UNIVERSITY LEAGUE
SPRING LUNCHEON AND LECTURE

“The history and mystery of: the Edmund Fitzgerald”
Rochelle Pennington, Author, Speaker, Newspaper Columnist.
Wednesday, March 23, 2022, 11:00 am.
Blackhawk Country Club.

No other Great Lakes shipwreck is more well-known than the Edmund Fitzgerald, which disappeared into a stormy Lake Superior on November 10, 1975, when wind gusts peaked at nearly 100 miles per hour and waves reached the height of three-story buildings. To this day, the Edmund Fitzgerald remains the largest shipwreck on the Great Lakes.

The Edmund Fitzgerald enjoyed fanfare right from the moment of its birth in June of 1958. Over 10,000 people showed up to see the launching of the Fitz. It was the largest ship ever built on the Great Lakes up until that point. The freighter was a favorite of boat watchers for the whole of its life and the giant had many nicknames: Big Fitz, Mighty Fitz, Titanic of the Great Lakes, and Queen of the Lakes.

It’s a common belief that the sinking of the Fitzgerald is the most well-known wreck on the Great Lakes in large part due to Gordon Lightfoot’s haunting ballad about the drowned ship in “an ice water mansion.” Lightfoot’s lyrics were mysterious. He sang about the Fitzgerald being “a bone to be chewed,” and about a “witch” in November who “came stealing.” Lightfoot’s words were both eerie (a lake grasping and holding its victims) and true. Superior’s waters are so icy cold that bacteria struggle to live.

Rochelle Pennington will explore the various theories and opposing views of dive detectives who are still trying to solve the mystery of what led to the demise of the 29-man crew. She will lead us from the launch of the ship in 1958 to its final radio broadcasts, and from the Fitz’s discovery on Superior's bottom to the raising of artifacts from its watery grave.

SPRING LUNCHEON
Social Hour: 11:00 a.m.
Lunch: 11:30 a.m.
Speaker: 12:00 p.m.
Where: Blackhawk Country Club.
3606 Blackhawk Drive.
Madison, WI 53705.
Cost: $30 per person.
Reservation Deadline: March 14.
Reservation form on page 11.
Pennington’s interest in the *Edmund Fitzgerald* came as a result of her love for Lake Superior. Her family owns a 100-year-old, vintage cabin just south of Superior’s southern shore, where she wrote her book, *Where the Hammock Hangs: A Love Letter to the Woods and Waters Surrounding an “Up North” Cottage*.

The book includes extensive research on Lake Superior, which is the backdrop to both the *Edmund Fitzgerald*’s life and to its loss. Historic lighthouses, shipwrecks, mines, logging camps, and lodges are all subjects in her book and figure deeply in the history and lore of the region.

Rochelle Pennington is both a lively storyteller and an entertaining lecturer who presents to schools, libraries, historical societies, corporations, hospitals, retirement facilities, and civic organizations. Each year she speaks to many audiences in the Midwest, and frequently is invited to return to the same groups to speak on further topics, ranging from history’s most memorable stories, complete with fascinating trivia, to motivational engagements highlighting courage, determination, and personal strength.

Please join us for this intriguing and informative program!

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**About the Event:**

The event will be held at the Blackhawk Country Club on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. The cost is $30 per person. Please see the reservation form on page 1 for more details.

The meal options are:

- Fresh baked quiche with fresh fruit and roast vegetables.
- Pecan crusted chicken and spinach salad with sliced strawberries, goat cheese and maple dressing.

All selections come with rolls, coffee, tea, iced tea, and assorted cookies for dessert.

A cash bar will be available.

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The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down
Of the big lake they call Gitche Gumee
Superior, they said, never gives up her dead
When the gales of November come early!

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK
Greetings, University League Members!

February has arrived, and I hope that 2022 is off to a good, and healthy, start for each of you. Next month we look forward to welcoming you to the Spring Luncheon at Blackhawk Country Club. Please note that the date is now **Wednesday, March 23**. It was originally planned for Tuesday, March 22, which is the date printed in your Yearbooks. Due to scheduling shifts at the venue, we had to cancel the 22nd, but were able to book the next day instead.

Our Spring Luncheon speaker, author and journalist Rochelle Pennington, will address the unsolved mystery of how the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, one of the biggest freighters to sail the Great Lakes, sank during a severe storm in November of 1975. She will also share her own theories about the sinking.

Most of us associate that event with Gordon Lightfoot’s song, *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. The sinking of the “Mighty Fitz” is so many things: a tragedy, a mystery, and an enigma that is debated to this day.

Come and enjoy the camaraderie of our gathering--invite a friend too--and learn more about this unforgettable event in Great Lakes and Wisconsin maritime history.

The arrival of February also signifies the beginning of University League’s annual Stay-at-Home benefit to raise scholarship funds for UW-Madison students. You’ll have received your invitation in the mail by now, with its catchy theme of sailing toward lofty goals and reaching for horizons that higher education metaphorically enables students to achieve. Special thanks go to Scholarship Benefit Committee Chair, Barbara Widder, and committee members Dory Christensen, Gail Schomisch, Judy Stang, Sandy Nuernberg, and graphic artist Denise Garlow for their hard work, expertise and creativity in developing our theme and launching this year’s campaign.

Your contributions are distributed to each UW-Madison school and college after our fiscal year ends on May 31. Scholarship recipients are then chosen by their major departments. Some are selected for the fall semester, while other departments award scholarships for the spring semester beginning in January. Either way, our support is a mainstay for students who often must balance their studies with jobs, internships, family obligations and, in the past two years, managing all the disruptions of the pandemic. You’ll read more on page 5 of this issue and in April’s *League Letter* of their deep gratitude and appreciation for our support.

We are still working to fill Board positions for next year. All of you have amazing abilities that would be a valuable contribution to University League, and that you can utilize in a leadership role. Personally, my time on the University League Board has offered me a surprising opportunity to acquire new skills. Even more significant are the new friendships with remarkable people and the great feeling of giving to a worthy cause. Please think about it! I welcome your email (jleffler@wisc.edu) or call (608-273-8491) to discuss joining the University League Board.

Joan Leffler
MEMBER PROFILE: Maureen Kind

Maureen has been a member of University League for 18 years. She is the Leader of the French Reading and Conversation Interest Group, a role for which her education and career has made her perfectly suited. She taught French and has studied, traveled, and lived in France throughout her adulthood.

Music is also an important part of Maureen’s life. She has been singing in choral groups ever since she was in the 7th grade and remains actively involved in local groups today.

Maureen grew up in Milwaukee and attended a parochial high school. She always wanted to learn French, but first she was required to take two years of Latin. Only then could she begin her study of French. At Creighton University in Omaha, Maureen continued French classes, and during her junior year she went to Aix-en-Provence under a study-abroad program sponsored by the UW-Madison. The year in Aix and her participation in the UW-Madison’s program was transformative. Upon her return to the U.S., Maureen transferred to the UW-Madison to complete her bachelor’s degree and then she continued on to earn her Ph.D. in French.

Maureen’s teaching career has had several dimensions. She was a Teaching Assistant at the UW; she taught at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD (but came back to Madison after realizing that Sioux Falls was not an especially stimulating place); and she taught at Memorial High School for 12 years.

While at Memorial, she served as a Fulbright exchange teacher for a year in Tarbes (near Lourdes), in southwestern France. There she taught English at an engineering college, while her French counterpart came to Madison and taught French at Memorial.

Maureen has many fond memories of her exchange year in Tarbes. She made several close friends in the community, who remain good friends today. She joined a choral group that performed in the area and also toured by bus, giving performances throughout France, and as far away as northern France and Belgium. When the pandemic eases up and international travel is less risky and tedious, Maureen will be heading back to France for a long overdue visit.

Maureen has been a member of the Madison Symphony Chorus for 50 years, the Madison Opera Chorus for 25 years, and has sung at Opera in the Park. You may have seen her on stage with the opera chorus in Madison Opera’s November 2021 production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* (see photo). Performing in opera requires learning to sing in a variety of languages: Italian, German, French, and even Russian. Maureen describes a memorable occasion during a trip to Russia with the Friendship Force. She was visiting a school where the children asked her if she spoke any Russian. Not knowing conversational Russian but nevertheless thinking quickly, she sang them a few bars from Tchaikovsky’s opera, *Eugene Onegin*, in Russian, much to their surprise and delight!

Thank you, Maureen, for making League’s French Reading and Conversation group such an enjoyable learning experience for its members, and for sharing your gift of music with the Madison community.

We look forward to seeing you again on stage at the symphony and the opera!
Ahoy!
Have You Climbed Aboard?

The Annual Scholarship Benefit is now underway and you should have received your personal invitation to participate with UW-Madison student scholarships. Thank you notes from student recipients show their appreciation:

“A theme I want to have throughout my personal life and career is to just help people however I can, feel accepted and important. This award will be extremely helpful to keep me pushing in my last semester working less hours and focus on my studies.” Jazsmin, Chemical Engineering.

“Veterinary School comes with many challenges, the financial burden being of great significance. I hope to become a clinical researcher and professor. Your financial support will be instrumental to my success.” Meghan, Veterinary Medicine.

“I found the perfect career for me as a child life specialist. This past year I was diagnosed with type one diabetes. This has affected me not only physically but mentally and financially. The financial burden you have relieved me of is especially important to me.” Grace, Human Ecology.

League scholarship recipients not only thank us for our financial support but note how the award makes them study harder while being motivated to help others in the future. “There is a ripple effect in helping others.” Kathleen A. Brehony, PhD.

Thank you for your generous gift!

INTEREST GROUP UPDATES

Spanish Conversation
By: Joan Leffler

At its January meeting, the Spanish Conversation Group discussed the most famous archaeological site in South America: the 15th century citadel, Machu Picchu, also known as the “Lost City of the Incas.”

Built in the Peruvian Andes by the Incas in the mid-1400s, little is known of its function in Inca culture, but Machu Picchu is recognized as an engineering marvel, built of precisely cut stones that fit together so perfectly that no mortar was used to hold them together. Nor were wheels used to haul thousands of stones to the top of the mountain during construction.
By coincidence, Machu Picchu was built at such a high altitude that after the Spanish *conquistadores* arrived in the early 1500s, they never knew of its existence and so it escaped destruction, unlike many other centers of Inca civilization during the Spanish conquest.

Today, thousands of tourists visit the site. In fact, some in our discussion group had been to Machu Picchu and shared first-hand information about their experiences. A recommendation on which they all agreed was to become acclimated to the high altitude for a day or two before attempting to ascend to the top. Altitude sickness is unpleasant and can spoil your visit!

The fact that the Incas had the endurance to withstand the high altitude and exert the strenuous effort required to build such a complex city is a marvel in itself.

**Wine Divas & Dudes**
By: Elaine Rosenblatt

The Wine Divas & Dudes finished out the last quarter of 2021 with some fun, wine learning opportunities.

The end of October we ‘traveled’ to Sicily compliments of Joan and Richard Leffler. We tasted white, red and dessert wines from the different regions in Sicily. Nero d’Avola is the most widely planted grape for red wine and Catarratto is the most planted grape for white wines.

At our November/December meeting we compared white and rose sparkling wines—prosecco (Italy), cava (Spain) and cremant (France) compliments of Michele Rohan, Mary Willis and Elaine Rosenblatt.

We learned about the different methods—traditional and tank—for making sparkling wines and the grapes used in each country.
There was plenty of food and good company at both events as you can see in the pictures. If you are interested in joining us in 2022, please contact Elaine Rosenblatt at elainer49@gmail.com. We will decide as the year goes on which meetings are in person and which will be done virtually.

**Genealogy**

By: Joan Leffler

The Genealogy Interest Group welcomed Debbie Kroopkin, Co-President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, as its January speaker. Debbie has done extensive research tracing her family in the Ukraine, Poland and Belarus, and now helps others find their family roots throughout eastern Europe and the Baltic Republics.

She presented a wealth of resources that are available to people who research their Jewish ancestry, but you have to be persistent.

Historically, Jews suffered pogroms, expulsions, massacres, isolation, and laws that negatively impacted their communities. Surnames often changed over time, or were randomly reassigned, or were anglicized upon arrival in the U.S., making it difficult for subsequent generations to piece together the identities of ancestors who once lived in Europe. Villages and towns changed names, too, as political boundaries changed, and in some cases shtetls, where concentrations of Jews lived, disappeared due to all of the adverse conditions stated above.

Though the information you often start out with is imprecise, Debbie’s advice to genealogists searching for information on their Jewish and other ancestors is to “go with whatever information you do have,” be patient, don’t give up, and with the many tools available online now for piecing together the starting point of immigrants and their migration records, chances are favorable that you’ll eventually “score a hit” and discover the origins of a relative who lived several generations ago.
Armchair Travelers  
By: Joan Leffler

University League member Gabriela Cergheanean led the Armchair Travelers on a tour of her homeland, “Beautiful Romania,” at its January meeting. Using slides, video, and general discussion, she introduced us to the many delights of this charming country: its castles, monuments and quaint cemeteries; spectacular scenery, sumptuous food, attractions in major cities, and a video of an entire village singing and doing a folkloric line dance in traditional costumes.

Above: Bran Castle, also known as "Dracula's Castle," in Transylvania

Like much of Europe, Romania’s history dates to prehistoric times, with influences from the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern Period all leaving their mark.

There were hardships during the Communist Era (1947-1989) but present-day Romania has emerged as a welcoming country offering visitors beautiful and varied scenery, colorful public squares, old, narrow streets with unique buildings that have maintained their original character, and rural villages that seemingly haven’t changed in generations.

Gabriela’s presentation included a video of a meal at a restaurant where the hearty and plentiful food served everywhere in Romania was on display.

She is shown in the side picture (on the right, holding a glass), about to indulge in her favorite Romanian dessert, a pastry with berries and cream. Her cousin, on the left, is in shock at the portion size of her lunch—all that food for one person!

After Gabriela’s talk, group participants were convinced to start making travel plans for visiting Romania. There are many discoveries to be made, and it is definitely a country not to be missed!
MEMBERSHIP UPDATE
Cindy May, Membership Chair
clmay@wisc.edu or 608-848-9291

During this long Covid shutdown, connecting with League friends and colleagues via Zoom for events, Interest Group presentations, and Committee meetings, just seeing their faces and hearing them talk, has been such a pleasure. I hope you all have taken advantage of this unexpected membership perk.

As variants continue to keep us cautious, please consider inviting friends and neighbors to share these special moments with us. Direct them to the University League website for membership information at https://univleague.wisc.edu/membership/, or contact me by either phone or email. I would be delighted to mail out invitations, with forms and return envelopes. Together, we can ease this time of separation for both ourselves and those we ask to join.

Whet your Appetite for the Gardening Season by Volunteering!

Did you just miss volunteering at the PBS Wisconsin Garden and Landscaping Expo in mid-February? If so, do not despair! With spring approaching, UW Volunteer Opportunities at formal gardens and natural areas will be gearing up for the 2022 season and welcoming volunteers.

Consider these three volunteer sites if you love working outdoors, maintaining the ecological health of natural areas, and making the campus community a more beautiful place for everyone: the Allen Centennial Gardens, UW Arboretum, and the UW Lakeshore Nature Preserve.

These locations are open all year to visitors, but volunteers are especially needed during the spring, summer and fall months. Tools and training are provided on site, and if you are already an experienced gardener, here’s your chance put your expertise to work for a worthy cause. Contact Volunteer Opportunities Coordinator, Priscilla Thain, priscillathain@gmail.com, or visit www.univleague.wisc.edu/volunteer to find out more.
After two years of the pandemic, reflecting on the lives of previous generations gives us an interesting perspective. Below are excerpts of an essay by League Past President (1988-1989) and current member, Margaret Hickman, who wrote this and other essays to pass on to her children and grandchildren. They relate firsthand what daily life was like growing up in the 1930s and 1940s on a farm in Iowa. In the passages below, Margaret describes attending a one-room school in the mid-1930’s:

“The school was a mile west of our farm and we walked through our pastures, climbed a stile, and walked along a narrow dirt road until we came to the school exit road. In the spring, the little creeks bubbled along, and there were myriads of wildflowers untouched by agriculture or forestry. There were also edible mushrooms to pick in a nearby wood. The land we walked along was not good agricultural land and was used primarily for cattle grazing. There were also three very marginal soft coal mines—to the immediate north, the immediate south, and near the old gravel road west. Beverly [Margaret’s sister] can remember hearing the mine donkey braying when we were in the schoolyard. The mines petered out during the eight years I was in school. Several extremely poor families lived in the mining area, and that was my first experience with children who had insufficient food and clothing.

...The school had two outdoor privies, a pump and well in the yard, and an attached coat room. The teacher arrived earlier than the pupils. In winter, she was responsible for starting the fire in the potbellied stove. She also brought in a stone crock of water and hung up the flag.

...When it was cold, a large container of water sat on the stove, and we would put in our pint jars of cocoa, soup or vegetables for hot lunch. We also carved our initials in baking potatoes, and they would steam for an hour until 12:00.

There was no phone, no electric lights. I remember an old upright piano—for we did a little singing. The “library” shelves in the back of the room held old encyclopedias, classics, required history books, and contributed volumes. I’m sure I had read everything by 6th grade.”

Margaret goes on to describe her teachers, the daily routine, activities and entertainment, disciplinary issues (almost nonexistent), and 8th grade graduation—a major event before starting high school in the town of Indianola.

Today, we cannot imagine public schools without central heat or air conditioning, electricity, indoor plumbing, or computers, tablets, and remote learning. The old ways came with hardships that most of us will never know, but there was a sense of commitment in families and communities who came together to help each other during the Depression and other times of adversity.
University League Luncheon and Lecture  
Wednesday, March 23, 2022, 11:00 a.m.  
Blackhawk Country Club.

Program: “The History and Mystery of the Edmund Fitzgerald”  
By: Rochelle Pennington.  
Reservation deadline: Wednesday, March 14** (No refunds after this date).

Member: ____________________________ Phone (s): ____________

Guest(s) name(s): ____________________________ Phone(s): ____________

____ Reservations @ $30 (includes lunch and program) $ ________

  General Scholarship (IHO/IMO) ____________________________ ________
  Great Dane Readers (IHO/IMO) ____________________________ ________

(For donations “In Honor of” or “In Memory of,” please circle IHO or IMO and provide contact information.)

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $ ________

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Menu choices (if more than one reservation, indicate who wants each):
See page 2 for descriptions of menu items.
  ______ Fresh Baked Quiche.
  ______ Pecan Crusted Chicken and Spinach Salad.

Diet restrictions (list name/restriction): ____________________________

Please Note: For the safety of all, we ask that attendees be fully vaccinated.

Make Checks payable to: The University League, Inc.  
Mail to: Betty Zeps, 1922 Adams Street, Madison, WI 53711.

**To guarantee your reservation, we must have your check and registration form in hand by Monday, March 14th. Questions? Call Betty Zeps at 608-255-5252.