A Little Cyanide with Your Coffee?

Please join us on Tuesday, September 13 for the Fall Coffee at 9:30 a.m. at Blackhawk Country Club to hear a presentation with this intriguing title.

Professor Deborah Blum, a Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer, will speak about murder and the birth of forensic medicine in Jazz Age New York. She’s the author of five popular science books, most recently the best-selling title, The Poisoner’s Handbook. She teaches writing at the University of Wisconsin, where she is currently the Helen Firstbrook Franklin Professor of Journalism.

Before joining the faculty in 1997, she worked at The Sacramento Bee, where she won the Pulitzer in 1992 for beat reporting. She has also written for publications including The New York Times, Slate, The Wall Street Journal, Science News, and New Scientist. Her work has been featured on The Today Show, Good Morning America, and NPR’s This American Life and Talk of the Nation/ Science Friday among others.

Earlier books include Ghost Hunters, published in 2006; Love at Goon Park, a 2002 finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize; Sex on the Brain, a 1997 New York Times Notable Book, and The Monkey Wars. She is also co-editor of A Field Guide for Science Writers.

A past president of the National Association of Science Writers, she now serves on the board of the Council for Advance of Science Writing and the board of the World Federation of Science Journalists. She currently blogs at Speakeasy Science, part of the PLoS network, and for Women in Crime Ink.
Message from Mona

Happy 110th birthday University League!

Since our inception in May of 1901, the University League has found ways to promote social contacts and opportunities for faculty as well as women students. We have honed our mission to include service, education, scholarships and friendship. And our outreach has long been expanded to all students and the community.

With the solid work of last year’s long range planning committee, our purpose is based on a firm foundation. Our challenge today is to determine the best way to communicate our continuing mission.

In June, Kathy Knox, Mary Jo Willis and I traveled to the Big Ten conference at Purdue University. The theme of the conference was “Soaring to New Heights – Connect, Share, Discover.” The entire Purdue campus seemed to welcome us to an information-packed weekend where we interacted with the now twelve schools that are part of the Big Ten Women’s Organizations. What a wonderful event!

Topics shared were ones familiar to many of today’s organizations: maintaining current memberships, attracting new and younger members as well as those newly retired, communicating the value of membership, and identifying our audience. We came home with renewed enthusiasm and many ideas to try here in Wisconsin as you will see in the offerings in this newsletter and our University League yearbook.

Our goals are several which are logically intertwined. A major effort will be to expand the University and Dane county communities’ knowledge of our organization. We need to enlist an ever expanding, diverse membership for its support in fulfilling the aims of our all volunteer group.

You can help us enhance the work, the joy, the knowledge and camaraderie that League membership brings to individuals. Help us grow our organization.

Begin it all by attending the fall coffee on September 13th to hear UW-Madison Professor of Journalism & Mass Communication and Pulitzer Prizing-winning science writer Deborah Blum who will speak on the intriguing topic of “A Little Cyanide with Your Coffee?” The event begins at 9:30 at Blackhawk Country Club, and we hope to have some of our scholarship recipients in attendance.

Many thanks to all of you who generously helped us kick off this 110th anniversary year by contributing to the scholarship funds, which many believe to be the main purpose of the League.

I look forward to a wonderful year, sharing our efforts.
Mona Steele, President
O Captain My Captain…introducing Mona Steele

With apologies to poet Walt Whitman, who joins us (in absentia) in welcoming our new Captain -- Mona Steele. A native of Appleton and the second of four children, Captain Steele’s academic voyage began with ports of call at Beloit College, UW-Madison, and Columbia University, where she earned her B.S. degree in physical therapy. After an initial 4-year anchorage at the Port of New York, Captain Mona and her physician husband set sail for safe harbors at Madison, Nashville, Baltimore, Chicago, and back to Madison -- truly a hectic but grand circle tour.

Captain Mona’s navigational skills emerge in an amazing plethora of volunteer civic leadership positions: League of Women Voters on the local, state, and national levels (Wisconsin president and national secretary-treasurer); Wisconsin Women’s Network (chair); Junior League; Attic Angel Association; Elvehjem Museum of Art (docent); and, of course, University League. A member for over two decades and a past vice-president for programs, she presently cruises with two University League interest groups: Book Critics and Foreign Foods.

On the starboard side, Captain Mona cites as particularly interesting her role as a steering committee member for the Vaccine Public Engagement Project (US Centers for Disease Control). The committee’s topic was civic engagement, centering around the subtopic of vaccines. Most importantly, our capable Captain has worked diligently throughout all these civic activities to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in the democratic process and to increase citizen understanding of major public issues. Indeed, she is a real public servant - quite a rarity in this day and age!

Captain Mona and her Co-captain, UW nephrologist Dr. Thomas Steele, have gathered a family crew of three daughters and a son -- two lawyers, one architect, and one business entrepreneur -- now anchored at Salem Oregon; Chicago; and Washington, D.C. Our new leader is especially passionate about her six grandchildren (ages 4-16) and also about gardening, art history, and reading. Rumor has it that she is a great cook, often found delightfully puttering in her dazzling new ship’s gallery. At the helm, as she embarks upon this nautical leadership journey. Captain Steele plans to encourage an increase in scholarship funds and a greater diversity among University League membership (i.e., age and ethnicity). For example, she hopes that the new Wine Interest Group will encourage younger recruits to come aboard.

Once again, as the Good Ship University League sets sail for the 2011-2012 season, let us wish to Captain Mona Steele and to this venerable organization fair winds and seas. Bon Voyage to all!

(By Barbara Pillinger)
Meet our Scholarship Recipient: Pamela Dorton

The University League has awarded the Cynthia Youmans Endowed Scholarship to Pamela Dorton. Pamela is a returning adult student and is pursuing a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning. She is studying green design and how it affects the health of building users in schools and office buildings. She has a master’s degree in interior design, specializing in historic preservation and green design. Pam says “I have always been interested in healthy living, whether this come from the correct selection of food for my family or environmental factors that contribute to sustainable living or healthy environments.”

Pamela’s career path has taken great perseverance. She is a single parent who has raised two sons. She took breaks from school to raise money to continue her education as well as to educate her college-age sons. She is working two jobs, one full-time and one part-time, while she continues her schooling full-time.

Membership Update

As of August 1, 2011, The University League membership is 374 individuals and 54 spouses/partners for a total of 428 paid members. We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Beverly Green, Keesia Hyzer, Charlotte Meyers, Anna Peczerski, Joyce Probstein, Barbara Sullivan and Bill and Edie Swift. A special “Thank You” to Dorothy Binning, Mona Steele, Robbie Preston and Helen Lackore for making phone calls for renewal reminders.

Each year we lose members due their moving or ill health. Please encourage your friends or family members to join our organization. Membership recruitment is not just the work of the Membership Development Committee, but each and every member of University League. Consider inviting a friend to the Fall Coffee in September and then inviting them to join. Pat Feltskog, Membership Chair, will be happy to send our brochure to interested people. Please either call her at 238-9836 or email at pafeltsk@wisc.edu. We can increase our membership with your help.

Make a Difference - Share Your Time and Talent

The University League Board needs new Board members for next year. Board members meet new people, learn new skills, and share their knowledge. By serving as a Board member, you can help the League continue to support scholarships, service, education and friendship while you are having a good time. Board service is two years - during the first year you serve as an assistant and learn the job and during the second year you do the job and train your successor. Please help Roma Lenehan and the Nominating Committee (to be announced in September) to find a new Board. To volunteer or suggest a nominee, contact Roma (238-5406 or rlnahan@charter.net).
“My Grandmother Had One of Those!”

The 2010-11 Antiques Group, under the able leadership of Elinor Zach and Gail Yu, enjoyed a fun and interesting year. Monthly programs featured “Coral’s Treasures,” a basket collection, ceramics, early kitchen utensils, vintage Christmas ornaments, and Korean antiques. In April the group visited a beautifully restored 19th century stone house. Finally, in May, this merry troupe ventured forth to Delafield and Wales. Barbara Pillinger planned an engaging day for 14 intrepid antiquarians (see photo), which included lunch at the lovely Delafield Hotel, followed by an informational program and shopping (oh, yes…) at the Antiques Center at Wales (Route 18E). The Antiques Group looks forward to another great year of “Serendipity” (i.e., unexpected treasure). Please join us!

(photos by Karen Goebel)

Norma Magnuson, University League Historian, and Barbara Pillinger, Scholarship Benefit Chair, admire a colorful yellowware bowl.

Coral Bishop discovered a possible “namesake” -- an “Alfred Bishop and Sons, Ltd.” advertising sign from a shop in London.
New University League Interest Groups

We have a few new groups Interest Groups ready to go. Contact the Interest Group’s leader if you are interested in any new group. (If you are a new member of any group, who didn’t register in Pay in May, please contact the chair to confirm your interest in that group. All leadership information is listed in the UL 2011-2012 Yearbook)

Wine Divas  If you’re a neophyte or a maven in this field, consider this event. Every 3rd Friday 4 – 6:00 pm interested members will meet at various venues, both public and private, to taste selected wines and champagnes from local, national, and international wineries. Come join this new group to experience different wines and food pairings that will add to your dining pleasure. Singles and couples welcome. Mary Jo Willis (467-8608; mjwillis@wisc.edu) will provide initial leadership.

Afternoon at the Movies Consider joining this new group to go to the movies and to share insights after the movies over a cup of coffee or a meal. It has its target time for viewing around 4 pm on the 2nd Tuesday. This is the best time and day to get the best ticket price at most cinemas including Sundance. Roma Lenehan (238-5406; rlenehan@charter.net) will coordinate the group since she knows the ins and outs of group movie-going, having organized a group of friends who go to the movies weekly. Singles and couples welcome.

Mah Jongg, the Chinese game played with tiles, is a game of skill, strategy and calculation and a certain degree of chance. It is similar to the Western card game of rummy. Beginning lessons will be offered Sept. 20, Sept 27, Oct. 4 and Oct 11. Lessons will be 9 am-11 am. Once everyone is familiar with how to play, the group will decide if they wish to meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. To begin, meetings are scheduled at 9:00am on Tuesdays but may change if another time works better for those involved. If interested in joining, please call Linda Harvey (271-6488; gmaharvey@charter.net).

Knitting will be led by Kate Beaver (848-5855; rosadog99@hotmail.com), who conceived the idea. Yet the specifics, whether it’s for beginners and/or frequent knitters are yet to be decided, but if this group interests you, give Kate a call. She intends to have the group up and running by February 2012. Your interest will determine the focus of the group, so let her know your interests and experience so she can plan.

Financial Updates for 2012 will study current and relevant financial topics. Fall term will offer glimpses of financial markets (stocks, bonds, ETFs etc.) presented by professionals, while spring term will focus on the real estate market also led by professional brokers. Are there interested members willing to host? If interested, please contact Kay Jarvis-Sladky (831-9331; holakati2@gmail.com). Meeting dates are at 7pm on the 3rd Wednesdays at members’ homes.

IT for the Technically Challenged. We are looking for a chair for this interest group. Kay Jarvis-Sladky asks that those interested in chairing or co-chairing this group, please contact her (831-9331; holakati2@gmail.com)
University League Fall Coffee Reservation Form
Due by Tuesday, September 6, 2011

Program: “A Little Cyanide with Your Coffee?” by Professor Deborah Blum

Time and Place: Tuesday, September 13 at 9:30 at Blackhawk Country Club

Member: _______________________________________

Guest: _________________________________________

_____ Reservations @ $12.00 each = _________

+ Scholarship donation _________

Total = ___________

Check(s) payable to: The University League, Inc.

Mail to: Linda Harvey, 5801 Tolman Terrace, Madison, WI 53711