Giving Warms the Heart

Written by Gail Schomisch
University League 2023 Scholarship Benefit Committee

Hip, Hip hurray,
We’re here to say.
The Happiest people,
Are those who give it away.

So, take a chance,
And liberate your soul.
To help us meet,
Our scholarship goal.

The purpose of life,
Is to inspire and motivate.

For our scholarship students,
A better future, you’ll create.

Giving allows others,
To persevere.
Expanding their knowledge,
Year after year.

So “DO NOT WAIT”,
Here’s your chance.
To make your donation,
Helping our students advance!
Musical, informational, and delicious! All describe our December Candlelight Concert, held at Maple Bluff Country Club to share the spirit of the season. “Opera: A Director’s Perspective” by David Ronis and his students made for a charming evening! It was delightful, beautiful and a performance for us to remember (see photographs on page 7). I hope many of you were able to be a part of this event.

Happy New Year, 2023! University League is back (after COVID restrictions) with members returning to our Interest Groups, program events, and Board meetings and committees meeting in person. Hip, Hip, Hooray!!

There is much to look forward to in 2023. First and foremost is receiving your Stay-at-Home Scholarship Benefit Invitation – watch for it in your mail box (not your in-box)! See page 1 for an inspirational poem about the Benefit. We look forward to the Invitation in early February with the details and our annual theme including beautiful and colorful artistry by League member Mary Jane Getlinger. Please thank the Scholarship Benefit committee for their hard work, time, talents and creativity – Dory Christensen, Denise Garlow, Joan Leffler, Ellen Lewis, Sally Lorenz, Sandy Nuerenberg, Judy Stang, Gail Schomisch, and Chair Barbara Widder. All of the funds collected for this benefit goes directly to assist student (General) scholarships. In 2021-2022 the University League contributed $33,670 to General Scholarships which was divided and given to the twelve schools at the University of Wisconsin-Madison so that they could award the money as scholarships. Please help us continue this tradition by donating to the Benefit when you receive your Scholarship Benefit Invitation. By giving generously you help UW-Madison students to accomplish their educational goals. We appreciate everyone who participates by contributing to our scholarships. Thank you to all in advance!

In the past two years, the spotlight on realities we wish to ignore have been dramatic – I’m thinking of the unthinkable – but actual war in Ukraine involving global stability, and in our country the political divides that appear very unsettled/intractable. Also, the long nightmare of the COVID-19 pandemic, with over one million deaths that continues and exposes the extreme disparities between the rich and the poor. In addition, the rapid rate of technological changes, affecting everyone and everything from education, to health, to travel, to romance, to religion raises far-reaching questions about what kind of lives are worth living.

Trust me, we can be glad/fortunate to come through these difficult and challenging times with strength, building relationships, and hope for our future. I am so very happy we are finding time to connect and contact one another, return to our favorite Interest Groups, and become involved with League activities like never before. We need each other. We are finding excellent ways of meeting/being with one another, continuously. Thanks to our Board of Directors, our non-Board appointed positions, and our entire membership during these changing and very unpredictable times. You make yourselves available, are patient, and flexible. I thank you all.

Our next program is our Spring Luncheon on March 23, 2023. It will be exciting, educational, and full of fun! Sarah Day, an actress from American Players Theatre, will share highlights and personal stories. We will meet at Blackhawk Country Club at 11:00 a.m. for lunch and “togetherness.” Please put the date on your calendar. Watch for the League Letter for details and registration.

FOREVER FORWARD,

Sandra J. Nuerenberg
College of Letters & Science Undergraduate Scholarship Reception

University League President Sandy Nuernberg, Scholarship Benefit Chair Barbara Widder, and President-Elect Sally Lorenz had the pleasure of attending the Scholarship reception on September 23 for the College of Letters & Science. Eight of the fifteen University League scholarship recipients chosen by Letters & Science were able to attend the reception. We enjoyed supper, conversation, and scholarship presentations together. Some of their parents were also in attendance. We learned how important a University League scholarship is to each student as they navigate their classes, studies, and jobs. It is clear that our scholarships make a significant difference for each student. Thanks to all who plan the annual Scholarship Benefit and to all those who contribute so the Benefit so that we can provide so many scholarships each year.

Many years ago, the State of Wisconsin supported the University to such an extent that tuition could be extremely low. How low? In September 1956, student fees and tuition per semester were $90 for in-state residents. That’s not $90 per credit. That’s $90 per semester. In 2022 dollars, that is $974.83 per semester, or $1,949.66 per year. From 1969 to 2012 tuition and fees increased steadily. In 2012 the legislature froze in-state tuition, but not fees or living expenses. Currently in-state tuition is $10,720 per year. Tuition has more than quintupled since 1956 in 2022 dollars. In addition, the cost of books and supplies is estimated by the UW at $1,150. Living costs (room and board and other living expenses) have increased 22% for students living on campus, from $12,194 in 2012 to $15,548 today.

Although more than half of graduating seniors (57.2%) did not take out student loans while earning their bachelor’s degree at UW-Madison, the graduating seniors who did borrow owed an average of $27,107 in student loans. Students of this graduating class owed slightly less than the previous graduating class ($27,173). UW-Madison student’s borrowing rates and average graduate debt are below the national average. Even so, this remains a major debt burden for young people beginning their careers. The more student debt can be reduced, the better.

University League scholarships help decrease the student’s need for debt. For more than 100 years the University League has provided scholarships and gifts to students at the University of Wisconsin who needed financial assistance. These scholarships offer badly needed assistance to students at the University. Please consider making a gift to the Scholarship Benefit.
Armchair Travelers

At the November Armchair Travelers meeting, Elaine Rosenblatt narrated a slide show of her April 2022 trip to Holland. The show featured spectacular tulip gardens, iconic Dutch windmills, wooden shoes, and the unique 17th century architecture found along Amsterdam’s canals and in many Dutch cities and towns.

We learned that windmills (which were used to drain sea water off the lowlands), wooden shoes (worn by generations as practical, water-proof footwear), and charming 17th - 18th century homes and municipal buildings are still in use and attract many visitors to Holland.

Tulip bulbs were brought to Holland in the early 1600’s from the Ottoman Empire and quickly gained popularity for their beauty, becoming a valuable commodity and symbol of wealth. Dutch tradesmen recognized the economic possibilities of bulb cultivation for export. For over 400 years the Dutch have been world leaders in the tulip bulb industry.

Although tulips, windmills, and wooden shoes today convey a sense of touristic charm, Elaine explained that each has a complex history that reveals why they are unique to the Dutch and representative of their culture.

Plans for 2023

We have planned most of the spring programs for Armchair Travelers for 2023.

Our membership is 51 and we welcome anyone who is interested in joining our group or who wants to attend any individual programs. To attend, contact Mary Jo Willis at mjwillis@wisc.edu. Our programs will be via zoom. They start at 6:50 p.m. when you can open your zoom link. Joan Leffler has generously agreed to be our Zoom host again this year. You will receive the link either Friday or Saturday before the program. I look forward to seeing all of you!

Programs for 2023

January 2  Let’s Talk Turkey Linda Baumann and Larry Hubbard
February 6  Uniting for Ukraine Natasha Akulenko
March 6  A Summer Tour of the Baltic Countries: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania Cindy May
April 3  To be announced
May 1  Modern Ukraine Francine Hirsh

This schedule is available under Interest Groups on the League website (www.univleague.wisc.edu).
Wine Divas & Dudes by Elaine Rosenblatt

The Wine Divas & Dudes Interest Group had a great start to their 2022-2023 season. Joan and Rich Leffler hosted an evening of Greek Wines – white, red and dessert! We learned there are over 300 indigenous grape varietals from Greece, many dating back to ancient time. We were treated to pairings with Greek foods and desserts including tzatziki, eggplant spread, lamb meatballs, baklava, and of course olives. The group had many favorite wines and I suspect quite a few of us will be checking out Greek wines in the future.

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Jane Crawford Maher was born in Iowa City, Iowa, on June 19, 1935, and attended University High School there. She graduated in 1957 from the University of Iowa with Highest Honors and Phi Beta Kappa honors majoring in history. Jane attended graduate school at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, where she received her MS degree in modern European history aided by a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. A NATO postdoctoral award gave Jane and husband Louis James Maher a year in Cambridge, England. Subsequently Madison became the family's home, where Lou was a professor of Geology. Jane was a member of the League of Women Voters and the University League for many years. She was a member of several League Interest Groups. She also reported on City Hall activities for the Middleton Times Tribune. Jane and Lou loved to travel and enjoyed annual visits to France.

Edward Lester Springer of Madison passed away peacefully on Friday, October 28, 2022, at the age of 91. Ed was born in 1931 at St. Mary’s Ringling Hospital in Baraboo. He graduated from Baraboo High School in 1948, winning the Elk’s Scholarship. He studied Chemical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, graduating with a BS in 1953, an MS in 1958, and a PhD in 1961. While pursuing his PhD, he married Patricia Meagher. Both Ed and Pat became very involved members of University League, rarely missing an event, even after moving to Oakwood. In addition to his work as a Research Chemical Engineer at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory, he enjoyed being with his family and friends, singing in two church choirs, volunteering at the UW Arboretum, and ushering at the Overture Center.
Friedemarie Farrar and her husband hosted a Madison Friends of International Students (MFIS) Thanksgiving dinner for six students from China, India, Germany and Hungary at their home on November 24. It was the first time in several years that the MFIS dinners had been held, due to the pandemic. Friedemarie said she served butternut curry soup to honor the heritage of her Indian student, Mitanshu, then red cabbage for the German student, Felix, and herself, then creamed corn and corn muffins for the food of the original Native Americans, plus turkey and stuffing and green beans. The students liked the food and ate a lot, but many were very quiet perhaps because some had a hard time speaking English. They definitely enjoyed the three pies – Apple, Pumpkin and Lemon Cream. The best time was had in the kitchen with a twelve-year-old Chinese boy – they shared lots of laughter while Mitanshu cut off the rest of the turkey meat and Friedemarie cleaned the dishes. Congratulations to Friedmarie for the resumption of this Thanksgiving tradition.

Correction to Scholarship Past and Present, November 2022 League Letter, page 4
Mary Jane Getlinger’s email is getlinger2@gmail.com
Our Festive Candlelight Concert

Top: Dinner at Maple Bluff

Middle Left: David Ronis, UW Opera Director (speaker), and Joan Leffler, Program Chair

Middle right: performers left to right: Pianist William Preston, Soprano Eloise Williamson, and Baritone William Volmar

Bottom: Watching the performance
University League Board 2022-2023

Front Row (left to right): Sandy Nuernberg, Judy Stang, Cindy May, Roma Lenehan, Marsha Janota, Joan Leffler
Back Row: Barbara Drake, Sally Lorenz, Rich Leffler, Diane Smidt, Karen Harris, Sheila Lynch, Linda Baumann, Mary Jo Willis, Jane Dunn, Barbara Widder, Priscilla Thain