Historic Pandemic 2021 University League Benefit is here!

Let’s help our UW Scholarship Winners flourish as they navigate through the year of Covid, by making this the year of record donations. Our Stay at Home Benefit is more fitting than any other year due to pandemic restrictions that ask us to stay at home to be safe. So spread the word to GIVE!

From MacKenzie Kerchefski, with an interest in Global Health by focusing on Internal Medicine, to Andrew Rodriguez, studying Accounting and Finance, to Ayden Schultz, majoring in Computer Science and Philosophy, these three scholarship winners are grateful to have your generous financial support. (Pictured social distancing and masked at the Allen Centennial Gardens are: MacKenzie, Andrew, and Ayden.)

“Just as April showers bring May flowers, your generous dollars inspire UW Scholars!” So, let’s make this an historic year for donations by helping all our scholarship winners thrive in their efforts to become University of Wisconsin graduates. They are our positive ambassadors and the future leaders in this world of uncertainty. Watch for your invitation to donate, coming in February.
Greetings University League Members,

January has arrived, and 2020 is now behind us. It was a year of the good, the bad, the outrageous, and everything in between, one that none of us will ever forget. Though difficult for so many, I hope nevertheless that you can name some positives to come out of the tumultuous past twelve months: perhaps closer family ties despite (or because of) Covid, personal accomplishments, helping neighbors and community, new friendships made and old ones strengthened, just to name a few. As 2021 gets underway, let’s continue to stay connected with each other, to be of service to others, and to be grateful for all that we do have that makes our lives worthwhile.

January is also the month when the Scholarship Benefit Committee is in the final stage of launching the annual Stay at Home benefit, which runs from February 1 through April 30. Of all the activities University League undertakes, the Stay at Home benefit, whose proceeds go into the General Scholarship Fund, is the most pertinent to our goal of providing scholarship support to UW-Madison students. I urge each of you to make a contribution to this effort. Any amount is welcome and appreciated. We are hoping to increase our members’ level of participation (100% would be wonderful!) since so many students are in a state of financial uncertainty in the wake of Covid. Every dollar you contribute helps a struggling student.

I’ve read numerous thank-you letters from our scholarship recipients. They reveal an amazing variety of majors, extending to every school and college at the University, from more traditional ones such as Education, Psychology, and History, to Neurobiology, Pharmacology/Toxicology, and Genetics. The students are impressive, and their achievements are numerous. Please show your support for our future teachers, doctors, researchers and leaders by contributing to the 2021 Stay-at-Home benefit campaign. Watch for your invitation to come in the mail late this month.

If your Interest Group hasn’t been meeting due to the pandemic, I urge you to consider setting up your meetings on Zoom, if feasible, or to join one of the groups that currently does meet on Zoom. Contact Interest Group Chair Susan Ihler, sjihler@gmail.com, or me, university.league2017@gmail.com for assistance. We can help you to get started. Groups now meeting regularly on Zoom include Armchair Travelers, Book Discussion, French Reading and Conversation, Genealogy, Spanish Conversation, Spanish Reading/Literature, Technology, and Wine Divas and Dudes. Check our website for their current activities. All of them welcome new members and have excellent programs to offer. That said about Zoom, do not forget Bird Study, which meets in person outdoors on Friday mornings while observing social-distancing guidelines.

I send each of you my best wishes for a healthy, happy 2021. May it be a year bright with hope for all.

Joan Leffler
Hello University League Members,

We, the UL Nominating Committee, are in need of your assistance!

While we are working very hard at filling the Board of Directors positions, we are in need of your help. If you have ever wanted to be more involved in University League, NOW is the time, here is your opportunity. The following positions have to be filled:

- Reservationist, 2021-2022
- Assistant Program Chr., 2021-2022
- Assistant Treasurer, 2021-2022
- Assistant Scholarship Benefit Director, 2021-2022
- Assistant Publicity Chr., 2021-2022
- and President Elect, 2020-2022

IF you are interested or know of a member who would be interested in Co-Chairing with you in one of these positions, we hope that you would consider taking an open position. IF you are a long-standing member OR a new member, we welcome your voice. Please contact me, Barbara Rogers, Nominating Committee Chair, and let me know your wishes. I can be reached by email at barbierog54@gmail.com.

Thank you for considering these positions to fill our UL Board of Directors.
Barbara Rogers, University League Nominating Committee Chair

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Pre-pandemic Outdoor Paella Party for League friends hosted by Bob and Kay Jarvis-Sladky in their backyard several years ago featured some wonderful food and comraderie to end the year. This is just another example of ways that joining the University League widens horizons you never knew you lacked!
2020 has really been an interesting year for us all especially our 21 Interest Group Leaders. Presently we have 12 groups meeting on ZOOM, one utilizing social distancing and masks outdoors, and one meeting via email to share favorite recipes (see a favorite recipe on page 5). For your information, the groups that are presently meeting are: Armchair Travelers, Bird Study, Book Critics, Dining Out for Lunch, French Reading and Conversation, Genealogy, Spanish Conversation, International Foods, Spanish Reading/Literature, Technology, and Wine Divas and Dudes. New members, if you are interested, visit the University League website, www.univleague.wisc.edu or check your Yearbook for information on joining any of these groups. They’d love to have you join them.

The Technology Group met on Wednesday, December 9th at 9:30 a.m. The topic was “Tips for Working with Zoom.” All are invited to future meetings; contact Mary Jo Willis, mjwillis@wisc.edu for information.

I am in the preliminary stages of compiling and comparing Interest Group data from last year (2019-2020) and this year (2020-2021). One interesting fact is that two/thirds of our University League members are participants in at least one Interest Group.

Group Meeting News

Artiques Group
We waiting to gather again when it is safe, as almost all of our meetings are via field trips. The ones we had planned last spring were cancelled. We hope the group will be able to reconvene again in the spring of 2021. If you are interested in joining the Artiques Group when next we are able to meet, please get in touch with Diane Smidt at diane.schmidt@gmail.com or 608-833-1760. (Note: For those of you who are new to the League, in 2018 the Art Appreciation and Antiques Interest Groups combined into one group, “Artiques.”)

Armchair Travelers
For October 5th, we discussed the effects on us, during a pandemic, of travel internationally, nationally and in Wisconsin. What were the experiences, positive or negative on the restrictions that we have been experiencing since last February? Elaine Rosenblatt, who was the University of Wisconsin Travel Nurse and used to travel all the time, led the discussion.

In November, we went with Cindy May on a journey up the Nile and visited a major attraction, Abu Simbel was one. This huge rock-cut temple is at the border between Lower Nubia and Upper Nubia. There are actually two temples: the Great Temple, dedicated to Ramesses II himself, and the Small Temple, dedicated to his chief wife Queen Nefertari. These temples were threatened with destruction by the construction of the Aswan Dam and were moved by cutting them into huge blocks and moved up to higher ground where they are today. What a task!

On December 7, we Armchair Zoomed to explore “Inner Spain” where most visitors to Spain never go to visit. Along with our leader, Dr. Julie M. Dahl, a UW professor who directs the Spanish language program for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Continuing Studies, we discovered fascinating examples of Spain’s varied history and the rich daily cultural practices that continue to make Spain unique. Phoenicians, Celts, Romans, Visigoths, and Arabs all left their mark on Spain before the rise of the Christian medieval and renaissance culture that filled the country with cathedrals and beautiful architecture.

Meeting News continued on Page 5
**International Foods Group** – Sally Carpenter

The recipe from the International Foods Group this month is from an Indian dinner we had in 1997. It got rave reviews and seems like a good winter recipe. At the dinner it was served with a shrimp dish, cucumber raita, and several other courses.

**Spinach and Sweet Pepper Rice (Saag aur Mirch Pullao)**

- 2 c. basmati rice
- 3 ¼ c. water
- 3 tbs. vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- 10 green cardamom pods, pounded lightly to break the skin
- One 3-inch stick cinnamon
- 2 bunches fresh spinach, washed, tough stems removed, and chopped (1 pound)
- 2 c. seeded and finely diced red and yellow bell peppers
- 1 tbs. peeled and minced fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. salt, or to taste

Wash the rice until the water runs clear. Then soak it in the 3 ¼ c. water for 30 minutes. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over high heat and cook the cumin fennel, cardamom, and cinnamon, stirring for about 1 minute. Stir in the spinach and peppers and continue to cook until the spinach is wilted, about 2 minutes. Remove spinach and peppers to a bowl and set aside. Leave the cardamom pods and cinnamon in the pan. Stir in the rice and water. Add the ginger and salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a minimum, cover the pan (partially at first, until the foam subsides, then snugly), and cook until done, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer rice to a serving platter, gently mix in the reserved spinach and peppers, and serve hot. Serves 6 to 8 depending on what it is served with. Bon Appetit!

Call Sally Carpenter (608-630-7334) if you have questions about the recipe or about our interest group. We welcome new members!

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**University League Volunteering Is a Fun Activity**

Even at volunteer recognition events, League members have a good time together. Cindy May, a long-time volunteer for WPT (now PBS Wisconsin), organizes University League volunteers for their fundraisers. Although everyone dressed for the occasion, Cindy and Joan received recognition for their attire. They were prize winners...literally.

Joan Leffler, Cathy Andersson, Cindy May and Kay Jarvis-Sladky at the Wisconsin Public Television's Annual Volunteers gathering September 25, 2019
IN MEMORIAM

**Helen Louise Hartley Kuntz**, died Sunday, October 11, 2020. She was almost 101 years old and proud of it. Helen will be remembered by her family and many friends as a lovely, gracious and generous woman (and a loyal and diehard Badger and Packers supporter) during the 77 years she lived in Madison. Madison was the perfect place for her to hone her many skills as a teacher, naturalist and librarian. Helen, a long-time member of University League (years ago, she was made an “Honorary Life Member” because of her contributions to and continuing involvement with University League), kept her membership current even though she wasn’t always able to attend our events and meetings. As a working librarian and tutor, she was very much a reader and was especially active in several League book interest groups.

**Alice O. Hansen**, born in South Dakota in 1935, passed away on Thursday, June 11, 2020. A lifelong singer, she had an elegant soprano voice. From her first solo at age 3 to her final solo 81 years later at the Oakwood Chapel in Madison, Wis., singing was one of her greatest passions and gifts. Alice and her husband Marc were enthusiastic travelers, traveling to all seven continents and Greenland. They enjoyed visiting cousins in Norway and Sweden, and entertaining them when they visited the U.S. They also traveled extensively in the U.S., but especially loved the area around Yellowstone National Park and the Beartooth Mountains of Montana, where they summered at their cabin. As a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Alice was an active partner and Board member in the Bethel Homeless program, serving persons in transition, poverty or other difficulties.

MEMBERSHIP

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS: Please check your directory listing in the 2020-2021 Yearbook and send corrections/changes to Cindy May, clmay@wisc.edu or phone 848-9291. THANK YOU!
The University League Needs More Members – Please Help! – Cindy May

Each year, the University League loses around thirty members, many due to age, relocation, illness, or death. It is vital that the League maintain or increase its total membership in order to meet budget obligations. This is always difficult, but even more so during the current pandemic. Please help out by promoting our organization to friends and family whenever an opportunity arises. Below is a template for a short membership pitch to use as a starting point, to be edited as you see fit for each occasion. For instance, you could include just the interest groups and volunteer opportunities you think might appeal to that individual. If someone is interested, please ask for their mailing address, phone number, and email address, then forward to me. I would be delighted to follow up by contacting them, telling them more about the League, mailing them a brochure, etc. If you'd like some brochures to hand out, please let me know.

Membership Pitch

Here are some points to talk to prospective members and your friends about:

• Have you heard of The University League? It's a non-profit membership organization that raises funds for University of Wisconsin-Madison student scholarships, plans events and activities that support learning and friendship, and promotes volunteer opportunities.
• Membership is open to anyone, male or female, who supports its mission. No UW-Madison affiliation is necessary.
• In 2020 the League gave more than $128,000 in scholarships and gifts to the UW-Madison community. Over the past decade, it has given more than a million dollars.
• The League offers a wide variety of interest groups including: aerobics, travel, book discussion, birding, bridge, dining, French and Spanish conversation, genealogy, movies, technology, and wine appreciation.
• Also, the League provides volunteers to 14 UW-Madison organizations, including Allen Centennial Gardens, Chazen Museum of Art, Friends of UW-Madison Libraries, Friends of International Students, the UW Arboretum, PBS-Wisconsin, and UW Hospitals. One of the most popular programs is Great Dane Readers, where volunteers read and distribute books to preschool classes for students from low-income families.
• Traditionally, the League sponsors four major events throughout the year, with fine dining and engaging speakers.
• You can find out more at univleague.wisc.edu.
• Membership dues are only $30 per year, with an extra $10 for a spouse or partner.

I know of no better way to support the University of Wisconsin-Madison and its students, learn new things, have fun, and get to know vibrant, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic new members.

Thanks in advance for your help -- Cindy May, Membership Committee Chair, 848-9291, land line, 335-9291 cell phone, or clmay@wisc.edu.

We appreciate receiving any articles and pictures you or your group have that you would like published in the League Letter and invite you to keep sending them. The deadline for submissions to the February issue is Monday, February 1. Please send to bszeps@wisc.edu or gisell_2403@hotmail.com in .doc or .jpg form for easier editing.
The June Orientation meeting of the 2020-2021 League Board of Directors began the year with an outdoor, masked, widely-spaced gathering in the backyard of Betty Zeps’ house. It was to be the final in-person meeting of the year. The Board has been successfully holding its meetings ever since on Zoom. We were masked, and there was plenty of hand sanitizer available as well as snacks and drinks to make us feel comfortable being together. Though we all would like to be able to talk face-to-face, our Zoom meetings have been quite productive! Just not as social.

(Note—All through this issue you’ll find pictures of fun pre-pandemic gatherings and League doings!)