African-American community, transforming it into neighborhoods of “health and prosperity.” National Wildlife Federation subsequently worked with other local communities on this venture. The reason for NWF’s involvement in this program is “Because the steps that ensure clean air, water and land for human communities also benefit wildlife.”



Interconnection between wildlife and humans is reciprocal in a sense. An interesting case in point is

the existence in North America of the bison on which Native American tribes heavily relied for their subsistence in the past. National Wildlife Federation reports that before their near extinction in the 1800s, they ranged clear from Alaska through Canada, and the United States to Mexico.

American Heritage Dictionary defines “bison” as a bovine mammal, its scientific name *Bison bison*, also called buffalo. The name is derived from the Latin “bisōn,” from Old High German “wisun” and is related to the European bison. Two types of bison are in existence in America, plains bison and wood bison. Males have a height of about five to six feet and may weigh over a ton, while females weigh approximately half of that. Bison subsist on grasslands and occupy an important position in the ecosystem. Today we find bison in many states of the U.S., on farms, in the wild, and in U. S. park management areas.

The article appearing in *National Wildlife* magazine in the August-September 2021 issue, appropriately named “Coming Full Circle,” outlined how after 100 years, The National Bison Range, renamed simply Bison Range, came to be managed by the Native American community residing in the area. The area in Western Montana encompasses the Flathead Indian Reservation, established in 1855 with 1.2 million acres. It is home of the Confederated Bitterroot Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d’Oreille tribes (CSKT). The National Bison Range occupied 29 square miles.

More recent history of the area is complex, notes Robert McDonald, the article’s author and CSKT communications director. Western expansion divided the area where the tribes lived, while the bison that used to be central to their subsistence were nearly wiped out. Then, in 1904 Congress divided the land for individual members of the tribes, leaving surplus land which was then claimed by non-Indians who crowded the land. But to save the bison, President Theodore Roosevelt established the National Bison Range in 1908 with 18,800 acres of tribal land. Unfortunately, the government erected fences to keep the animals in without giving access to the Native-American tribes.

However, when the Indian Reorganization Act was passed in 1934, the CSKT were the first to establish a Tribal Council based on democracy and not on hereditary chiefs. They decided to buy back tribal lands. Since they established themselves as a role model in their new approach, it brought them closer to control of the National Bison Range. With considerable “support from local, state, and national organizations,” legislation moved through Congress and President Donald Trump signed the law on December 27, 2020, returning ownership of the bison range to the CSKT. This is the country’s first tribally designated wilderness area, according to McDonald.

It is noteworthy that, according to National Wildlife Federation, “The tribes played a pivotal role in saving bison from extinction in the late 1800s, and transferring the range to tribal control will help right a historic wrong and protect a sacred place for future generations.”

Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service turned over management of the National Bison Range, it has been renamed Bison Range, and all other signs have been removed and replaced. According to the article, the bison range occupies substantial intermountain grasslands. It is now entirely under the management of the CSKT tribes. Already accustomed to managing other wildlife on the reservation, CSKT took over autonomous management of the bison herd in 2022. This seems a fitting outcome, since the tribes had cared for land and animals originally, bringing meaning, purpose, and ownership back into their lives today.

Similarly, re-evaluating local approach to a nearly nation-wide concern by Native-Americans about the restoration of bison – termed buffalo by Native-Americans – Denver Parks and Recreation changed their management procedure of herds, Lisa Moore of National Wildlife magazine reports in its Winter 2023 issue titled “Sacred Return.” Every year, Denver would auction off excess bison. But in 2022, they decided to end the auction and, instead, transfer these buffalo to Indigenous Peoples. 15 bison went to the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming, 17 to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma, and one to the TallBull Memorial Council, a cooperative of Cheyenne, Arapaho and other Indigenous Tribes

(TBMC). This latter cooperative has “exclusive use of about 70 acres” in Denver’s Daniels Park, where they are allowed to practice their traditions. Eventually, an intertribal and Denver American Indian Commission agreement was designed to continue this transfer of animals to tribal herds. This action would also promote genetic diversity in herds, while at the same time, right a historical wrong.

The event called for a celebration by Cheyenne and Arapaho Peoples in Denver’s Genesee Park in March of 2023. They celebrated the healing, long in coming. Bill TallBull, board member of TBMC, recalled a dark and painful history in his and his people’s memory of an 1864 U.S. military incursion as they had gathered to arrange for peace. After all this time, TallBull feels “Now we are finally getting to the point where we’re sitting at the table and sharing our history.” In this “Sacred Return,” he expressed the hope “his people will have their own herd to manage and will again be free to hunt and fish on their traditional lands... We are part of Mother Nature.”

So little is known to many of us about the buffalo in the rush, rush world of today, particularly in the way these animals still affect Native-American lives in a cultural, spiritual connection. Documentaries about the buffalo generally come from a non-Native perspective, and that leaves out some important insights and connections to them. For that reason, Director Colin Ruggiero, in cooperation with the National Wildlife Federation, produced a documentary entitled “A Buffalo Story,” Talor Stagner reports in the fall 2024 issue of *National Wildlife*. To give greater authenticity and meaning to the documentary, Ruggiero worked with Jason Baldes, an Eastern Shoshone, and Patti Harris, a Northern Arapaho. In the process, they were able to depict the Native-American perspective. The documentary was created on the Wind River Reservation in Montana and was first shown at the 2024 International Wildlife Film Festival in Missoula.

Jason Baldes is committed, on many levels, to the preservation of the buffalo. He is Director of the Tribal Buffalo Program for the National Wildlife Federation, Director of the Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative, a member of the InterTribal Buffalo

Council, the board of the Conservation Land Foundation, and the environmental commission of the Congress of Nations and States as well as an educator on the reservation and at the University of Wyoming. Baldes says he sees buffalo as wildlife and not as cattle. Buffalo need space to roam the land, which benefits not only wildlife but humans and plants as well and is healthy for the ecosystem.

Ruggiero had been hired by National Wildlife Federation in 2016 to produce the documentary which came about in stages, until 2024 when it turned into the full-length documentary. As filmmaker, Ruggiero enjoys dealing with the “barriers between people and

nature.” In the documentary, Baldes states: “All animals are important. We call them our relatives. We have songs and ceremonies. We dance, we sing. We have relationships with all the creatures around us.”

*~Evelyn D. Klein is an author, speaker, artist, independent scholar and TMS editor. She has published four books of poetry, essays and illustrations as well as a reference book about the English language entitled “Power Behind Your Writing, What Every Writer Needs to Know.”*

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(Continued from Page 1, Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony)

### English translation, lyrics of “Ode to Joy”

Oh friends, not these tones!  
But let’s strike up more agreeable ones  
And more joyful.

Joy!  
Joy!

Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity,  
Daughter of Elysium,  
We enter, drunk with fire,  
Heavenly one, thy sanctuary!  
Thy magic binds again  
What custom strictly divided;  
All people become brothers,  
Where thy gentle wing abides.

Whoever has succeeded in the great attempt,  
To be a friend’s friend,  
Whoever has won a lovely woman,  
Add to his jubilation!  
Yes, and also whoever has just one soul  
To call his own in this world!  
And he who never managed it should slink  
Weeping from this union!

All creatures drink of joy  
At nature’s breasts.  
All the Just, all the Evil  
Follow her trail of roses.  
Kisses she gave us and grapevines,  
A friend, proven in death.  
Ecstasy was given to the worm,  
And the cherub stands before God.

Gladly, as His suns fly  
Through the heaven’s grand plan  
Go on, brothers, your way,  
Joyful, like a hero to victory.

Be embraced, Millions!  
This kiss to all the world!  
Brothers, above the starry canopy  
There must dwell a loving Father.  
Are you collapsing, millions?  
Do you sense the Creator, world?  
Seek him above the starry canopy;  
Above the stars must He dwell.



## Book Review

# Revisiting the White Whale: *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

By Mike Woolsey

It may seem strange to be doing a book report here on a classic work, one that has existed since 1850, been reviewed by famous writers, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Faulkner, T. H. Lawrence, and countless university professors and students. What can I hope to add to all that?

However, this series of essays is one of scholarly “passions,” and I proffer this one on that score, having read the novel four times since the early 1970s, discussed it in two Great Books seminars over the intervening decades, and recently taken an Osher Life Long Learning (OLLI) class on the subject.

To begin with, one of the novel’s more salient features is its apparent duality, for it combines historical and technical description of the mid-19th century whaling industry with a highly allegorical tale of human existentialism. As such, it often seems like two books in one, with many of its chapters abruptly alternating between these two aspects. Whaling industry description actually seems to comprise over half the book, making the reader wonder if the book’s main purpose is merely to inform, rather than to edify, with the imaginative part tacked on to make the whole more palatable.

But that would be a mistake. With repeated readings, one begins to appreciate high art at work. First, the humdrum pace of the whaling industry chapters mimics the customary slow, and mostly uneventful, pace of 19<sup>th</sup>-century whaling voyages. These voyages commonly lasted for 2-3 years, with it being possible for a ship to neither encounter any whales nor visit any ports for months at a time. By this means, the reader is absorbed into the isolation and introversion of the crew, separated from civilization and surrounded by natural forces.

Second, in Melville’s hands, the whaling details very often suggest allegory, with many a prosaic chapter ending with a sudden leap to philosophical and/or religious significance. So, whales in general are portrayed as more than mere animals. They are “profound” and “wise,” and in the case of *Moby Dick*, godlike, easily plumbing in their dives the most profound depths of the ocean. Accordingly, the severed heads of expired whales, attached to the sides of the ship for extraction of their spermaceti oil, are in one place compared to the heads of philosophers Kant and Locke, and in another to the head of Plato, with allegorical warnings to the reader of becoming too enamored of their respective doctrines.

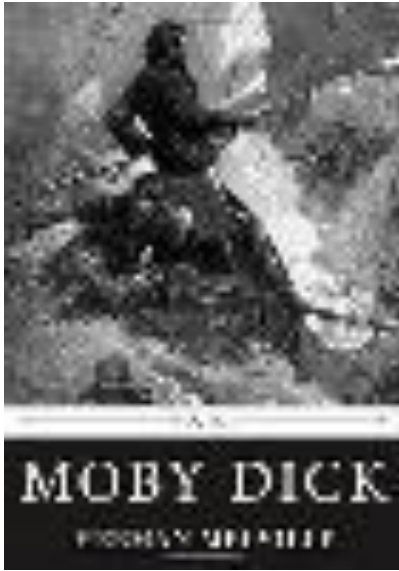
In a similar vein, a chapter on the classification of different whale species uses the nomenclature of Elizabethan-Age publishing, dividing species of whales into Quartos and Folios, like the original publications of Shakespeare’s plays. All this led to my first interpretation (in the early 1970s) of the book’s allegory, supposing that the whales were meant as metaphors of philosophical, literary, and religious writings that the author had read and somehow exhausted, only to be obsessed with the one book he could not conquer, signified by the White Whale, and presumably being the Christian Bible!

If this seems too much of an imaginative leap, it’s not so much when you consider the constant religious allusions that the novel employs, particularly those concerning captain Ahab, whose “impiety” is regularly contrasted with the “piety” of First-Mate Starbuck. In addition to Kant, Locke, and Plato, Melville also alludes to the works of Spinoza, Descartes, Aristotle, Dante, Cervantes and the Old Testament *Book of Job*. These works are the book’s



whales, so I thought, each to be “conquered” by the adventurous scholar and plumbed for their wisdom, symbolized by the extraction of spermaceti oil!

However, as time went on, as I reread the book and discussed it in seminars with others, this theory seemed too simple, too pat, and not sufficiently supported by the story’s many other incidents and allusions, particularly in the case of the white whale. Moreover, it seemed to trivialize the tale of Ahab, reducing him to a metaphor for a reader of books, and that despite his saying of himself that “Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels.”



So, I began instead to focus on what is most consistent in the story, in particular the words used to describe its two great protagonists. In addition to being “impious,” Ahab is regularly described as “mad,” “monomaniacal, and “vengeful” in his obsession with the white whale, whom he views as either the agent of a supernatural power or that power itself. To him, the white whale is guided by an “intelligent malignity” that is “inscrutable,” and seemingly “indifferent” to the fate of humans, whatever the justice or injustice of that fate:

“. . . and now that all his successive meetings with various ships contrastingly concurred to show the demoniac indifference with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against . . . “

As the story goes, Ahab had lost one of his legs at the knee in a previous, years-old encounter with that very whale, and had ever since vengefully pursued it around the globe.

Vengefully? What is it but madness to wreak vengeance on an animal that would normally be perceived as simply protecting itself against the sharp harpoons of human hunters, and why is it thus necessary to impute a “malign” intelligence to it? “Vengeance on a dumb brute!” cried Starbuck, “that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous.”

But for Ahab, the white whale is an “unreasoning mask,” a “wall” that hides “an unknown but still reasoning” thing of “inscrutable malice.” His pursuit of the whale may then be construed as the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, an attempt to remove the mask that hides “all visible objects” and “each event,” in other words, the “reasoning thing” behind everything, or the supernatural.

Chapters later, in the midst of a lightning storm that fires the tops of the ship’s three masts, cows the crew, and threatens the ship, Ahab raves on:

“Oh! thou clear spirit of clear fire, whom on these seas I as Persian once did worship, till in the sacramental act so burned by thee, that to this hour I bear the scar; I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now know that thy right worship is defiance. To neither love nor reverence wilt thou be kind . . . Come in thy lowest form of love, and I will kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest, come as mere supernal power; and though thou launchest navies of full-freighted worlds, there’s that in here that still remains indifferent. Oh, thou clear spirit, of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to thee”

Mere madness? Or an allegory of religious crisis, in which a submissive (i.e. Persian-like) faith in God, and a “sacramental act” of reverence is rewarded by a cruel fate? If Ahab learned in a searing experience that neither “love nor reverence” is to be rewarded in kind by the Deity, is he not justified in subsequently

offering only defiance to the “personified impersonal” (i.e. an impersonal God, personified (i.e. masked) by the natural world)? And, if fate is unkind and God apparently indifferent to the human condition, is there not tragic glory to Ahab’s attempt to engage the supernatural on equal terms, his will against the Divine will?

Whew! Has there ever been such a wild expression of existentialism? As still further evidence of this perception, in a chapter where Ahab comforts the African-American cabin-boy, Pip, who has become so traumatized by falling overboard and being left alone for a time in the vastness of the ocean that he has seemingly become a babbling idiot, Ahab says:

“There can be no hearts above the snow-line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! look down here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him, ye creative libertines. Here, boy; Ahab’s cabin shall be Pip’s home henceforth, while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my inmost centre, boy; thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings.”

The gods are here depicted as both “frozen” and as being “creative libertines,” who can abandon a “luckless child” whom they created. How can man show faith and devotion to any such Divinities? For this reason, the story poses a profound and universal human question, whatever the reader’s philosophical disposition or religious belief. Once having addressed the question in its full import, it would seem that there are but two paths for a man to take: patient, Job-like perseverance and faith in divine justice, or ego-centered defiance of the human condition. The one path is promised by the *Book of Job* to end in ultimate salvation by a just God, while the novel’s final chapter, in which the ship and all its crew (but one) is destroyed, implies that the latter path leads only to despair and/or annihilation.

Thus, does Ahab’s existential crisis have a universal aspect, a universality that is dramatically supported by the depiction of the ship’s crew as being awed and swept-up by him and his obsession, despite its conviction that he is “mad” and may well be leading them all to destruction. Though comprised of diverse races, nationalities, and philosophical/religious

inclinations, including those of a cannibal and a mysterious, Asian “Parsee,” the crewmembers collectively suspend their better judgement and enthusiastically unite with the old man’s “monomania.” Even pious Starbuck is somehow helpless in the face of Ahab’s “mad” logic.

It’s worthy of note here that Ahab is not an atheist. He believes in an intelligent Deity. It’s just that he finds It detached and, ultimately, unjust. In this respect, the portrait of him may be autobiographical. Melville’s friend and co-great-artist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, said of him upon their meeting in later life:

“Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had “pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated”; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists – and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before – in wondering to-and-fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us.”

The novel is claimed to be among the greatest ever written. Not only is it a rollicking good yarn, replete with vivid imagery, suggestive allegory, and poetic prose, but it unapologetically raises a universal and existential human question, presented in tragic form.

But as a tragedy, it lacks something. If it were not for the allegory, there would be no tragedy. Just hunting a dangerous animal out of vengeance is not heroic, just crazy. But based as it is on allegory, the tragic aspect becomes less immediate in a human



sense, less poignant, more abstract and philosophical. *King Lear* it is not.

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

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## *Words to Ponder*

### Excerpts from **Walden**

by Henry David Thoreau

#### from **Solitude**

The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature, -- of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter -- such health, such cheer, they afford forever! and such sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected, and the sun's brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shed their leaves and put on mourning in midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Should I not have intelligence with earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?

#### from **The Ponds**

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluvial trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows.

## **The Minnesota Scholar**

A subscription to *TMS* is a benefit of membership in MISF. Subscriptions can be obtained for a \$15.00 annual fee for non-members. Single issues are \$7.50. Send subscription requests and address changes to MISF at the address below.

***The Minnesota Scholar* welcomes submissions.** We are especially interested in topical issues. We print essays/articles reviews, and memoirs.

**Submission guidelines:** Articles/ essays should be between 1,000-1,800 words. Use Times Roman font, size 12. Submit electronically in a Word Document. Manuscripts will be edited and minor adjustments may be made. Submissions will be acknowledged, although the editor reserves the right to decline to publish an article deemed unsuitable. For more specific guidelines and information contact the editor.

TMS assumes no responsibility for contributor errors. Opinions expressed by contributors may not reflect the opinions of the editor or of MISF. Copyright reverts to the individual authors after publication.

**Deadline for the net issue:** Friday, May 2, 2025

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# Programs & Meetings



June 22, 2024

## MISF Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of MISF convened on June 22, 2024, at the Shoreview Library in the Community Room in Shoreview, MN. President Steven Miller called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. with 23 attendees present. Emily Pollack Highlighted the Forum's annual activities with a slide presentation as follows:

**Programs and Events:** program lead, Steve Miller,  
Monthly meetings at Ramsey County Library in Shoreview, MN.  
Programs for members who cannot attend are recorded by Charlie Rogers.

**Social Events:** coordinated by Peter Simmons

**The Year's Programs:**

Edward S. Curtis: The North American Indian Photo Exhibit; Ranked Choice Voting: A Top Reform to Strengthen Our Democracy; The Electrification of the Mississippi River Gorge and the High Dam Controversy; Wonderland Park and the Infanorium; The Indigenous Oral History Manual: Canada and the United States; Minnesota Carnegie Libraries After 100+ Years; Building Community Food Webs; What About Metaphor? Can understanding urban ecosystems improve our odds?

**Study Groups:** Philosophy, History

**Grant Sponsorship:** Administered by MISF, inactive

**Financial Report:** Emily Pollack, Treasurer

Support and Revenue 2,661.88

Donations  
Memberships  
Interest

Expenses 2,926.91

Journal  
Membership Expenses  
Office Expenses  
Online  
Partnerships, Affiliations

**The Journal (TMS):** Evelyn Klein, Editor

The journal needs member contributors in the following areas:

Feature Article, Memoir, Book Review,

Article length should be about 1,500 to 1,800 words; book review should be about 1,000 words

The editor handed out submission guidelines.

**Elections were held with the following results:**

**Board of Directors:** Charlie Roger, Charles Yancey both re-elected; Steve Miller newly joining the board

**President of the board:** Emily Pollack

Emily Pollack thanked outgoing president, Steve Miller, for his years of outstanding service.

She reminded members that there is a picnic coming up in August.

The new president invited members to take advantage of Volunteer Openings in the areas of:

Journal needs; audio visual team; study groups and leads in history and in urban agriculture.

President Emily Pollack thanked the following people and presented them with an MISF candle, Enlightening the Community:"

- The day's speaker, Larry Baker, for coming in on short notice and looking forward to his inspiring presentation on urban ecosystems.
- Sue Hunter Weir for the history group meetings at the History Center.
- Bill McTeer for updating the website with Mike Woolsey.
- The newly elected board members;
- The current and outgoing board members: Lucy Brusic, Ruth Campbell, Curt Hillstrom, Evelyn Klein, Charlie Rogers, Carol Rudie, Dale Schwie, Peter Simmons, Barb Sommer, Mike Woolsey, Charles Yancy, Steve Miller.

The program followed immediately after conclusion of the business meeting.

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## Can Understanding Urban Ecosystems Improve Our Odds?

Presented by Larry Baker

Following many centuries of mostly agrarian lives, more than half of the people on our planet now live in cities. Early industrial cities were a mess, choked with smog, filthy water, large epidemics to the point that lifespans around 1900 were shorter for folks living in cities than in the countryside. Yet urbanization has increased globally.

Early industrial cities were a mess. Pittsburgh had considerable industrial smog in 1914, for example. Early industrial cities had terrible water and sanitation until about the 1940s. Clean water technologies greatly reduced mortality rates and cut infant mortality rates by 70%. Water pollution from untreated sewage was ubiquitous. Garbage was often dumped into the nearest low spot.

Eventually, urban ecosystems were put in philosophical perspective of two views. The

anthropocentric view involved manifest destiny, scientific forestry, 20<sup>th</sup> century engineers, among others. The biocentric view included sanctity of nature, transcendentalism, and most 20<sup>th</sup> century ecologists.

Baker posed the question of what is an urban ecosystem? To this he responded that it is related to socioeconomic drivers and patterns of human activities.

In answer to what are the elements that affect ground water, the response was to reduce nitrogen inputs to crops by accounting for nitrogen in groundwater.

Temperatures have also affected the ecosystem. Misery hours per day, as he called them, have gone up and doubled between the years 1950 and 1998. Heat problems have also caused other urban problems, such as higher crime, poor quality cotton,

decreased milk production, heat-related deaths, impact on plants and insects.

Cities are where humans have the greatest impact on climate and where the impacts of climate change are felt most by humans. Effects of choices on household carbon are greater in a single-family dwelling, however, than in a multi-dwelling structure and is therefore disproportionate between same size households.

It is important to establish source control for stormwater nutrients. In that respect, the Prior Lake Street Sweeping Project was initiated. The question was: Can source reduction be used to reduce phosphorus entering lakes? The short answer is yes. The Prior Lake Street Sweeping Project is now recognized as a cost-effective, quantified way to

reduce phosphorus to urban waters. But it took ten years to get there.

Multidisciplinary research is needed for sustainability of our cities. This research needs to include hydrologists, sociologists, economists, political scientists, environmental engineers, and ecologists. In the meantime, people need to think about how can we choose to reduce our personal CO2 emissions. Our daily decision of car use, for instance, and household infrastructure come into play as well as location and housing density.

Larry Baker is a Research Professor Emeritus, DFL Environmental Caucus, and a budding novelist.

A lively question and answer period followed the program.

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August 2024

## MISF Annual Picnic

The annual MISF picnic was held this year at Mounds Park in St. Paul. Attendees brought a dish to share. Close to thirty people attended the event. It

was a perfect opportunity to visit with members and visitors on a more personal level.

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September 28, 2024

## Power Behind Your Writing, What Every Writer Needs to Know

Presenter Evelyn D. Klein

Author Evelyn Klein discussed the motivation behind writing her book, *Power Behind Your Writing, What Every Writer Needs to Know*. She began her discussion by telling the audience that the seed for her love and curiosity of language was sowed when she was in elementary school, and she found out words actually have histories.

Over the course of many years of teaching English, language arts, linguistics, communications and German, she began developing contents of this book in order to fill specific classroom needs to help students be effective writers and second language learners. Thus, she devised specific exercises and activities that helped students achieve these goals with

a personalized approach. She was inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein, British philosopher who said: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world."

Of course, the presenter noted that at MISF she was talking to the choir with their many excellent writers, but she was here to share content, purpose, and inspiration of the book for students and writers of all ages. The book could serve as text or reference.

The book is based on the idea that if we understand the complexities of the English language, we are better able to make effective use of it. Therefore, the book is divided into two major parts: The first part is Roots and Branches of English and the Story of English. This is intended to give readers a better understanding of the make-up of the English

language, as well as to indicate that a living language is always in flux with new vocabulary, changes in meaning, and obsolete or dated expressions and vocabulary.

The second part of the book addresses Components, Structures and Principles of Language, including Sentence Components: Parts of Speech and Language Structures that Carry Writing: Sentence Types. The presenter explained how Parts of Speech are introduced in terms of not only traditional grammar but also functional grammar in a more workable approach that takes the guesswork out of identifying the parts of speech necessary to constructing sentences. An appendix of irregular verbs can be found at the end of the book.

The section Sentence Types introduces four main types, drawing on the relevant parts of speech for

their construction. This gives students an idea of what constitutes a complete sentence, one that is also coherent and clear. At the same time, this activity aids in placing appropriate punctuation marks. But for those looking for the definition of punctuation marks, a chapter on punctuation has also been added.

In part two, each chapter is followed by a suggested exercise where students or writers can practice what has just been explained. The purpose of this book is not to practice grammar for its own sake but to relate structural form and choice of language to writing that communicates clearly and accurately in a language that is always in flux and communicates well with today's readers.

The presentation was followed by a lively, hour-long discussion. Books were available for purchase. About 14 people were in attendance.

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October 26, 2024

## **Living the Intentional Community: The Appeal of Cohousing**

Presenters Becca Brackett and Lynn Englund

**B**ecca Brackett, retired M.D., Secretary of TCCN, founding member of Cedar Cohousing and Lynn Englund, Treasurer of TCCN, co-founding member of Cedar Cohousing in Minnesota explained how the Twin Cities Cohousing Network is catalyzing cohousing in Minnesota.

Cohousing is an alternative housing model with full-featured living accommodations. It forms a special type of intentional community by a group of people who have chosen to live together. It is intended to prevent social isolation and some of the problems associated with it. It can bring people of different ages together, people who like to experience common interactions with others and share in some daily tasks.

Cohousing has successfully been undertaken in Europe and was started in Denmark in the 1970s. It is now finding its place in different areas of the U.S. For instance, in Wisconsin, we find Arboretum Cohousing with forty individual units and all generations. In Stillwater, Minnesota, we find a senior

community of 24 units of adults fifty-five years and over with a common house and patio. In Seattle, Washington, we find Capitol Hill Urban Housing with nine units in a multi-generational setting.

Boomers imagine new opportunities in such a setting. Cohousing makes it easier to make friends. Both younger and older families can benefit, as they share possessions, spaces, and workloads.

To live in a co-housing community requires an effective group process and non-violent communication. A self-managed consensus decides what is best for the group. People work through objections to improve proposals until all agree.

Cohousing can influence society and the greater community. Daily tasks can be made easier by ideas shared on the way to work, carpooling kids to daycare, asking a neighbor for a cup of sugar, happy hour in the common house, to name a few. It can also cut down on the use of community resources and be easier on the environment.

Cohousing requires clear expectations. Each community has to come to consensus on such things as work requirements, ability, interests, and so on.

Two types of exchanges exist in housing: Transactional vs. Generalized. Transactional exchanges rely on direct reciprocity. Generalized

transactions rely on indirect reciprocity, where everyone relies on each other's contributions.

The presentation was followed by an extended discussion of the appeal and workability of cohousing, on legalities and rules for the community. About eighteen people were in attendance.

November 16, 2024

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## Family Declassified: Uncovering My Grandfather's Journey from Spy to Children's Book Author

Presenter Katherine Fennelly

Katherine Fennelly embarked on a family research project after receiving a letter about her maternal grandfather from researchers in Austria, who were writing a book about him as a spy. She also learned, through 23andMe, that she is of Ashkenazi Jewish heritage on the maternal side of her family. Her research led to publishing *Family Declassified: Uncovering My Grandfather's Journey from Spy to Children's Book Author* (Sunbury Press, 2023).

She came to some conclusions regarding her grandfather's silence about his work with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which later became the CIA. She remembers seeing her grandfather only four times. She still wonders why her mother and grandmother, whom she knew intimately, never talked about her grandfather.

Part of her presentation, a description of the process of her research, included sources she used: family, government documents, academic and public libraries, newspaper archives, social media, and correspondence with experts. She found the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, to be particularly helpful. She wove together her family history and history of Hungary during WWII.

Francis "Ferko" Kalnay was born in 1899 in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There was a myth in the family that his mother had died when he was one year old. In reality, she'd been sent to an insane asylum, where she lived for 20 years.

When Ferko was 15, he entered the Royal Hungarian Maritime Academy. He joined the Imperial Merchant Marines in 1919. From 1922 to 1941 he was in the Foreign Language Information Service, where he served as an editorial advisor. He spoke seven languages and joined the OSS in December, 1941. He began in oral intelligence, became the director of the Survey of Foreign Experts in 1943, became the head

of the Balkans' Unit of X-2 (a top secret branch) in 1944, and left the OSS in December, 1945.

Fennelly used the Aeon Timeline, which connects events to people and places to put her grandfather's journey into the context of the times. Hungary had the second largest population of Jews, after Poland, in the 1940s. Hitler invaded Hungary in March 1944. Nearly 600,000 Jews were murdered within 12 months, including Ferko's sister and nephew. While this had been a golden age for Hungarian Jews, and the Jewish religion had been on a par with Christianity, Christian Nationalism took hold in Hungary and thousands more Jews were deported under Adolph Eichmann. Jewish families in Budapest were required to wear yellow stars and to live in yellow star homes.

Ferko frequently traveled to Argentina when he was in the Foreign Language Information Service. He married Elsie in Argentina in 1924. They had two daughters, Fennelly's mother being the elder.

Ferko abandoned Elsie in 1953 and fled to Mexico. In addition to having been a spy, a trainer of spies, and a war hero, he was a man of many talents. While living in Mexico, he designed homes that brought tourism to the town.

He wrote several children's books. He also wrote articles about cooking for *House Beautiful*. In 1974, at the age of 75, he migrated to Carmel, California, where he lived and was cared for by a granddaughter until he died in 1993.

How might one explain hidden Jewish ancestry? Some coping measures, which are common among victims of trauma, include: protecting self and future generations, repression of difficult memories as a mechanism of survival, and a response to continuing antisemitism.

Fennelly shared a quote: "When a secret is shared with more than two people and across a generation, the secret itself becomes a thing and



breaking it becomes a social taboo,” Eviatar Zerubavel *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life*. (Oxford University Press).

This lecture was presented on Zoom and had about 12 participants. It was also offered in person.

~Ruth Campbell

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## Study and Discussion Groups

Study groups meet monthly at 7:00 p.m. over Zoom, unless otherwise designated. Books and topics are chosen by participating, attending members. See Meetup.

**History Group:** Meets first Wednesday of the month. No meetings in July and August. Facilitated by Emily Pollack.

**Philosophy Group:** Meets second Wednesday of the month, ongoing. Facilitated by Curt Hillstrom.

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## Upcoming Programs and Meetings

MISF meetings currently take place at the Ramsey County Public Library, Shoreview, at 4570 Victoria Street North, Shoreview, MN 55126, 651-724-6006.

Membership meetings generally occur on the fourth Saturday of the month, except for November, when it is usually held on the third Saturday. No membership meetings are held in July, August, and December. Meetings begin at 10:30 a.m. and usually last until 12 noon. Everyone is welcome.

**January 25, 2025**

### **The Accidental Hero: How a WWII Czech Liberation Story Is a Current Event**

**Presenter: Patrick Dewane**

A string of jaw-dropping coincidences in the last week of WWII had Colonel Matt Konop liberating the same Czech villages his grandparents had left for Wisconsin in the 1860s. Konop's first language was Czech, and the town's people paraded him around town on their shoulders, declaring, "One of our own has freed us!" However, like many returning veterans, Konop did not talk about his experiences after the war. And when he died in 1983, his family knew nothing of the story that changed his life. When the Czech Communist Party took power in a coup in 1948, his story, and America's role in Czech liberation, was whitewashed out of the official history. Twenty-three years after Konop's death, his grandson discovered his unpublished memoir and turned it into a one-man show called "The Accidental Hero" that he's performed across America and annually in the Czech Republic. The Czechs have posthumously made Konop an Honorary Citizen and have awarded his grandson, Patrick Dewane, a Medal of Honor for reviving their history. In this program, Dewane will perform excerpts of his award-winning show and will read from his book about his grandfather.

**Patrick Dewane** has performed his one-man show, "The Accidental Hero," over 20 times across the United States, including Ford's Theater in Washington,

D.C., the University of Florida, the Marcus Center in Milwaukee, and the University of Notre Dame. His annual tour of the show to the Czech Republic began in 2013 and has included the U.S. Embassy in Prague, Peko Theater in Pilsen, and Kino in Domažlice, where he was awarded the city's Medal of Honor. Dewane's management career in the arts includes a stint on Broadway and senior-level positions with The Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Minnesota Opera, where his *New Works Initiative* program produced Kevin Put's *Silent Night*, the winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for music. He was nominated for an Emmy as Executive Producer of the PBS broadcast of *Silent Night*. He has an MFA from Brooklyn College and taught writing at the graduate school of St. Mary's University of Minnesota. He and his wife live in Edina.

**February 25, 2025**

### **Uncommon Common Sense: Riding the Dragons of Complexity**

**Presenter: Glenda H. Eoyang, Ph.D.**

Complexity sciences, and their application to human systems, have been around since the early 1980s, but the power in academe, business, industry, and government still sit squarely in Newtonian worldviews. Why? What are the challenges of thinking through the lens of complex adaptive systems? In the history of science, practice leads theory into a new paradigm. (Continued on Page 16)

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(Continued from Page 15, Glenda Eoyang, February 25)

We see the influence of complexity all around us today, while the theory remains at the edges of disciplines like economics, public health, education, public policy, business, philanthropy, and politics. Explore the underlying assumptions that inform future-oriented practice while they challenge traditional theory. Eoyang calls these radical views of reality dragons. Today, too, “there be dragons” beyond the bounds of traditional knowledge. You will explore six radical ideas that will inform your personal understanding and action in a complex world.

**Glenda H. Eoyang, Ph.D.** is Founding Executive Director of Human Systems Dynamics Institute. She works with public and private organizations to help them thrive in the face of overwhelming complexity and uncertainty. She is a pioneer in the applications of complexity science to human systems, and she founded the field of human systems dynamics (HSD) in 2001. She received her B.A. in physics and philosophy from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, New Mexico and her doctorate in Human Systems Dynamics from the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Through Human Systems Dynamics Institute, she leads a global network of over one thousand scholar-practitioners. They apply HSD to wicked problems ranging from early childhood education to violent extremism, public health, and corporate futures and strategy. She has published across disciplines in both academic and practitioner literature. Her book *Adaptive Action: Leveraging Uncertainty in Your Organization* (Stanford University Press, 2013) outlines her wide-ranging theory and practice. It is a roadmap for anyone who chooses to work at the intersection of order and chaos.

**March 25, 2025**

**A Brief Introduction to the History of Artmaking in Minnesota**

**Presenter: Brian Szott**

From such historic luminaries as Seth Eastman and Alexis Fournier to contemporary artists, Jim Denomie and Dan Bruggeman, this lecture will review the nearly 200-year history of artmaking in Minnesota. Bring your questions.

Art historian **Brian Szott**, curator of Art at the Minnesota Historical Society from 2001 to 2022, organized numerous exhibitions, including Seth Eastman: *Artist on the Frontier; Thank God and FDR*, and *Art Speaks*. Previously, he was Director of MCAD Gallery at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Szott is a co-author of the 2015 Afton Press publication *Minnesota Modern: Four Artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

**April 26, 2025**

To be determined.

**May 24 2025**

**Ginny Hanson Poetry Day**

Presenter to be determined.

**June 28, 2025**

**Annual Business Meeting**

Program to be determined.