



# LIFE PROGRAM

*Learning Is ForEver*

JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | 2026



*Providing adult education, insight, and engagement*

[www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net) | [facebook.com/RCTCLIFE](https://facebook.com/RCTCLIFE)

FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION, PLEASE PHONE 507-280-3157

*Supported by Rochester Community and Technical College*

# Welcome to Learning Is ForEver at RCTC



## FROM THE OFFICE

As we look ahead to a new year full of connection, learning, and discovery, we want to extend heartfelt thanks to all of you. Your curiosity, enthusiasm, and

continued support make this program truly special. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join us this winter and spring to explore new topics, meet fascinating people, and experience what LIFE has to offer!

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## ABOUT LIFE

As part of the Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC) outreach effort, Learning Is ForEver (LIFE) provides stimulating educational programs and encourages social and personal growth for lifelong learners in our growing and diverse community. This is accomplished through various affordable classes, including lectures, discussion groups, and other learning opportunities, all in an accessible setting. LIFE offers classes in Current Affairs, History, Humanities, Science/Math/Technology, Personal Interest, and Travel. There are no educational requirements, term papers, or tests. Everyone succeeds, and all are welcome!



## FROM THE ADVISORY CHAIR

Winter is upon us. While we can't predict what the season will bring, we *can* promise engaging and informative courses to keep you learning, entertained, and connected all season long. Most

winter classes are available via Zoom, perfect for those unpredictable Minnesota days. Beginning in April, we'll have more in-person classes at the Heintz Center, while still offering many online classes to provide flexibility and convenience.

The LIFE Board and staff sincerely appreciate your support through your class participation and generous donations. LIFE is a self-sustaining program, and your financial contributions make it possible to provide quality courses and outstanding presenters while keeping fees affordable. By now, you should have received our annual fundraising appeal letter. Please consider making a gift. Your support truly makes a difference. Donations are tax-deductible when given through the RCTC Foundation-LIFE, and if you are over 73, you may wish to explore using a Qualified Charitable Distribution through your IRA Required Minimum Distribution.

Julie Stenehjelm  
LIFE Advisory Board Chair

## PICTURED ON THE COVER



**Pixy Russell** (left) is a member of the LIFE Advisory Board. She has been a long-time member of LIFE and a firm believer in continuing education and reading, especially a

good mystery. She even reads cookbooks. Classes that feature literature, history, current affairs, travel, and new topics about medicine and healthcare are high on her list. She retired from Mayo Clinic after 20 years in Public Affairs.

**Adrienne Dormody** (center) grew up in New Orleans, lived in West Virginia, and then moved to Minnesota. Her background includes liberal arts, education, and social work. She thinks LIFE is a fantastic resource that everyone should try. The professors are great, and she's had a lot of professors in her life! She loves to travel and is married to Stuart Dormody, a native Minnesotan.

**Sue Solberg** (right) retired from RCTC several years ago and has been attending LIFE classes since. She has loved every lecture she's heard, and thinks the presenters are terrific. Sue is grateful for the opportunity to be inspired and increase her understanding of so many topics.

## BECOMING A MEMBER

To attend LIFE classes, participants may choose to purchase a membership to enjoy reduced class fees. Non-members are always welcome but pay a slightly higher fee per class. 12-month membership (September through August) are only \$35. Memberships are non-refundable.

## LOCATION

Classes are held in person at RCTC Heintz Center, located at 1926 Collegeview Road SE, Rochester, or online via Zoom.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

Tuition assistance is available. Reach out to our office for information.

## GUEST POLICY

Members may bring a guest (someone who has not attended before) to a class at no charge. Please contact our office for more information.

## WAYS TO REGISTER



### ONLINE

Available for members with credit card payment at [www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net)



### MAIL

Include the registration form and a check payable to "RCTC LIFE"

RCTC LIFE Program  
851 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Box 50  
Rochester, MN 55904



### IN PERSON

Bring a check payable to "RCTC LIFE"

RCTC Heintz Center  
1926 Collegeview Road SE  
Rochester, MN 55904

## CLASS FORMATS



### IN PERSON

The class is held in an RCTC classroom unless otherwise noted.



### ONLINE

Live class online. The Zoom link will be emailed before the class.



### HYBRID

Live in-person and online at the same time. The Zoom link will be emailed before the class.



### DISCUSSION GROUP

A conversation that allows participation by all members.

## VIEWING ROOM

We welcome you to our viewing room to watch any online class on the big screen. Contact our office to reserve your seat.

## CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

Cancellation requests must be made **five business days before** the class starts. A \$5 processing fee will be retained.

- In the event the LIFE Program is canceled, a full refund will be issued.
- If RCTC classes are canceled due to inclement weather, all LIFE classes will be canceled (and rescheduled if possible).
- If Rochester Public Schools are closed but RCTC remains open, LIFE will hold classes.



**ROCHESTER**  
COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE





CLASSES PROVIDED VIA  
zoom  
VIRTUAL MEETING PLATFORM

## Course Recordings

Miss a class you wished you could have attended?

Want to learn about a topic that was offered previously?

Wish you could share a past class with a friend?

We've got you covered!

Many of our online classes have been recorded and are kept in our archive for one year. **Purchase a recording for only \$10/recording/person!**

Purchases can be made online or by completing the paper form. To purchase online or learn more, visit [www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net) or scan this code.



Questions? Call 507-280-3157 or email [jamie.schroeder@rctc.edu](mailto:jamie.schroeder@rctc.edu)



## Ice Cream Social

Thursday, April 2  
1-3 PM

RCTC Heintz  
Center Commons



Adult  
Enrichment

**New  
Hobbies  
and  
Friends  
Await at  
Community  
Education**

Register Today!

[www.rochesterce.org/enrichment/adult](http://www.rochesterce.org/enrichment/adult)



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\*Signifies in person class

\*\*Signifies hybrid class

## GREAT LITERATURE BOOK GROUP

Stephen MacLennan and Betty Spitzmiller facilitate discussions of great literature for people who love reading (and sometimes rereading) and making connections with the author, fellow readers, and their own lives.

This year's group will continue reading Samuel Cohen's *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). This compact and inexpensive anthology includes essays by authors such as James Baldwin, Rachel Carson, and Henry David Thoreau.

Discussions are presented in a hybrid format: each month, members may choose to meet in person at the Heintz Center or join via Zoom. After registering, you may pick up a copy of Cohen's 3<sup>rd</sup> edition from the LIFE office for an additional \$6 or secure your own copy.

The group will meet on the first (non-holiday) Thursday of each month, September-June, and in June selects a novel to read over the summer. **The class fee covers all remaining sessions.** Note, if you registered in the fall, you do not need to register again. Come to class prepared to discuss pre-selected works of classic literature!



\$25/\$35 Jan 8, Feb 5, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7

10:00 AM-12:00 PM Hybrid/Room H1305

## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: AMERICA'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Historian Richard Bell will guide us through a four-part exploration of the Declaration of Independence, its creation, meaning, and lasting impact. See page 7 for a description of each part.

### Part 1: Time to Part

T, Jan 6 10:00 AM-11:30 AM

### Part 2: These Truths

W, Jan 7 1:00 PM-2:30 PM

### Part 3: All the People Say Amen

T, Jan 13 10:00 AM-11:30 AM

### Part 4: The Fate of the World

W, Jan 14 1:00 PM-2:30 PM

\$48/\$58 Online via Zoom

## HEADLINERS

Gather, listen, and learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell.

This is a place to flex your brain, find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know, and be humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspaper/magazine topics or other topics you would like to discuss.

**There is no registration fee; however, you need to pre-register.** Each class is limited to 12 participants to ensure everyone has time to share their thoughts.



Fri, Jan 9, Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 10, May 8

1:00 PM-3:00 PM

The January session will be held in the LIFE Conference Room H1305. Other sessions will be in Room H1415.

## LIFE BOOK GROUP

Enjoy lively and thoughtful book discussions with fellow readers on the third Friday of each month! Group members suggest and select the books, and discussions are facilitated by Steve Troutman. Please plan to get your own copy of each selected title. Note, if you registered in the fall, you do not need to register again.

Jan 16 *A Bright Future: How Some Countries Have Solved Climate Change and the Rest Can Follow* by Joshua Goldstein and Staffan Qvist

Feb 20 *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

Mar 20 *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari

Apr 17 *James* by Percival Everett

May 22 *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond

\$25/\$35

9:00 AM-11:00 AM Online via Zoom



## RATED R FOR READ!

Whether you are a reader wanting to discuss the book you read, or a movie buff who enjoys the story played out on screen, this is for you!

Enjoy themed snacks as you watch a movie based on a novel. After the movie Stephen MacLennan leads a discussion of the book and movie. You are encouraged to read the selected book before the movie; however, if you'd rather just come and enjoy the movie, snacks, and fellowship, that is fine too.

You must secure your own copy of the books. Don't miss your chance to answer the question as to which is better, the book or the movie?

Jan 15 *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Feb 19 *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks

Mar 19 *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier

Apr 16 *A Simple Plan* by Scott Smith

May 21 *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed



\$10/\$20 (per session) 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

Location: Forté Living Movie Theatre Room  
3955 Superior Dr NW, Rochester

## GREAT DECISIONS DISCUSSION GROUP

America's largest discussion program on world affairs returns with facilitator **Richard Leitch**. Each session focuses on a key global issue using the *Great Decisions* Briefing Book and companion video.

Tuesdays, 3:00 PM–5:00 PM

Feb 17 Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy

Mar 3 Trump Tariffs and World Economy

Mar 17 U.S.–China Relations

Mar 31 Ruptured Alliances

Apr 14 Ukraine & European Security

Apr 28 Multilateral Institutions

May 12 U.S. Engagement in Africa

May 26 The Future of Human Rights

\$15/\$25 (per session). New this year: register by session, not for the full series.

Online via Zoom



## Why name *LIFE* in Your Will or Trust

Since 1993, the LIFE Program has been an integral part of Rochester Community and Technical College's outreach by inspiring lifelong learners to engage, discover, and grow. LIFE has received financial support from individuals who have included the LIFE Program as a beneficiary of their wills and estate plans.

By naming the LIFE Program as a beneficiary in your will or trust, you are expressing gratitude for the opportunities our educational programs have provided. This gesture ensures that the programs you cherish will continue to enrich the lives of lifelong learners for years to come.

## Your Legacy Shapes our Future



Thanks to bequests and other major gifts, the LIFE Program can grow and offer innovative new classes to meet the changing interests of our diverse community. Our commitment to creating stimulating educational experiences will fulfill lifelong dreams and foster lasting connections well into the future.

Have you already named the LIFE Program as a beneficiary of your will or trust? If so, please contact the RCTC Foundation at 507-281-7771. We would love to thank you for your generosity.



## What's Up in the Night Sky for 2026 with J. Kelly Beatty



The coming year promises to be a great one for stargazers. So join J. Kelly Beatty, senior editor at Sky & Telescope magazine, as he highlights the year's exciting "what's up?" celestial events. Kelly starts with March 3rd's Total Lunar Eclipse, the last one until 2028, which will be visible across the U.S. He'll let you know where and when to look for all the bright planets — Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. And he'll get you ready to see the Perseid meteor shower in August and the Geminids in December. Along the way, he'll help you track down the brightest stars of spring, summer, and fall.

M	Jan 5	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## Biosecurity on Farms with David Weinand



Biosecurity is a concept that isn't new, but is something that is getting more attention lately. David's job is to help farmers develop and implement a biosecurity plan for the livestock operations. This will be increasingly important if a foreign animal disease were to be introduced into the United States.

M	Jan 5	1:00 PM-2:00 PM	\$10/\$20	Zoom
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## The Declaration of Independence: America's Birth Certificate (Four Sessions) with Richard Bell



### Part 1: Time to Part (T Jan 6, 10:00 AM-11:30 AM)

The Declaration of Independence is both brief and monumental—1310 words that changed the world. In this opening session, historian Richard Bell explores its remarkable journey from 1776 to today, including its survival through war, fire, and celebration. He then turns back to the turbulent 1770s to uncover how a five-person committee crafted this groundbreaking document. Was it the first of its kind or part of a larger tradition? What did it mean then—and why does it still matter now?

### Part 2: These Truths (W Jan 7, 1:00 PM-2:30 PM)

This session delves into Jefferson's powerful draft and the ideas behind it. Bell traces the Declaration's famous preamble to Enlightenment thinkers like Locke and Mason, showing how Jefferson distilled complex philosophy into unforgettable prose. The discussion then turns to the list of grievances that justified revolution and defined the colonists' break from Britain.

### Part 3: All the People Say Amen (T Jan 13, 10:00 AM-11:30 AM)

Follow the drama of July 1776 as Congress debates, edits, and finally adopts the Declaration. Bell recounts the tense votes, Jefferson's 86 revisions, and the proclamation that sparked both jubilation and backlash. This session captures the Declaration's transformation from draft to a defining national statement.

### Part 4: The Fate of the World (W Jan 14, 1:00 PM-2:30 PM)

In the concluding talk, Bell explores how the Declaration's ideals reverberated far beyond 1776. Translated and circulated across the globe, it inspired independence movements from France to Latin America and fueled later struggles for abolition, women's rights, and civil rights—cementing its legacy as a universal call for freedom.

Class fee covers all four sessions			\$48/\$58	Zoom
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*Questions? Call 507-280-3157.*

### Sole Survivors with Ric Mixer



The 1966 loss of the Daniel J Morrell focused on the survival of a single crewman who braved two winter nights in just a peacoat and his underwear. Ric Mixer published the sole survivor's book on his ordeal, and he shares rare televised comments from Dennis Hale on how he managed to make it through the gale on Lake Huron. Ric also features a lone lifesaver who came home after his crew rowed out to a schooner that they thought was in peril. Only Jerome

Kiah lived to tell the story. Ric's lecture includes the newly discovered Western Reserve, lost with its crew and young passengers in a rare July storm. Wheelman Harry Stewart survived, becoming a master himself-sailing into other shipwreck adventures during his career. The 1916 Black Friday Storm is featured, where two captains were the only members of the crew of two ships lost on Lake Erie.

T Jan 6 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Lebanon-Hopes for a More Stable Future with Henry Berman



In the 1980s Lebanon was the epitome of a failed state, riddled with sectarian hatred, car bombs, political assassinations, and foreign interference. The violent climate was encapsulated by a horrific attack that murdered 241 U.S. Marines in 1983. With the recent weakening of Hezbollah, does the country now have a golden opportunity for a positive political reset towards stability and peace?

W Jan 7 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### Great Literature with Betty Spitzmiller & Stephen MacLennan



Stephen MacLennan and Betty Spitzmiller facilitate discussions of great literature for people who love reading (and sometimes rereading) and making connections with the author, fellow readers, and their own lives. This year's group will continue reading Samuel Cohen's *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology* (3rd edition). This compact and inexpensive anthology includes essays by authors such as James Baldwin, Rachel Carson, and Henry David Thoreau. This class is presented in a hybrid format: members choose to meet in person at Heintz Center or join via ZOOM. Registrants may pick up a copy of Cohen's book from the LIFE office for an additional \$6 or secure their copy. The group meets the first (non-holiday) Thursday of each month, September through June, and in June selects a novel to read over the summer. The class fee covers all remaining sessions. Note, if you registered in the fall, you do not need to register again. Members should come to class prepared to discuss preselected works of classic literature.

Th Jan 8, Feb 5, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$25/\$35 Room H1305



### Women You Have Never Heard Of with Virginia Wright-Peterson



Women have made remarkable contributions to our community since the 1850s, but few of these women are known today. Their stories are powerful and inspiring. Hear about the first woman to be elected to public office, women who served in WWI, WWII, and Vietnam, a woman who was instrumental in creating the Minnesota Highway Department, and others who broke through barriers and had a significant impact on our region.

Th Jan 8 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Headliners with Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell



Gather, Listen, and Learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell. This is a place to flex your brain and find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know and humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspapers/magazine topics or any other topics you would like to discuss. Class is limited to the first 12 registered each date to keep the group at a size where everyone will have time to express their thoughts. There is no fee attached to this class.

F Jan 9 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$0/\$0 LIFE Conference Room



## The Supreme Court and the Separation of Powers with Timothy Johnson



The Federal Government is facing a clear constitutional crisis in terms of which branch holds power and whether they can place checks and balances on one another. Despite this crisis, the U.S. Supreme Court has set standards for how the branches interact. This talk considers these standards and then discusses what they mean for the current crisis in the U.S.

M Jan 12 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Hebrew: A Language Revived, Constructed, or Refreshed with Asya Pereltsvaig



The often-told story of the Hebrew language is that it was "brought back from the dead" in the late 19th century, in conjunction with the rise of Zionism. But with very few (if any) other examples of successful language revival around the world, it is worth re-examining whether that is indeed what happened to Hebrew: was it really dead in the Middle Ages? What did it take to "revive" it?

And what makes its history so unique? In this lecture, we'll examine those provocative questions from a scientific perspective, while challenging ideological tenets often held by both Jewish and non-Jewish commentators. We will explore how the knowledge gained from modern speech-and-language sciences can help us understand the controversial history of the Jews and of their holy language. The lecture presupposes no knowledge of linguistics or Hebrew.

M Jan 12 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## The Danube River with Stephenie Slahor



As Europe's second-longest river, the Danube River flows along many famous cities and sites, but we'll "armchair travel" along the lesser-known stretch from Germany's Bavaria to Vienna, Austria, exploring the history, trade, inspiration, and culture along that portion of the river's route.

T Jan 13 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Hearing a Rainbow: Arlen's "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" with Tom Cimarusti



Though the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz has become one of the best-known films of all time, initially it was only a moderate success. By the year 2000, however, the film had not only become an American institution, but "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" was deemed the greatest song of the century. Come join Dr. Tom Cimarusti as he explores this musical gem, highlighting the song's genesis, its melodic simplicity and harmonic sophistication, and its ability to offer each of us a hope for something better -- to whisk us to another world where "troubles melt like lemon drops."

W Jan 14 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom



## Rated R for READ! *Alice in Wonderland* with Stephen MacLennan



We will individually read the Lewis Carroll 1865 novella *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (and, for those wanting more, continue with the author's subsequent 1871 novella *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *What Alice Found There*) and then gather to watch the Disney 1951 animated movie musical (rated G, 75m). As time and interest allow, the moderator will share select material from *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition* (2000 edition) by recreational mathematician Martin Gardner. Rated R for READ is a casual (reading/audiobook optional) book/movie club that explores story via literature and cinema. Bring your copy of the book(s) or simply show up for the movie and enjoy post-movie discussion and themed (stature-preserving!) snacks provided.

Th Jan 15 10:00 AM-1:00 PM \$10/\$20 Forté Theater Room  
3955 Superior Drive NW



## LIFE Book Group with Steve Troutman



Enjoy lively and thoughtful book discussions with fellow readers on the third Friday of each month! Group members suggest and select the books, and discussions are facilitated by Steve Troutman. Note, if you registered in the fall, you do not need to register again. Please plan to get your own copy of each selected title.

Jan 16 *A Bright Future: How Some Countries Have Solved Climate Change and the Rest Can Follow* by Joshua Goldstein and Staffan Qvist  
Feb 20 *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon  
Mar 20 *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari  
Apr 17 *James* by Percival Everett  
May 22 *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond  
Jun 12 *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* by Timothy Snyder  
F Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 22 9:00 AM-11:00 AM \$25/\$35 Zoom



## Hitler's Soldiers in America: The Hidden History of German POWs with Anette Isaacs



German historian Anette Isaacs sheds light on a little-known chapter of World War II: the lives of over 400,000 German POWs held in more than 500 camps across the United States. Discover how these captured soldiers from Hitler's Wehrmacht adjusted to life in places as far-flung as Texas, Iowa, Georgia, and, of course, Florida. This eye-opening lecture reveals the human side of war in the most unexpected corners of the American home front.

T Jan 20 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Origins of Agriculture in Precontact North America with Constance Arzigian



Vast cornfields dominate southern Wisconsin and Minnesota, but when and how were maize and many other plants first domesticated? Humans have been manipulating the reproduction of plants and animals for millennia to increase yield, have easier access, and so forth. This talk will explore when and how Native Americans in the Midwest interacted with a wide range of native plants to cultivate and domesticate them, starting at least 7000 years ago. They ultimately incorporated the corn and beans that had been first domesticated in Central America. The result was the "Three Sisters Agricultural System" that Native Americans at contact practiced and introduced to Europeans.

W Jan 21 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Adventure and Horror with Taylor Hagood



From Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde to Long John Silver, Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson created some of the most memorable characters in all of Anglophone literature. His own life was no stranger to the adventure he wrote about, making him a flamboyant figure in literary history. This lecture will present Stevenson's tantalizing life and work, which remains read to this day.

W	Jan 21	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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### A Grand Tour of Art's Masterpieces (Part 1): Prehistory to Renaissance with Deborah Robin



Journey through Western art's most magnificent achievements, in three related sessions. The first installment takes us from prehistoric cave paintings to Ancient Greece and Rome and then to Europe's medieval masterpieces, revealing how humans have expressed themselves in each of those cultures. No prior art history knowledge is necessary.

Th	Jan 22	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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### British Country House Weekend: Life at Downton Abbey with Andrew O'Brien



Explore the social lives of this fabulously wealthy, landed aristocracy. From how to enter a dining room correctly to subtle cues given by a hostess across a dinner table, this world was highly choreographed. At the same time, these weekend parties required enormous numbers of footmen, maids, and kitchen staff in order to serve these guests. Learn about the lives of domestic staff as we take a peek downstairs. Between 1860 and 1914 was the "golden age" of the English country house. The Dukes of Devonshire, the Rothschilds, and the Churchills, amongst others, hosted weekend parties for Britain's elite.

M	Jan 26	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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### Science in the Shadows: Eight Women Who Changed the World with Emilie Lucchesi



Dr. Emilie Le Beau Lucchesi tells the story of eight women whose discoveries and efforts have changed the world, yet still their names are hardly recognizable. This hour-and-a-half lecture will celebrate the stories of these forgotten innovators, the challenges they faced, and how their exciting discoveries changed the world. Be prepared to meet: Dr. Rachel Fuller Brown and Dr. Elizabeth Lee Hazan (developed Nystatin); Eunice Foote (first conceptualized greenhouse gas effect); Zelia Nuttall (decoded the Aztec Stone Calendar); Dr. Vera Rubin (identified dark matter); and Dr. Grace Eldering, Loney Clinton Gordon, and Dr. Pearl Kendrick (developed the first whooping cough vaccine).

M	Jan 26	1:00 PM-2:30 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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### Preserving the Past: The United States National Historic Sites with Valerie Gugala



Join us for a captivating journey through time. We will delve into the rich tapestry of American history, uncovering the hidden gems and iconic landmarks that have shaped the nation. Discover how these sites offer invaluable insights into our collective heritage, bridging the past and present while fostering a deeper appreciation for the remarkable preservation efforts that safeguard these treasures for generations. We will explore the heart and soul of America, where history and conservation intertwine to create a legacy worth celebrating.

T	Jan 27	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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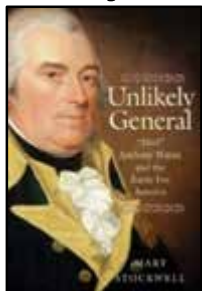
## The Power of Portraiture with Adrienne Lee



Take a closer look at portraiture with this introductory survey of some of the most fascinating painters from throughout art history. Portraits do more than depict a person... they send a message. Together we will demystify the power of portraits by discussing the work of Rembrandt van Rijn, Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, Vincent van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, Alice Neel, Amy Sherald, and more!

W Jan 28 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Unlikely General: "Mad" Anthony Wayne and the Battle for America with Mary Stockwell

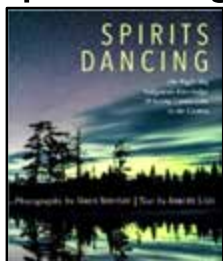


In the spring of 1792, President George Washington chose "Mad" Anthony Wayne, a Revolutionary War veteran, to defend the young United States from a potentially devastating threat. Tribes living in the Ohio Country had vowed to stop the advance of the United States across the Ohio River. With the full support of the British at Fort Detroit, they had already defeated two American armies. Washington needed a champion to go west and secure the vast country lying north of the Ohio between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River for American settlement. Wayne was an "unlikely" choice. A spendthrift, womanizer, and heavy drinker, he had just been

removed from Congress for voter fraud. But Washington took a chance on Wayne, hoping he could accomplish a nearly impossible task. Wayne must raise an army, train his recruits to fight as fearlessly as the enemy, and, if called upon, defeat the tribes and their British allies in one pivotal battle – or all hope for an American future in the West would be lost.

W Jan 28 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Spirits Dancing with Travis Novitsky



Join us as we explore, through astrophotographer Travis Novitsky's eyes, the human connection to the aurora, Milky Way, and the wonder of the universe above us.

Travis is a proud member and lifelong resident of the Grand Portage Anishinaabe Nation in northeast Minnesota. His images not only reflect the natural wonders of the region but also honor the cultural significance of the cosmos within Indigenous cultures. Travis is a self-taught astrophotographer whose work is deeply connected to his love of the night sky and ancestral homelands. For over 35 years, he has

devoted himself to capturing the beauty of the night sky over the North Shore of Lake Superior, with a particular passion for photographing the northern lights and star-filled skies.

Th Jan 29 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## The Making of Mount Rushmore: A Great Program to Kick Off Everyone's America 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration with John Grabko



One of the man-made wonders of the world, Mount Rushmore, was described by FDR as "America's Great Shrine of Democracy." Historic images, insights & stories will tell the tale of Mount Rushmore.... The monument that will last 10,000 years until as sculptor Gutzum Borglum described, the Wind, Rain & Time shall wash it away!

Th Jan 29 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

*[www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net)*



### The Invasion of a Global Sensation with Tom Cimarusti



The year 1962. Four teenage boys from Liverpool. And the rest is history. Yet who could have imagined that a band from a relatively poor northwest port city of England would export their homegrown success to a world eagerly opening up to the burgeoning phenomenon known as rock n' roll? Come explore the sensation of the Beatles as Dr. Tom Cimarusti, Professor of Music History at Florida Gulf Coast University, takes you on a musical journey from the band's formation to their rise to superstardom. And who knows? . . . Paul McCartney may pay us a surprise visit!

M Feb 2 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### The Long Way Home: Around the World Navigation of the Pacific Clipper with Ben Rich



Trapped in Auckland, New Zealand, on December 8th, 1941, at the start of World War 2, and their return through Hawaii no longer available, we will follow the crew through their 37-day circumnavigation around the world to return their Boeing 314 Pacific Clipper safely back to the United States.

W Feb 4 10:00 AM-11:15 AM \$12/\$20 Zoom

### Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd with Clarissa Schrooten



Bison are the largest land mammals in North America. They once numbered in the millions and roamed across the country. Learn about American Bison, their history, and how organizations are helping them now. The Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd is a partnership between the MN DNR, MN Zoo, Zollman Zoo, and Dakota County to help bison conservation in the state of Minnesota.

W Feb 4 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$12/\$20 Zoom

### Freshwater Freedom Seekers with Emilie Lucchesi



When people think of the Underground Railroad, they likely think of Harriet Tubman and other brave abolitionists who led enslaved people through dark forests and across steep mountain ranges. But most enslaved people actually escaped by boat. The Great Lakes served as a major route on the Underground Railroad. Dr. Emilie Le Beau Lucchesi tells three harrowing stories of freshwater freedom seekers and the abolitionists who helped them cross the Great Lakes.

Th Feb 5 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Headliners with Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell



Gather, Listen, and Learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell. This is a place to flex your brain and find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know and humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspapers/magazine topics or any other topics you would like to discuss. Class is limited to the first 12 registered each date to keep the group at a size where everyone will have time to express their thoughts. There is no fee attached to this class.

F Feb 6 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$0/\$0 Room H1415



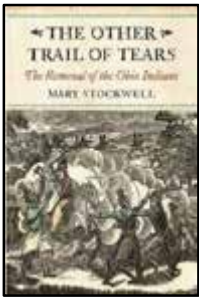
## Russia in 1917, the Year of Two Revolutions with Asya Pereltsvaig



This lecture examines one year in Russian history: the year when Russia turned from an absolutist monarchy into a democratic republic (at least on paper) and then into a Bolshevik/Communist dictatorship. Starting with the investigation into Rasputin's murder (which occurred in the last days of 1916) and ending with the only democratic election that the Bolsheviks allowed during their 70-year reign (and in which women were allowed to vote in!), 1917 in Russian history was packed with momentous events, larger-than-life personalities, and points-of-no-return. As with Asya Pereltsvaig's previous lectures on Russian history, we will scrutinize the past in order to understand Russia of today, and perhaps even gain a new appreciation of present-day U.S. politics and society.

M	Feb 9	3:00 PM-5:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians with Mary Stockwell



Many have heard of the "Trail of Tears," but few realize that not just the Cherokee but most of the tribes living in the eastern U.S. were also removed to the West after 1830. These tribes included the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, and Wyandot, who were living on reserves in Northwest Ohio granted to them by the U.S. government after the War of 1812. On these reserves, the Seneca, Shawnee, and Wyandot had quickly become successful farmers, while the Ottawa and Delaware practiced their traditional ways. But no matter how the tribes lived, they were all expected to move across the Mississippi River after President Andrew Jackson won passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830. The tribes in Ohio disagreed among themselves about removal. The Seneca and Delaware welcomed the chance to move west away from American settlers. The Shawnee were divided, with many wanting to stay in Ohio while others, especially among the young, wanted to head to the Kansas Territory to maintain their customs. The Ottawa were confident that they would never be removed, while the Wyandot were determined to stay on their Grand Reserve in Upper Sandusky forever. Even though most of Ohio's citizens, and their representatives in Congress, wanted the tribes to remain in their state, the Shawnee, Ottawa, Wyandot, Delaware, and Seneca all made their way down the "Other Trail of Tears" to Kansas and Oklahoma between 1831 and 1843.

T	Feb 10	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## Christian Nationalism, Past, and Present with Sarah Ruble



Christian Nationalism is much in the news. Some people proudly wear the title of Christian nationalists, while others consider the movement a threat to American democracy. Yet for all the certainty with which some people claim and others reject the description, the definition of Christian Nationalism is contested. Is it a new movement? Is everyone who wants their country to be more "godly" a Christian nationalist? What are its goals and aims? In this session, we will explore some possible definitions of Christian nationalism and investigate its possible roots and aims.

T	Feb 10	1:00 PM-2:30 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## Floriography with Stephenie Slahor



From ancient times to the Ottoman Empire, and from the Victorian Era to the present, flowers have been used to express thoughts and emotions. We'll see how the practice of floriography developed as a form of communication with flowers and their colors, and how the practice still influences our sending and receiving of flowers.

W	Feb 11	1:00 PM-2:30 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## "Never Give In:" The Life of Sir Winston Churchill with Jim Gibbons



"Never, never, never give in!" This was the creed Sir Winston Churchill lived by his entire life. Born into the aristocracy of the Dukes of Marlborough and becoming a Duke himself, Winston Churchill was always pursuing his goals and life's dreams. Churchill became President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, and First Lord of the Admiralty. He was a historian, artist, and writer who won a Nobel Prize for literature. He was also the first person ever to be made an honorary citizen of the United States. Historian Jim Gibbons will present the life of Sir Winston Churchill, who, as Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II, stood alone against the tyranny and slaughter of Adolf Hitler, his troops, and the German Nazi Party. Churchill inspired the British people by rejecting defeat, surrender, and compromise. He truly lived by his motto to "Never, never, never, give in!"

Th	Feb 12	10:00 AM-12:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## Lincoln's Last Day with John Grabko



At the close of the Civil War in the spring of 1865, President Lincoln was looking to the future and the reconstruction and healing of a country reunited. April 14th dawned as a day of hope. Explore the final hours of President Abraham Lincoln as his day unfolded. From his early rise and breakfast with family to business and personal meetings through the day, to his appointment with destiny at Ford's theatre that evening. You will be surprised & fascinated by the stories and events that came together to mark the last day of who may have been our greatest president! This is

not a story of assassination, rather the inspiring thoughts and plans of a man looking to the future!

Th	Feb 12	1:00 PM-2:15 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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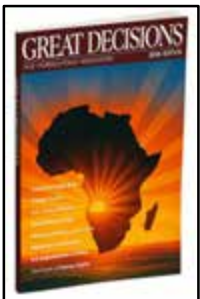
## Harper Lee and the Enduring Legacy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* with Lauren Radick



Join us as we celebrate a groundbreaking novel that not only reshaped American literature but also confronted the racial and moral challenges of its time with honesty and grace. Together, we'll trace Harper Lee's personal journey, explore her storytelling craft, and consider how the world of Maycomb reflects the realities of the Jim Crow South. We'll also look at the novel's lasting influence on the Civil Rights Movement and its continued relevance in today's conversations about justice and empathy. Through engaging discussion, close reading, and interactive activities, we'll revisit the novel's unforgettable characters and moral questions—discovering why *To Kill a Mockingbird* remains one of the most powerful stories ever told.

T	Feb 17	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy with Richard Leitch



Richard Leitch is back to present and discuss the topics from the 2026 edition of the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Discussion Groups. We will begin the class with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association on the selected topic. At 3:30, our presenter will join the group to facilitate the discussion for the remainder of the time. This lecture will discuss how Trump's return has marked a break from 80 years of U.S. foreign policy leadership, embracing an "America First" approach. This chapter explores the risks of isolation and diminished influence in relation to Trump 2.0 foreign policy. To order a personal copy of the Great Decisions

2026 Edition Discussion Guide for an additional \$39, contact the LIFE office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T	Feb 17	3:00 PM-5:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## Cities of the World: Prague with Taylor Hagood

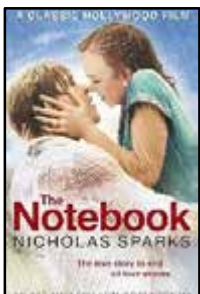


One of Europe's great cities, its past glittering with the golden era of Bohemia, Prague has also enjoyed a renaissance as a travel destination. From its famous astronomical clock to its hauntingly beautiful Charles Bridge, its old charm carries a distinct allure. At the same time, the city has had a complicated beginning in the twentieth century, reflecting the major movements of Europe.

In this installment of his "Cities of the World" series, Professor Taylor Hagood will give a tour of the famous and lesser-known streets of Prague.

W Feb 18 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Rated R for READ! *The Notebook* with Stephen MacLennan



To mark Valentine's Day, we will individually read the Nicholas Sparks 1996 debut novel *The Notebook* (272 pp) and then gather to watch the Nick Cassavetes 2004 movie (PG-13, 124m), starring Rachel McAdams and Ryan Gosling. A young couple falls in love in 1940s North (novel) / South (movie) Carolina, their story framed from a perspective decades later. Rated R for READ is a casual (reading/audiobook optional) book/movie club that explores story via literature and cinema. Bring your copy of the book or simply show up for the movie and enjoy the post-movie discussion and themed snacks provided.

Th Feb 19 10:00 AM-1:00 PM \$10/\$20 Forté Theater Room  
3955 Superior Drive NW



## A Grand Tour of Art's Masterpieces (Part 2): Prehistory to Renaissance with Deborah Robin



In the second installment of the journey, we'll explore legendary works that changed the course of art history. From Renaissance Italy, we'll see how artists like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Bernini, and Caravaggio created masterpieces where every brush stroke and chisel mark embodied the pursuit of perfection. No prior art history knowledge is necessary.

Th Feb 19 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## The Stave Churches of Norway with Kristin Anderson



Known for their fascinating appearance and remarkable survival, the stave churches of Norway form an interesting connection to early medieval architecture and imagery, blending church design with elements of pre-Christian Scandinavian structures. Learn about these distinctive buildings, their decoration, and their history in this illustrated talk.

M Feb 23 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Climate Change: What We Know and What It Means? with Steve Troutman



Steve has been a student of climate change and global warming since 1999. He has delivered presentations on the topic nine times, including at a national conference and at LIFE in 2020. In this updated presentation, he will review the scientific research and the resulting models and worldwide predictions. He will explain why there is, but should not be, an ongoing debate about climate change. He will look at the projected effects and impacts in Minnesota and the Midwest.

T Feb 24 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## The Anatomy of a Dictator: The Private Life, Illnesses, and Early Years of Adolf Hitler with Anette Isaacs



German Historian Anette Isaacs delves into the lesser-known aspects of Adolf Hitler's life, tracing his youth, personal struggles, and physical and mental health issues to better understand the roots of his destructive ideology. The aim is not to excuse, but to better comprehend the man behind the myth through a psychological and biographical lens. This deeper insight challenges us to confront how personal pain can evolve into historical tragedy.

T Feb 24 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

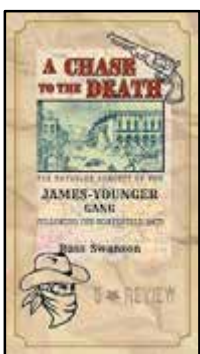
## Women Photographers with Adrienne Lee



Celebrate a few of the women artists who captured their unique and distinct perspectives of the world through photography. Spanning the realms of photojournalism, war correspondence, Surrealism, and social commentary, this presentation will feature the work of Dorothea Lange, Lee Miller, Dora Maar, Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, and Laurie Simmons.

W Feb 25 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## A Chase To The Death with Russ Swanson



Join historian Russ Swanson for an immersive look into one of the most dramatic chapters of the American frontier, the failed 1876 raid on the First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota. What began as a bold daylight robbery by the infamous James-Younger Gang quickly descended into chaos, leaving two townspeople and two outlaws dead, and sparking what would become the largest manhunt in U.S. history. Over the following two weeks, a thousand determined pursuers tracked the fleeing gang through the dense Big Woods and across the sweeping prairies of southwest Minnesota. Using historic maps, period documents, and insights from eight years of meticulous research, Swanson brings the story to life, placing you right alongside the posse in pursuit of America's most notorious outlaws.

Th Feb 26 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Jewish Resisters and Rescuers During the Holocaust with Howard Kerner



Incredible though it seems, in addition to the amazing, little-known Christians and Muslims who risked their lives to save tens of thousands of Jews from the Holocaust, there are many unknown Jews who risked their own lives, with courage and goodness, to fight for, help, and save their own people. This uplifting program will disprove once and for all the lie that Jews passively accepted their imminent destruction.

Th Feb 26 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

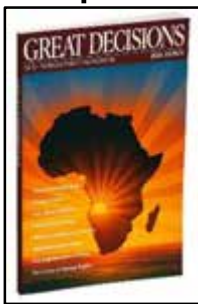
## A Musical Einstein: J.S. Bach and the Art of Counterpoint with Tom Cimarusti



J.S. Bach's musical style often incorporated one of the most intellectually demanding compositional processes, counterpoint. Simply defined as note-against-note, this style of writing dominated much of the Baroque period and often featured the composer's prowess in writing overlapping melodies, much like the well-known piece "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat." This course will investigate Bach's genius in writing polyphonic works and will offer participants an introduction to the composer and his most famed collection of keyboard works, the Well-Tempered Clavier (WTC).

M Mar 2 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy with Richard Leitch



Richard Leitch is back to present and discuss the topics from the 2026 edition of the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Discussion Groups. We will begin the class with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association on the selected topic. At 3:30, our presenter will facilitate the discussion for the remainder of the time. This week's Great Decisions topic will discuss how Trump's aggressive trade and tariff policies have shaken global economic norms. What's the rationale behind this radical shift in economic policy, and what are the implications for multilateral trade and geopolitics? To order a personal copy of the Great Decisions 2026 Edition Discussion guide for an additional \$39, please contact the LIFE office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T Mar 3 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



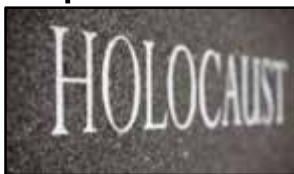
## Insects: We Are the Aliens with Joel Dunnette



Insects are amazingly diverse and incredibly different from us. Join Joel Dunnette, MN Master Naturalist and volunteer instructor, as he helps us understand and recognize the wonder and importance of insects to our world.

W Mar 4 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Unique Holocaust Resistors, Spies, and Rescuers with Howard Kerner



In a new program, we will profile some of the most clever and unique men and women whose genius and goodness enabled them to spy on and resist Nazi evil and to rescue persecuted people. These extraordinary and virtually unknown men and women are from Germany, England, Italy, and Hungary, and their fascinating actions will astonish you.

Th Mar 5 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Headliners with Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell



Gather, Listen, and Learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell. This is a place to flex your brain and find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know and humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspapers/magazine topics or any other topics you would like to discuss. Class is

limited to the first 12 registered each date to keep the group at a size where everyone will have time to express their thoughts. There is no fee attached to this class.

F Mar 6 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$0/\$0 Room H1415



## The Donner-Reed Journey with Nancy Maxwell



It must have seemed like the opportunity and adventure of a lifetime! A journey across the continent with family and friends to reach the land of milk and honey. Clean air, mild seasons, rich soil, abundant crops, and free land! And so it could have been, had not human frailty and nature collided in the wrong place at the wrong time. For the Donner-Reed wagon train of 1846, hopes and aspirations culminated in unspeakable tragedy. A look at their story provokes questions.

M Mar 9 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

*[www.learningisforever.net](http://www.learningisforever.net)*



## Russian Civil War: Why the Bolsheviks Ultimately Seized Russia with Asya Pereltsvaig



This lecture continues our exploration of Russian history to understand Russia today. Although it is often thought that the October Revolution in 1917 immediately brought about the Bolshevik/Soviet regime across the vast country, the truth is more complex than that. For nearly five years, the establishment of Bolshevik rule was far from a foregone conclusion, as the

Russian Civil War raged from Murmansk in the Russian north to Crimea in the south and to Vladivostok on the Pacific coast. Nearly a dozen different armies fought one another in a conflict that was more bloody, brutal, and barbaric than anything Russia had seen. We will examine the key events and larger-than-life personalities that shaped the Russian Civil War in order to answer the question in the title of the lecture: Why did the Bolsheviks ultimately seize Russia?

M	Mar 9	3:00 PM-5:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## Crafting Clues: The Trailblazing Life of Frances Glessner Lee with Michelle Gibbons



Step into the fascinating world of forensic science with historical presenter, Michelle Gibbons, as she discusses the life of Frances Glessner Lee, known as the "Mother of Forensic Science." Born in Chicago, Illinois, Lee revolutionized criminal investigation by creating The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death to train detectives. Discover Lee's trailblazing legacy of determination and pioneering spirit as you are transported to the heart of the 20th-century emerging field of homicide investigation.

T	Mar 10	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## The Rat Pack with Jim Gibbons



Class, style, music, fame, and, of course, friendship are just some of the words to describe the once infamous members of The Rat Pack. Centered around the nightlife and music scene in Las Vegas, members of The Rat Pack of the 1960s included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop. The group would appear together in many movies, and many times, when one member of the group would perform at a show, the rest of the Rat Pack would attend as well, as a surprise for the audience. This historical, not musical, lecture given by Jim Gibbons will describe the history of The Rat Pack, how it originated, and how it affected the entertainment industry of the time. Gibbons will explain each member's fame, life, works, and friendship with the other members of The Rat Pack and their ongoing legacy.

W	Mar 11	10:00 AM-12:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group with Lauren Radick



Imagine living among some of the greatest British artists, writers, and thinkers of the early twentieth century. Virginia Woolf, her sister Vanessa Bell, John Maynard Keynes, E.M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, and other brilliant minds formed what became known as The Bloomsbury Group—a circle that revolutionized modern thought and culture. Living in a vibrant district of

garden squares and townhouses in central London, they gathered weekly to debate art, literature, philosophy, politics, and love with striking honesty and creativity. Rejecting Victorian convention, they championed freedom of thought, gender equality, aesthetic beauty, and emotional truth. Their influence can still be felt today—in modernist literature, visual art, feminism, and even economics. This session explores how the Bloomsbury Group reshaped what it meant to live, love, and create in the modern world.

Th	Mar 12	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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### Ireland with Stephenie Slahor



The Emerald Isle has a variety of ancient and modern wonders in its geology, human history, resources, and world-famous products. The lecture takes an "armchair tour" of this island and how its influences have shaped European and world history, lore, and events.

Th Mar 12 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Britain's New King: King Charles III with Andrew O'Brien



As king-in-waiting for seventy years, Charles was the longest crown prince ever. We will explore his first three years as king as well as his upbringing in the royal family, the failure of his first marriage to Dianna, and his unlikely love for Camilla. Uniquely in the royal family, Charles has a passion for the environment and his own private charity, the Prince's Trust. We will explore the contributions and DRAMAS made by Prince William, Prince Harry, Kate, and Meghan!

M Mar 16 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Now, Where Did I Put my Glasses? A Guidebook to Alzheimer's Disease: Diagnosis, Prognosis, Management Options with Edward Creagan, MD FAAHPM



Dr. Creagan will share with us data-driven insights and perspectives on Alzheimer's dementia. He will address the apocalyptic increase in this condition and some of the promising FDA-approved medications. He will highlight the transition from normal aging to mild cognitive impairment to dementia. At the end of this presentation, we will each have an in-depth understanding of the role of lifestyle options and choices, and know the subtle differences between normal aging and more serious cognitive changes.

M Mar 16 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### U.S. and China Relations with Richard Leitch



Richard Leitch will present and discuss this week's topic from the 2026 edition of the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Discussion Groups: U.S. and China Relations. This week's discussion examines the current relations between the U.S. and China, noting the tariffs, military modernization, and pressure on Taiwan. Does Trump have a coherent China policy, and will his tariffs on rare earth minerals be effective? What are America's strategic options? Class will start at 3:00 pm with a viewing of the Great Decisions video on the topic and will continue with a lecture and discussion by Richard Leitch starting at 3:30. If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great

Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T Mar 17 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



### The Art and Dramatic Life of Modigliani with Taylor Hagood



His life story is the stuff of dark fairy tales. Amedeo Modigliani emerged as one of the great artists in early twentieth-century Paris, the great city of art. His haunting, elongated portraits mesmerized those who saw them, and the people who found themselves in his sphere were dazzled by his personality. But Modigliani's own attractiveness eventually caught up with him in a vividly tragic denouement. Professor Hagood will present his life and art in all its colorful and heartbreaking glory.

W Mar 18 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### Bears of the United States with Clarissa Schrooten



There are eight different kinds of bears in the world, and three of them call North America home. Learn more about the bears of the U.S. as we talk about each of the bear species' unique features, yearly behaviors, reproduction, and more.

W Mar 18 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Rated R for READ! Rebecca with Stephen MacLennan



We will individually read the Daphne du Maurier 1938 novel *Rebecca* (446 H pp, National Book Award winner) and then gather to watch the Alfred Hitchcock 1940 movie (PG, 130m, AA Best Picture winner). In 1930s Cornwall, England, a self-conscious woman (Joan Fontaine) adjusts as the newlywed wife of an aristocrat (Laurence Olivier) under the auspices of an austere housekeeper (Judith Anderson) and the spectral presence of the aristocrat's first wife. Rated R for READ is a casual (reading/audiobook optional) book/movie club that explores story via literature and cinema. Bring your copy of the book or simply show up for the movie and enjoy the post-movie discussion and themed snacks provided.

Th Mar 19 10:00 AM-1:00 PM \$10/\$20 Forté Theater Room  
3955 Superior Drive NW



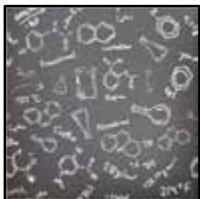
### A Family of Children Away From Home: Stories of Indian Boarding School Students from Minnesota and Wisconsin, 1920-1940 with Linda LeGarde Grover



Linda LeGarde Grover will share excerpts from her research on Native American children from Minnesota, boarding school survivors, and descendants. At the heart of this research was a series of interviews of boarding school survivors and descendants that took place during the late 1990s. In remembering and recounting their own school experiences, the interviewees have contributed a priceless picture of their own lives as well as the effects of boarding school policies and practices in American Indian families, communities, and tribes during the boarding school era and today. This presentation will include quotes from boarding school children as well as photographs of schools, students, and family life.

M Mar 23 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### The Fast and the Curious: a Chemical Kinetics Adventure with Heather Sklenicka



The chemical reaction is the basis for all of chemistry. In this session, you'll learn how reactions are communicated, measured, and what factors impact their speed. There will be plenty of time for questions before we run an experiment in which you will get to manipulate the rate of a reaction.

M Mar 23 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



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## The Cherokee Nation Remembered: The Road to 1838-39 Forced Cherokee Removal to Indian Territory, now the State of Oklahoma, with Rowena McClinton



During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Cherokee Nation faced pressure from U.S. settlers and policymakers as expanding cotton cultivation intensified demands for their fertile homelands. Between 1785 and 1819, the Cherokees lost more than 50 million acres through a series of treaties, yet they sought to safeguard their sovereignty by adopting a republican-style constitution. Despite these efforts, federal officials pursued a policy of Indigenous removal with the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the 1835 Treaty of New Echota. This set the stage for the 1838–39 Trail of Tears, an 800-mile forced march that caused immense suffering and loss. Even in the aftermath of forced removal, the Cherokee people demonstrated remarkable resilience, rebuilding their nation and preserving their sovereignty in the decades that followed.

T	Mar 24	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## Bertha Benz: A Trailblazer in Automotive History, with Anette Isaacs



In 1888, Bertha Benz—a mother of five and a visionary pioneer—made history as the first person to complete a long-distance journey by automobile. Her bold adventure not only demonstrated the potential of her husband Carl Benz’s invention but also sparked the global revolution of the automobile. German historian Anette Isaacs brings to life the inspiring story of Bertha Benz, a woman of courage and determination whose journey forever changed the course of transportation history.

T	Mar 24	1:00 PM-2:30 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## All That Glitters with Nancy Maxwell



Jewels, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and pearls, some so dazzling as to be known by name: the Hope and Sancy diamonds, the La Peregrina pearl. All were treasured for their beauty and rarity. Within the grasp of only the very few who could afford them, jewels became tokens of both power and love; symbols to be protected, cherished, and passed down through the ages. Yet not all survived. Some fell victim to greed, violence, and political upheaval. Some mysteriously disappeared. Let’s delve into the glittering world of famous gemstones, legendary jewelry pieces, and the intriguing stories woven into their histories.

W	Mar 25	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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## The Founding Mothers with Valerie Gugala



The American Revolution was not won by soldiers and statesmen alone. This lecture highlights the courageous and often overlooked women who played vital roles in the fight for independence—as spies, soldiers, fundraisers, writers, and homefront heroes. From battlefield bravery to political protest, discover powerful stories of women whose contributions helped shape a new nation.

W	Mar 25	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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## A Grand Tour of Art's Masterpieces (Part 3): Prehistory to Renaissance with Deborah Robin



In the third and final chapter in this art history series, we turn our attention to the enduring legacy of the Northern Renaissance. You’ll see how Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Gentileschi used innovative techniques and profound insights into the human condition to create a new era of artistic expression. No prior art history knowledge is necessary.

Th	Mar 26	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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### Take Me Out to the Ballgame: A History of Twin Cities Ballparks with Kristin Anderson



A richly illustrated presentation about the historic and contemporary baseball parks of the Twin Cities. Beginning with the early baseball grounds and simple wooden ballparks of the late 19th century, we'll also visit Nicollet Park and Lexington Park in the early 20th century, see Midway and Met Stadiums at mid-century, and finish our virtual tour with a look at two modern wonders, Target Field and CHS Field.

M Mar 30 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### 1918-1938 The Interwar Years Around the World with Chad Israelson

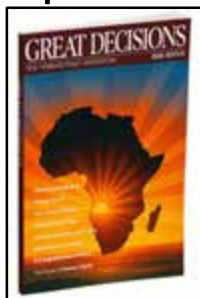


Pandemic, Democracies in Crisis, Rapid Technological Changes, Social Turmoil, and Financial Meltdown. Sound familiar? It would if you were alive roughly 100 years ago. Come learn about this tumultuous period that mirrors our own.

M Mar 30 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room H1415



### Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation with Richard Leitch



This week's Great Decisions class will begin with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association on The Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation. We will discuss how U.S. alliance skepticism may drive countries like Japan and South Korea to reconsider nuclear options. What are the implications of the Trump administration's rethinking of the U.S. alliance system for regional and global security? Will this new uncertainty alter the way allies and rivals in various regions make decisions about security and nuclear weapons? Class will start at 3:00 pm with a viewing of the Great Decisions video on the topic and will continue with a lecture and discussion by Richard Leitch starting at 3:30. If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T Mar 31 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



### The Past, Present & Future of Whitewater Wildlife Management Area with Christine Johnson



Listen to stories of the early inhabitants of the Whitewater Valley, how MN DNR manages the 27,400-acre property and plans for the future, the staff that work here, and how we partner with NGO's to make habitat management happen in a variety of habitat types. Hear about why the Whitewater WMA is so unique and what we're doing to preserve and enhance those features. Learn about opportunities for you to connect with the land.

W Apr 1 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### The Greatest Satirical Songs with David Misch



Satire is one of the oldest forms of humor, and adding music makes it even more powerful; in early Germanic and Celtic societies, people mocked in song would break out in boils and even commit suicide. Returning speaker, writer, and author, David Misch, shows how 15 hilarious, pointed, satirical songs mock racism, war, sexism, income inequality, and more. This lecture is for mature audiences. Please note: Those prone to boils may not wish to attend!

W Apr 1 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Ice Cream Social



Enjoy a variety of ice cream and topping and reconnect in person after only visiting through our computers over the winter.

Th Apr 2 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$5/\$5

Commons



## The Beach Boys: The Evolution of Surf Rock with Tom Cimarusti



Considered one of the greatest bands in rock history, The Beach Boys gained national attention following the release of their 1963 album *Surfin' U.S.A.* Their turbulent career, fueled by bandleader Brian Wilson's struggle with schizophrenia and the band's legal battles, coupled with their innovative "California sound," gave rise to what scholars refer to as Surfer Rock. Come explore the genius behind Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys as Dr. Tom Cimarusti (Professor of Music History at FGCU) examines the music of one of the successful and influential bands in pop music history. Bring your surfer caps as we sing a song or two!

M Apr 6 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## They're Off! with Stephenie Slahor



The "Sport of Kings" accounts for billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs in its workings. We'll look at such aspects as how horses are selected and trained for racing; how racetracks host and monitor races; famous races, jockeys, horses, owners, and trainers; and the racing traditions at some of America's most famous tracks.

M Apr 6 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Remembering Route 66 with Leslie Goddard



The name evokes images of gas stations, mom-and-pop motels, quirky attractions, and adventure on the open road. In this nostalgia-packed lecture, historian Leslie Goddard, Ph.D., explores the history of Route 66, the iconic road that linked Chicago to Los Angeles from 1926 until its closing in the mid-1980s. Learn why Route 66 remains so indelibly associated with the lore of the American road trip. What was Route 66 like at its pinnacle and what is it today?

T Apr 7 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Microplastics: What We Know, What We're Learning, and What's Next with Matthew Savoca



Plastic pollution has become one of the defining environmental challenges of our time. As global production rises, tiny plastic fragments, microplastics, are turning up everywhere: in air, water, soil, wildlife, and even our own bodies. In this talk, Dr. Matthew Savoca will explore what scientists have learned about how plastics move through the environment, how they enter and affect living organisms, and what emerging research is revealing about their potential risks to ecosystems and human health. He will also discuss new methods and policies aimed at reducing plastic pollution and safeguarding planetary health.

T Apr 7 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom



### Victor Hugo's Dark Art with Taylor Hagood



Few writers have ever matched Victor Hugo's dark imagination. His sweeping novels presenting outcasts of 19<sup>th</sup> century French society mark some of history's greatest literary achievements. Less well known are the artworks he produced, often drawn with the same pen and ink used to write the books. In this lecture, Professor Hagood will delve into the story of Hugo's life and the grim visions that haunted it.

W Apr 8 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### How to Get the Most Out of Your Next Medical Encounter: What We Never Learned in School with Edward Creagan MD, FAAHPM



Dr. Creagan had been a practicing medical oncologist and a palliative care and hospice consultant at Mayo Clinic for approximately 40 winters. In 2018, he transitioned into the arena of digital health and patient information. Once upon a time in medicine, there was a mantra: 1 patient, 1 hour, 1 room, 1 healthcare provider. Today, that model is obsolete. In a general medical practice, a typical patient may have only 13 minutes with the provider. On average, a healthcare provider will interrupt the patient after about 11 seconds of them explaining the reason for their visit. We, as patients, need to understand the pressures in the healthcare delivery system, and how to navigate for our care. Dr. Creagan will share the subtleties in the nuances of the electronic health record and how to advocate for ourselves on some life-and-death decisions.

W Apr 8 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### The Ins and Outs of Emergency Medical Services with Alex Catevenis



Alex Catevenis will discuss the need-to-know information for when you need to call 911. When to call, when not to call, and what to do when you are unsure. He will also present some common themes often overlooked in an aging population. Including trip hazards, medication management, File of Life programs, and much, much more! Join Alex for a discussion about making good decisions and hopefully remaining independent, at your home, for as long as you can!

Th Apr 9 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### Headliners with Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell



Gather, Listen, and Learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell. This is a place to flex your brain and find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know and humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspapers/magazine topics or any other topics you would like to discuss. Class is limited to the first 12 registered each date to keep the group at a size where everyone will have time to express their thoughts. There is no fee attached to this class.

F Apr 10 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$0/\$0 Room H1415



### Deep Diving with Ric Mixer



Ric shares deepwater exploration of shipwrecks off Michigan's Shipwreck Coast, including visits to the Adella Shores, Whaleback Barge 129, the Atlanta, tug Satellite, and schooner Frank Wheeler. Included in this lecture is a background on each cargo and the construction of the ships, as well as the mission of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society to discover the whereabouts of each ship that was lost.

M Apr 13 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom



### The Boeing 737 Max: Investigation Facts and Fiction with Ben Rich



The Boeing 737 MAX was the topic of negative publicity after two MAX accidents in 2018 and 2019. The fleet was grounded for almost two years, and we will look at the "facts" found in the actual mishap investigations and discuss whether the groundings were warranted or based on political rhetoric and political grandstanding.

M Apr 13 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$10/\$20 Zoom

### The History and Philosophy of Money with Brendan Shea

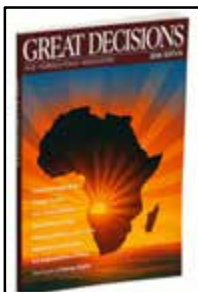


What if I told you that money doesn't exist, and never has? In this lecture, we'll take a trip through one of humanity's strangest and most powerful shared belief systems, from Aristotle's puzzlement over coin value to Adam Smith's invisible hand to the modern mystery of fiat currency. We'll explore how societies collectively agree to treat worthless objects as valuable, why this impossible fiction actually works, and the various problems (economic, ethical, and otherwise) that can happen when it doesn't. Our journey ends with cryptocurrency, which claims to solve the "trust problem" in money through mathematics, but might just be replacing one illusion with another.

T Apr 14 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room H1415



### Ukraine and the Future of European Security with Richard Leitch

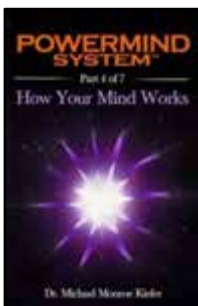


The Great Decisions discussion class on Ukraine and the Future of European Security will begin with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association and continue with a discussion facilitated by Richard Leitch, focusing on reduced U.S. support for NATO and Ukraine; Europe faces strategic uncertainty. The Trump administration has signaled an intention to reduce its security role in Europe. What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas, and how might Europe respond? If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T Apr 14 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



### The Powermind System: The Neuroscience of Peak Performance with Michael Kiefer



Discover how mindset and brain science intersect to drive achievement. Drawing on over a decade of research and insights from *The Powermind System*, this session explores how neural pathways shape confidence, motivation, and goal setting. Learn how visualization, affirmations, and cognitive reframing influence brain function and performance. This is illustrated through case studies of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Justin Jefferson, and Lady Gaga. Gain a deeper understanding of how intentional thought can rewire the brain for success.

W April 15 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room 1415



*Questions? Call 507-280-3157.*

## Rated R for READ! *A Simple Plan* with Kerry Novotny



We will individually read the Scott Smith 1993 novel *A Simple Plan* (335 pp) and then gather to watch the Sam Raimi 1998 movie (rated R for strong violence and language, 121m) starring Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton, and Bridget Fonda. In modern-day Ohio (novel) / Minnesota (movie), a man and his wife, his brother, and their friend discover a downed small plane in the woods containing a large sum of money and embark upon a spiraling series of flawed decisions. Rated R for READ is a casual (reading/audiobook optional) book/movie club that explores story via literature and cinema. Bring your copy of the book or simply show up for the movie and enjoy the post-movie discussion and themed snacks provided.

Th Apr 16 10:00 AM-1:00 PM \$10/\$20 Forté Theater Room  
3955 Superior Drive NW



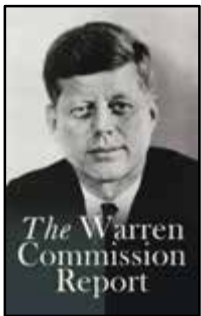
## In Focus: St. Peter's in Rome with Kristin Anderson



The famous basilica of St. Peter contains design elements by some of the greatest Italian architects of the Renaissance and the Baroque, including Michelangelo and Bernini, but the site's history goes back a thousand years before they worked on the current church. In fact, the building we see today replaced "Old St. Peter's," an Early Christian basilica from the fourth century. This presentation will focus on both buildings as well as some of the famous art inside the present-day basilica of St. Peter.

M Apr 20 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## The Warren Commission Report: Fact or Fiction with David Yorks



This presentation examines the findings of the Warren Commission—which investigated President Kennedy's assassination for ten months and released its report in September 1964—alongside the later conclusions of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which conducted a thirty-one-month inquiry and published its results in March 1979. For those who attended last season's program, this discussion will also revisit and analyze several key issues surrounding Dealey Plaza, including the longstanding controversies related to the Texas School Book Depository and the Grassy Knoll. The goal of this talk is to highlight a selection of major questions that continue to surround the events of November 22, 1963, and to set the stage for audience questions and conversation following the presentation.

T Apr 21 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room H1415



## Turning Clay into Gold: The King, the Alchemist and the Birth of Porcelain with Anette Isaacs



Dive into the extraordinary story of King Augustus the Strong, who dreamed of opulence, and Johann Friedrich Böttger, the alchemist he tasked with making gold, but who instead discovered something even more valuable: porcelain. Learn how their quest for riches led to the creation of Europe's first "white gold" and turned Saxony into a hub of beauty and craftsmanship. German historian Anette Isaacs presents a tale of ambition, accidental genius, and the porcelain that dazzled a continent!

T Apr 21 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom



## Songs for Earth Day with Paul Koeller

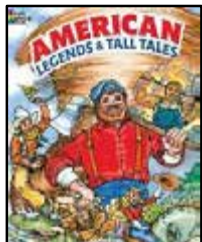


Come and learn about artists and songs appropriate for Earth Day. Enjoy songs about protecting the environment, safe energy, protecting wildlife, and enjoying nature.

W Apr 22 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room H1415



## "But it's a Great Story!" Debunking American Legends with Valerie Gugala



This lecture will delve into some widely popular American legends that have been passed down through generations, exploring the truth behind these tales. While these legends may have become ingrained in popular culture, it is important to examine their historical accuracy. Stories like George Washington's false teeth, Paul Revere's Ride, Johnny Appleseed, and the Curse of the Hope Diamond are included.

W Apr 22 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## The Decades 1950s with Jim Gibbons



The 1950s were the decade of Rock and Roll, the postwar boom, the Korean War, and Civil Rights. From the booming economy to the baby boom, America was starting to prosper after the war. From the Supreme Court's landmark decision in "Brown v. Board of Education" in 1954 to activist Rosa Parks making her name in America's history, the Civil Rights Movement was moving forward. Elvis became the idol of American teenagers everywhere and had the nation "All Shook Up," later taking his crown as the King of Rock and Roll. It was the Golden Age of Television, where everybody loved Lucy and learned the schemes of Eddie Haskell. Historian Jim Gibbons will take you back to an age of innocence and Eisenhower. Despite the scare of communism and Sputnik, Rodgers & Hammerstein taught us to whistle a happy tune when afraid in The King and I. Gibbons will discuss the American values and conservative culture of peace, progress, and prosperity in the 1950s.

Th Apr 23 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

## Picasso & Matisse: Rivals Who Revolutionized Modern Art with Deborah Robin



Step into the electric atmosphere of early 1900s Paris, where two artistic giants—Picasso and Matisse—sparked a revolution that would transform art forever. At the legendary salons of Gertrude Stein, these fierce rivals pushed each other to explosive new heights of creativity. This two-session course reveals how these extraordinary personalities ignited the modernist movement that shocked society and changed how we see art. In part one (April 23), you'll meet the influential Stein family and learn about their role in promoting the work of Picasso and Matisse. In part 2 (May 14), you'll see how to understand and appreciate the challenging concepts of Picasso's Cubism and Matisse's Fauvism. No prior art knowledge required.

Th Apr 23 & May 14 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$30/\$40 Zoom

## The Scam Landscape: Staying Safe with AARP featuring William Raker



Have you ever been approached with a fraudulent offer or been a victim of identity theft? The AARP Fraud Watch Network is working to empower you in the fight, with proven resources and tools to help you spot and avoid identity theft and fraud. By taking a few practical steps, you have the power to fight back against fraud. This session will arm you with the latest data on fraud trends and provide tips and resources to protect yourself and your family.

M Apr 27 1:00 PM-2:15 PM \$0/\$0 Room H1415



### Bats of Whitewater State Park with Jeremy Darst

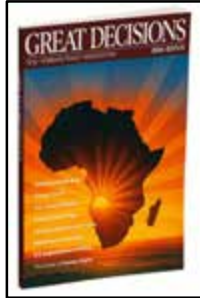


Ever wanted to learn more about bats? Then this might be the program for you! During this program, we will take a deep dive into the bats of Whitewater State Park. We will look at which species call the park home. What impact has the deadly White Nose Syndrome had on the bat population? We will also look at the research that has been conducted at the park, what we have learned, and what questions still need to be investigated. Lastly, we'll discuss the steps currently underway by the DNR and its partners to help the bat population thrive.

T Apr 28 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order with Richard Leitch



This week's Great Decisions class will begin with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association on Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order. At 3:30, Richard Leitch will facilitate a discussion on the topic for the remainder of the time. Today's lecture focuses on whether multilateralism survives amid shifting global power and rising nationalism. This chapter examines the future of global cooperation across trade, health, and finance. If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T Apr 28 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



### The American Revolution and the Fate of the World with Richard Bell



When we think of the American Revolution, we often imagine a local struggle: 13 colonies taking on the British Crown in a spirited fight for independence. But that familiar story is only half the truth, and perhaps not even the most fascinating half. In this riveting program, historian and author Richard Bell invites audiences to rediscover the Revolution as a global conflict that

unleashed chaos, opportunity, and transformation across six continents. From the sugar fields of the Caribbean to the court of the King of Mysore, from refugee camps on the Canadian frontier to uprisings in Sierra Leone and Peru, the war that gave birth to the United States was never merely America's own. It was a seismic world event that redrew maps, toppled hierarchies, catalyzed migrations, and fueled new movements for liberty—and for empire. Through vivid storytelling, Bell traces the far-reaching reverberations of the war via the lives of those it displaced, empowered, or destroyed: a Native matriarch fighting to preserve an alliance, a Prussian officer reinventing himself in a foreign army, and a Boston schoolteacher shipwrecked thousands of miles from home. Along the way, Bell explores how the Revolution sparked a transoceanic refugee crisis, ignited antislavery activism, and inspired uprisings from Ireland to India. This is the American Revolution as you've never seen it before, complex, interconnected, and astonishingly relevant to the modern world.

W Apr 29 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 Room H1415



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## Streetcars and Street Fights in Jim Crow New York with Richard Bell



She was shouting for someone to help her. She was wrestling for a better hold of the window frame so that he couldn't pull her outside and throw her on the ground. No one got up from their seats to stop him. Instead, they watched, all of them, mouths open, as if it were happening far away. The conductor was bigger, older, and stronger than she was, and he yanked and heaved at her until her grasp broke. But now she was grabbing at his coat. As she held on, she could see her friend, a woman he had already thrown out of this boxy, airless streetcar, pressed up against its side, her face a picture of horror and rage. She was screaming at him, begging him. Get your hands off her. "You'll kill her. Don't kill her!" The woman in this scene is Elizabeth Jennings, the 25 year-old New Yorker who launched the first successful civil disobedience campaign in U.S. history. On Sunday, July 16, 1854, Jennings, an African American school-teacher and choir-mistress, stepped onto a "whites only" streetcar on Third Avenue. She was the first among a small army of young Black female New Yorkers to fight to end apartheid on urban transit in New York. Led by University of Maryland historian Richard Bell, this talk examines why streetcars were the locus of such frequent and fraught attempts to police the color line in the Jim Crow North and why Black women drove this extraordinary campaign for civil rights.

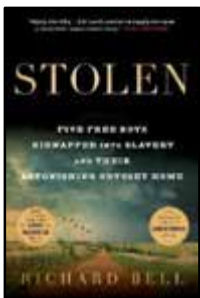
W Apr 29 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

\$15/\$25

Room H1415



## The Reverse Underground Railroad: Slavery and Kidnapping in Pre-Civil War America with Richard Bell



Join us for a talk with Dr. Richard Bell, the author of *Stolen*, a book that tells the incredible story of five boys whose courage forever changed the fight against slavery in America. Philadelphia, 1825: five young, free black boys fall into the clutches of the most fearsome gang of kidnappers and slavers in the United States. Lured onto a small ship with the promise of food and pay, they are instead met with blindfolds, ropes, and knives. Over four long months, their kidnappers drive them overland into the Cotton Kingdom to be sold as slaves. Determined to resist, the boys form a tight brotherhood as they struggle to free themselves and find their way home. Their ordeal—an odyssey that takes them from the Philadelphia waterfront to the marshes of Mississippi and onward still—shines a glaring spotlight on the Reverse Underground Railroad, a black market network of human traffickers and slave traders who stole thousands of legally free African Americans from their families to fuel slavery's rapid expansion in the decades before the Civil War.

Th Apr 30 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

\$15/\$25

Room H1415



## A Most Luxuriant Songster: The Life and Music of Cole Porter with Tom Cimarusti



Although not as prolific as his contemporary Irving Berlin, Cole Porter remains one of the most iconic songwriters in American musical history. Come explore the luxuriant life and music of Cole Porter as Dr. Cimarusti's introduces the composer's rise to fame, his musical style, and the debilitating accident that facilitated the end of his career. And of course, we'll enjoy a video or two of the iconic Ethel Merman singing a Porter favorite, "Anything Goes."

M May 4 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22

Zoom



## Natural Disaster Planning & Preparation with David Weinand



Natural disasters happen all the time. Did you know there are people who are working to make sure your city, county, and state are prepared? The events can sometimes be predicted (flash flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.). Being as prepared as possible and being able to respond is part of their jobs. David will give some examples and talk about the process of the government being as prepared as possible.

M May 4 1:00 PM-2:00 PM \$10/\$20 Zoom

## The Music and History of Queen with Paul Koeller



Join Paul as he uses a presentation with photos and music to explore the music and history of the rock group Queen.

T May 5 10:00 AM-12:00 PM \$15/\$25 H1415



## Culture Wars as Gender Wars with Sarah Ruble



Many contested issues in the United States today center around gender. Feminism. Abortion. Trans rights. In this session, we will explore why gender matters so much in our political and religious discourse and trace the roots of some of our current debates to earlier episodes in U.S. history.

T May 5 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Long-Term Environmental Monitoring on the Upper Mississippi River with Jennifer Sauer



Have you ever wondered what the fish, vegetation, or water quality is like on the Upper Mississippi River? We will explore the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program's Long-Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM) element. The LTRM has been in existence for close to 40 years. We will discuss what we have learned about the river over that time period.

W May 6 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



## What is a Book? Past, Present, Future with Marguerite Ragnow



From manuscript to codex to digital file, how we think about and how we use books can be very individual. How much does the format, the physical nature of the book, affect what we think about it? We will be exploring the history of the book and asking some of the big questions about the form books take that seem increasingly important in the age of AI.

Th May 7 1:00 PM-2:30 PM \$12/\$22 Zoom

## Headliners with Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell



Gather, Listen, and Learn! Meet in person once a month to engage in a thoughtful exchange of ideas, opinions, and information with facilitators Steve Frytak and Phil Karsell. This is a place to flex your brain and find gratification in being acknowledged for what you know and humbled by the knowledge of others. Bring current newspapers/magazine topics or any other topics you would like to discuss. Class is limited to the first 12 registered each date to

keep the group at a size where everyone will have time to express their thoughts. There is no fee attached to this class.

F May 8 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$0/\$0 Room H1415



### A Very British Symbol: Houses of Parliament with Andrew O'Brien



Dive into the mother of all parliaments. Learn how Parliament evolved from a King's council during the Anglo-Saxon period to the modern body that we know today. Do you know why the seats face each other instead of facing forward? Did you know that a secret passage, dating from 1660, was uncovered just recently? Learn why a famous suffragette hid in a cupboard on the night of the 1911 Census, and why the House of Commons provides its members with free snuff!

M May 11 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

### Did a Pandemic Cause the Fall of Ancient Rome? with Colin Elliott



In the middle of the second century AD, ancient Rome thrived at the height of its power under the emperor Marcus Aurelius. The Pax Romana, a period of relative peace and stability, seemed unassailable. Yet around AD 165, a devastating illness, now known as the Antonine plague, possibly history's first pandemic, swept through the Roman legions and ravaged urban centers, including the imperial capital itself. This fast-spreading but mysterious disease

killed thousands and acted as a catalyst for profound social, economic, and political changes while exposing deep-seated fragilities in the Empire's institutions. The Antonine plague disrupted Rome's economy, already strained by stagnation, strained food supplies, and mass migration. Rome's wars became longer and costlier. The persecution of Christians also accelerated. This class provides a comprehensive history of the plague, blending ancient accounts with modern scientific analysis. It offers a vivid picture of how a pandemic both reflected and accelerated the Roman Empire's vulnerabilities, setting the stage for its eventual decline.

M May 11 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### More Ins and Outs of Emergency Medical Services with Alex Catevenis

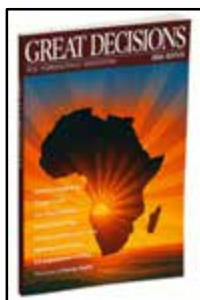


Alex Catevenis is back for a second round of need-to-know information for when you need to call 911. When to call, when not to call, and what to do when you are unsure. This presentation will start with a recap of common themes often overlooked, address any new concerns, and offer more information and discussion as to how you can make good decisions and remain independent for as long as you can.

T May 12 10:00 AM-11:15 AM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### U.S. Engagement of Africa with Richard Leitch



Africa's geopolitical role is growing. What lessons can the U.S. learn from China's presence there, and how might it strengthen ties, especially with leading nations like Nigeria? What tools of statecraft might the U.S. bring to its engagement with Africa? Class will begin with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association on the selected topic. At 3:30, our presenter will facilitate the discussion for the remainder of the time. If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T May 12 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



### Iroquois Theater Fire with Jim Gibbons



It's December 30, 1903, and you are seated in the gorgeous Iroquois Theatre in Chicago. With its spacious three-level seating, high balcony, and hidden staircase, the picturesque theatre is a sight to see! The bottom orchestra level alone can seat up to 700. With five levels, elevators are used to transport actors and actresses. You feel safe knowing the theatre, located near the Chicago Loop Shopping District, is fireproof and police patrolled, as advertised in the playbill. You feel lucky to have a ticket! With over 2,200 attending, all floors including standing room areas, are full. Then, the Drury Lane musical, Mr. Blue Beard, begins! At 3:15 PM, disaster hits. Gibbons will discuss the tragedy and explain how, through mass panic, ignoring fire safety codes, and blocked exits, over 600 people died. Gibbons will discuss the structure of the building and events before, during, and after the deadliest theatre fire and single building fire in Chicago and U.S. history.

W	May 13	10:00 AM-12:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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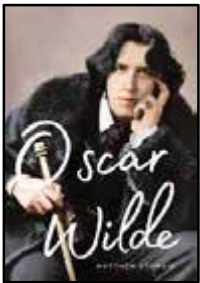
### Hopi Kachinas with Stephenie Slahor



This lecture focuses on the origins and creation of Hopi Kachina dolls, and their ceremonial significance to the Hopi people who reside in north-eastern Arizona.

W	May 13	1:00 PM-2:30 PM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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### Oscar Wilde: A Life of Wit and Wisdom with Lauren Radick



Oscar Wilde was one of the world's most popular writers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. His incredible charm, larger-than-life personality, and sparkling conversational skills drew attention to him wherever he went. His humor, his fashion-forward style, and literary genius all established him as one of the most celebrated writers of the Victorian Era. We will explore a comprehensive experience in the life of Oscar Wilde, including his body of work, his family, his education, his relationship with both women and men, and the trials that changed everything. His unique wit, literary contributions, and personal struggles continue to inspire discussions on art, morality, and human rights.

Th	May 14	10:00 AM-11:30 AM	\$12/\$22	Zoom
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### Russian Film Discussion with Asya Pereltsvaig



With this first installment of our Russian Film Series, we'll explore life in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia through the lens of some of the nation's greatest film directors. Each session will focus on a film from a different time period, examining how political regimes shaped the ways people lived, loved, and laughed. We'll also consider how Russian cinema connects to—and stands apart from—world cinema.

The class will combine lecture and discussion. After registering, participants will receive a link to a subtitled version of the selected film to view on their own device. For those who prefer a shared viewing experience, the film will also be screened in the LIFE Conference Room at 10:00 AM on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Those viewing the film at Heintz are welcome to watch the discussion via Zoom in the conference room. Please call the office to reserve a seat.

M	May 18	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	\$15/\$25	Zoom
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*Questions? Call 507-280-3157.*



### Radiant Rebellion: Katharine Hepburn's Unstoppable Spirit with Michelle Gibbons



Step into the dazzling world of Hollywood's golden era as we discuss the legendary life of Katharine Hepburn. Gibbons will discuss Hepburn's fiery spirit, razor-sharp wit, and timeless elegance, childhood, and start in Hollywood. Hear about her iconic role in movies.

T May 19 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Zoom

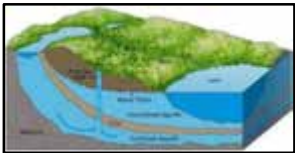
### Presidential Birthplaces with Valerie Gugala



Which state has seen the most future Presidents born? Who was the first President born an American citizen? (Hint: It's not George Washington!) Humble or lavish, in a large town or out in the wilderness, in this presentation, we will virtually travel to Presidential birthplaces across the country.

T May 19 1:00 PM-3:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom

### Minnesota's Groundwater Resources Uncovered with Brent Beste



In Minnesota, we are often thought of as the land of 10,000 lakes, where our water resources are plentiful. Minnesota may be water-rich, but our resources are not evenly distributed. More than 75% of Minnesotans obtain water for drinking and economic growth from groundwater, and outside the Twin Cities metro area, that number is likely to be well over 90%. This talk will discuss Minnesota's water resources, how groundwater use affects other users and resources, and how DNR works with water users to ensure sustainable water use.

W May 20 10:00 AM-11:30 AM \$12/\$22 Room H1415



### Rated R for READ! *Wild* with Kerry Novotny

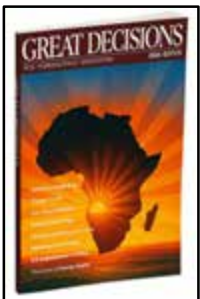


We will individually read the Cheryl Strayed 2012 memoir *Wild: Lost and Found on the Pacific Coast Trail* (336 H pp) and then gather to watch the Jean-Marc Vallee 2014 movie *Wild* (rated R for sexual content, nudity, drug use, and language; 115m) starring Reese Witherspoon (AA Best Actress nominee) and Laura Dern (AA Best Supporting Actress nominee). Despite little wilderness experience, Minnesotan Strayed embarks on a three-month quest of self-discovery along the Pacific Coast Trail. Rated R for READ is a casual (reading/audiobook optional) book/movie club that explores story via literature and cinema. Bring your copy of the book or simply show up for the movie and enjoy the post-movie discussion and themed snacks provided.

Th May 21 10:00 AM-1:00 PM \$10/\$20 Forté Theater Room  
3955 Superior Drive NW



### The Future of Human Rights and International Law with Richard Leitch



The final Great Decisions discussion class will examine The Future of Human Rights and International Law. The session will begin with a short video produced by the Foreign Policy Association and continue with a discussion facilitated by Richard Leitch at 3:30. This lecture focuses on democracy and human rights retreat globally—and the U.S. pulls back—how can civil society and legal norms remain effective in a divided world? What is the role and force of international law in this era of impunity? If you wish to purchase a personal copy of the Great Decisions, 2026 Edition, please contact the LIFE main office by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

T May 26 3:00 PM-5:00 PM \$15/\$25 Zoom



## Generational Cycles and the Predicted Crisis with Steve Troutman



Steve has done this eye-opening and frequently requested presentation for LIFE seven times since 2008. Based on research by two historians/authors, who identified four generational archetypes that have been seen over and over again in U.S. history. Each generational archetype brings with it an identifiable set of characteristics (current iterations: Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z).

Every 20 years or so, the next archetype comes of age and another archetype ages out, changing the generational alignment. Each alignment is referred to as a turning. There is a repeating succession of four turnings (i.e., high, awakening, unraveling, crisis) which result in a repeating 80-year cycle. This cycle enables us to make predictions. This updated presentation will focus on what is predicted for the Crisis Turning and what comes next!

W May 27 1:00 PM-3:00 PM

\$15/\$25

Hybrid/Room1415



## *Instructor Biographies*



**Kristin Anderson** is a Professor Emerita of Art and Design at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. Her courses included art history and architectural history surveys as well as more specialized offerings such as American Art, Scandinavian Art, and Women and Art. A graduate of Oberlin College, Kristin has master's degrees in art history (University of Minnesota) and church history (Luther Seminary) as well as a Ph.D. in American Art, Architecture, and Popular Culture from the University of Minnesota.

**Page 16, 23, 27.**



**Dr. Connie Arzigian** is a Teaching Professor in the Archaeology and Anthropology Department at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, and Senior Researcher with the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at UWL. Her research is on Midwestern archaeology and paleoecology, examining subsistence and settlement systems, and the origins of agriculture. In addition, she teaches about biological anthropology and how our species has emerged and thrived. **Page 10.**



**J. Kelly Beatty** is an award-winning science journalist and astronomer. During the 1980s, he was among the first Western journalists to gain direct access to the Soviet space program. Kelly is a former Senior Editor of *Sky & Telescope* magazine (serving over 40 years) and former editor of *Night Sky* magazine. Now retired, he remains actively involved in *Sky & Telescope* articles, tours, and projects. He has a bachelor's degree in geology from the California Institute of Technology and a Master's degree in science journalism. Specializing in planetary science and space exploration, Kelly conceived and edited *The New Solar System*, considered a standard reference among planetary scientists. **Page 7.**



**Richard Bell** is Professor of History at the University of Maryland and author of *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*, which was a finalist for the George Washington Prize and the Harriet Tubman Prize. He has held major research fellowships at Yale, Cambridge, and the Library of Congress and is the recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar award and the 2021 Andrew Carnegie Fellowship. He is a Trustee of the Maryland Center for History and Culture and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

**Page 5, 7, 29, 30.**



**Henry Berman** is a retired businessman, working for 34 years at Ecolab, a global company based in St Paul. He has been a prominent member of the Great Decisions Speaker's Bureau for seven years, with a strong interest in the Middle East, Africa, and the emerging nations of Asia. He has given presentations on such varied topics as Saudi Arabia, the Future of the Kurds, Red Sea Security, South Africa's Legacy of Apartheid, and China in Africa. He has also been a teacher at OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Minnesota) for three years. Courses he has created and led include the Middle East Conflict, the Horn of Africa, and the Philippines-US Relationship. **Page 8.**



**Brent Beste** is a Water Resources Planner with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Brent has been with the DNR for 11 years, with nine years spent reviewing groundwater use permits across Southern and Southwestern Minnesota. In Brent's role as the water resources planner, he coordinates large water-related projects to ensure consistency across different technical groups and partner organizations. Brent holds a bachelor's in Meteorology and Hydrology from St. Cloud State University and a Master's in Public Administration from Hamline University. **Page 34.**



**Alex Catevenis** was born in Lewiston, ME and graduated high school in 2005. He went to college for a few years, realized he needed something more. He joined the U.S. Army in 2008, there he served for eight years on active duty, as a medic and had deployments to Afghanistan in 2009 and 2012. He was medically retired in 2016 and moved to Rochester, MN. Alex joined Mayo Clinic Ambulance and Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences Paramedic Program, graduating in 2018. He previously graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice in 2016. Alex joined the instructor staff with Rochester Community and Technical College Emergency Medical Training Center in 2017, as well as joining SE EMS Consortium Faculty in 2019. He took over RCTC's Director position in 2020 and has been in that role since. **Page 25, 32.**



**Dr. Tom Cimarusti**, a native of Los Angeles, received his Ph.D. at Florida State University and here he defended his dissertation concerning 19th-century Italian song. He has presented his research at conferences in Europe, Asia, and the United States. He is currently working on an edition of hymns associated with the late 19th-century religious cult, the Koreshan Unity. He has received numerous research grants and excellence in teaching awards. As an avid accordionist, he is also active in the performance of the traditional music of Argentina (tango), Italy (work songs), and the USA (zydeco). He lives in Naples, FL, with his wife Christy and two boys, Paul and Christopher. **Page 9, 13, 17, 24, 30.**



**Dr. Edward Creagan** is a medical oncologist who practiced at the Mayo Clinic for more than forty Minnesota winters until he transitioned into the orbit of digital health and health information in 2018. He was the first Mayo Clinic consultant board-certified in hospice and palliative medicine. Dr. Ed received the Distinguished Mayo Clinician Award—Mayo Clinic's highest honor. He also completed an elected term as President of the Mayo Staff. He is the author of the triple award-winning book *How Not to Be My Patient: A Physician's Secrets for Staying Healthy and Surviving Any Diagnosis*. His second book is about death and dying issues, titled *Farewell*, and provides answers to vital end-of-life questions. He blogs regularly on his website, AskDoctorEd.com, and can be followed daily on Instagram, X, and TikTok. **Page 20, 25.**





**Jeremy Darst** is a southeastern Minnesota native. He grew up in the area around Rochester. He enjoys exploring and recreating in nature. For the last 15 years, he has worked as a Naturalist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He loves learning about the natural world and local history. The favorite part of his job is sharing these things with others. **Page 29.**

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**Joel Dunnette** is an MN Master Naturalist and volunteer instructor. Joel leads butterfly counts and dragonfly and general "bug hunts" and is an advocate for recognizing the wonder and importance of insects in our world. **Page 18.**

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**Colin Elliott** is a Professor of History at Indiana University, Bloomington, specializing in the Roman Empire's economic, social and environmental history. He authored *Pox Romana: The Plague that Shook the Roman World* (Princeton, 2024) and *Economic Theory and the Roman Monetary Economy* (Cambridge, 2020). His next book, *Tyrant & Gladiator: Commodus, Last Emperor of the Pax Romana* (Princeton University Press), is a biography of the Roman Emperor Commodus. Elliott is also host of The Pax Romana Podcast—a podcast exploring the exciting stories and sources from Roman history. He teaches several popular courses at Indiana University, including 'Ancient Leaders and Leadership'—a favorite of students of the Kelly School of Business. In 2020, his teaching earned the David and Cheryl Morley Career Distinguished Teaching Award—the College's highest teaching honor for early career faculty. **Page 32.**

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**Stephen Frytak** is a retired Mayo Medical Oncologist. He previously served on the Learning Is ForEver (LIFE) Board. **Page 5, 9, 13, 18, 25, 31.**

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**Jim Gibbons**, a Marengo, IL, resident and historical presenter, has made a name for himself teaching the importance of history. Using his passion for and strong knowledge of history, Jim offers over 176 riveting presentation topics. Jim has been researching history and historical figures since college. Using his slogan, "Life is no mystery when you know your history," he has a passion for retelling historical stories of presidential, world, and United States history, with a strong emphasis on how history continually repeats itself. Jim's goal is not only to teach the important parts of history but to point out that if history's warnings are heeded, mankind stands to have a brighter future. **Page 15, 19, 28, 33.**

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**Michelle Gibbons** is making a name for herself by teaching the importance of history. Through her passion for history and training from her father, Michelle debuted at several locations in early 2020. She received her BA Degree from NIU in 2008 with double majors in Journalism and English and a minor in Political Science. Using her father's slogan, "Life is no mystery when you know your history," Michelle's goal is to teach history and help others learn its value in today's society. **Page 19, 34.**

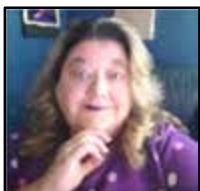
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**Leslie Goddard**, Ph.D., is an award-winning historian who has been presenting on topics in American history and women's history for nearly twenty years. She holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. from Northwestern University (U.S. History/American Studies/Theater History) as well as master's degrees in both museum studies and in theater. A former museum director, she currently works full-time as a public speaker and author. Her presentations have been seen by audiences in more than thirty states, including scores of universities, museums, libraries, festivals, and civic organizations. **Page 24.**



**John Grabko** retired in 2013 from the Minnesota Historical Society after a decade of preserving and sharing Minnesota's history. He also worked as a seasonal state park naturalist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In addition, John spent 10 years with the Rochester, MN, Convention & Visitors Bureau, traveling the world promoting tourism. Today, John is the president and founder of Historic Adventure & Travel Tours, a history-based tour company that shares America's story with adventure travelers. **Page 12, 15.**



**Valerie Gugala** has been studying the Lincoln Family for more than 50 years. Her interest in the Lincolns led to the Presidents, First Ladies, and their families. Over the last 25 years, Valerie has spoken at libraries, schools, churches, senior groups, and park districts throughout the country. She loves to share her knowledge of and enthusiasm for our country's history. She has a background in theatre, was the co-producer for the Bartlett Park District Theatre Program for over 10 years, and worked with The Mystery Shop, a traveling mystery theatre company, from 2001 to 2020. Valerie lives in Bartlett, IL, a suburb of Chicago, with her husband, son Steven, and two Siamese cats. **Page 11, 22, 28, 34.**



**Taylor Hagood** has lectured for LIFE since 2021. As a professor of American literature at Florida Atlantic University, he lectures on literature, art, music, history, and travel. He is the author of multiple books, including the biography/true crime *Stringbean: The Life and Murder of a Country Music Legend*; *Faulkner's Imperialism: Space, Place*, and the *Materiality of Myth*; *Secrecy, Magic, and the One-Act Plays of Harlem Renaissance Women Writers*; and *Faulkner, Writer of Disability*, winner of the C. Hugh Holman Award for Best Book in Southern Studies. **Page 11, 16, 20, 25.**



**Anette Isaacs**, German-born and raised, is a historian and public educator who has been presenting hundreds of programs on more than 40 different topics (all about her native country's history, politics, and culture) all over the United States. She holds a Master's Degree in American Studies, Political Science, and History, and is currently serving as the Director of O.LLI at FIU (Florida International University) in Miami, FL. **Page 10, 17, 22, 27**



**Chad Israelson** received his BA from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and his MA from the University of Nebraska. Israelson has taught at RCTC since 1996. He has also taught at UW-La Crosse, Augsburg, and Winona State. Chad won Outstanding Educator in 2003 and 2012. Chad recently coauthored the book *The Political World of Bob Dylan: Freedom and Justice, Power, and Sin* and has authored *Kings of North: Photographs and History of the Minnesota Vikings*; *Football and Family: The Justin Jefferson Story*; and *Small Town, Big Dreams: The Kirill Kaprizov Story*. **Page 23.**



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**Christine Johnson** earned her BS in Ecology and Environmental Biology from UW-Eau Claire, then worked jobs centered around deer and elk research and management before coming to Minnesota and the Whitewater WMA to learn about land management. When not working, she enjoys time outdoors with her family and working on restoring native habitat on their 10 acres near Pickwick, MN. **Page 23.**

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**Timothy R. Johnson** is the Morse Alumni Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Law at the U of M. He is a nationally recognized expert on U.S. Supreme Court oral arguments and decision-making. Johnson has co-authored three books about Supreme Court oral arguments, and his work appears in academic journals. His research and commentary have been covered by The Economist, The Guardian, New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, NPR, C-SPAN, USA Today, ABC, CNN, and The National Journal. Johnson has won multiple college and university awards for teaching and was named the 2018 American Political Science Association's Distinguished Teacher. **Page 9.**

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**Phil Karsell** is a retired Mayo physician. His interests include volunteer medicine for the Salvation Army and, recently in Guatemala, making wooden toys for the Ronald McDonald House, nature photography, grandchildren, and lifelong learning — science, history, and philosophy. **Page 5, 9, 13, 18, 25, 31.**

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**Howard Kerner** received his BA and MA in English from the State University of NY at Albany and did additional graduate work towards his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia. Howard has taught at the high school, college, and university levels for 47 years, lectured extensively, and published over 700 articles, many on the Holocaust. His "passion project" since retirement is researching and sharing uplifting and inspiring stories of human goodness during the Holocaust. **Page 17, 18.**

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**Dr. Michael Monroe Kiefer** brings a blend of science, psychology, and human potential to his work as a speaker, educator, and life coach. With degrees in genetic engineering and behavioral psychology, Michael began his career in advanced research before a life-changing health crisis inspired him to explore the power of the mind and holistic healing. For more than 30 years, he has captivated audiences nationwide with engaging presentations that combine neuroscience, personal growth, and Eastern wellness practices. He is author of *The POWERMIND System* and several other books **Page 26.**

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**Paul Koeller** is a retired IBMer and active Mayo Volunteer who loves researching and presenting music and local history topics. Paul has given numerous history presentations in Rochester and presented about twenty different rock music classes for Rochester Community Education and RCTC's LIFE program. Paul also loves traveling and gardening. **Page 28, 31.**

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**Adrienne H. Lee** is an art historian and writer who is brand new to Minnesota. Known publicly as The Wandering Art Historian, she spent the last eight years giving lectures, teaching classes, and hosting art-inspired book club discussions all over the state of Florida. Ms. Lee is an avid reader and writer of both fiction and non-fiction, and she published her debut novel in January of 2024. **Page 12, 17.**

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**Linda LeGarde Grover** is a member of the Bois Forte of Ojibwe and professor emeritus of American Indian studies at the U of M Duluth, where she is a recipient of the Albert Tezla Teacher Scholar Award. She is the author of fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, essays, and articles. Her research focuses on American Indian boarding schools' effects upon families and communities. Grover's work has received the Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers Fiction Award, the Flannery O'Connor Award, the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize, and the Minnesota Book Award. **Page 21.**

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**Dr. Richard Leitch** earned his BA in East Asian Studies from Colby College in 1985 and went on to earn an MA in Asian Studies from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, after a two-year career on Wall Street. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from Illinois in 1995, and was the recipient of the Harriet and Charles Luckman Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching, and the College of Liberal Arts Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Graduate Assistant. He has been a member of the Political Science Department at Gustavus since 1996, teaching courses in International Relations, Comparative Politics, Asian Politics, Environmental Politics, and the Politics of Poverty. In 2000, he received the Swenson-Bunn Award for Teaching Excellence at Gustavus, and in 2008, the Edgar M. Carlson Award for Distinguished Teaching. In 2012, he was included in The Princeton Review's The Best 300 Professors. His research interests include Japanese domestic politics and foreign policy, and he is the co-author of Japan's Role in the Post-Cold War World. **Page 15, 18, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 34.**

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**Emilie Le Beau Lucchesi**, Ph.D., is an author and journalist in Illinois. She is a regular contributor to Discover Magazine. Her work has also appeared in National Geographic, USA Today, The New York Times, and The Atlantic. She is the author of *Ugly Prey: An Innocent Woman and the Death Sentence that Scandalized Jazz Age Chicago* and *This is Really War: The Incredible True Story of a Navy Nurse POW in the Occupied Philippines*. She is the co-author of *A Light in the Dark: Surviving More than Ted Bundy* with survivor Kathy Kleiner Rubin. **Page 11, 13.**

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**Stephen MacLennan** is a retired electrical engineer and mathematician who worked 30 years in the field of digital signal processing in the Twin Cities, then taught high school mathematics at Wayzata and Eagle Ridge Academy (Minnetonka) and coached the Minnesota High School All-State Math Team. Throughout, he kept books of poetry, stories, essays, novels, and plays nearby for society and solace. In 2024, he and his wife, Mai, moved to Rochester, where he now enjoys literature, mathematics, music, and tennis. **Page 5, 6, 8, 10, 16, 21.**

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**Nancy Maxwell** spent her childhood in a variety of places, Ecuador, Iran, Haiti, Kenya, and Bermuda. At Cornell University, she was encouraged to major in Psychology, but her interest in humanities has always been paramount. As a teacher and counselor in an international school in Switzerland for more than 20 years, she familiarized herself with palaces and cathedrals of European cities. The chance to walk corridors of the Palace of Versailles and streets of Paris facilitates one's ability to identify with challenges of both the privileged and wealthy. The historian and the counselor merge in the pursuit of humanity. 20 years in secondary education in Connecticut refamiliarized Nancy with American life and history, increasing her fascination with the human condition. Nancy has made it her business to discover both a mental and physical context in which such people who lived centuries ago regain their humanity and tell their stories. **Page 18, 22.**

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**Rowena McClinton**, Ph.D., overarching passion and academic research addressed unearth voices in the historical record. That led her to Native American studies, church history, Central Europe, and German. Fortuitously, she merged her past experiences of living in Germany, learning German, and volunteering with the Mississippi Band of the Choctaw Nation into one topic: Moravian missionary activity among the Cherokees. Those experiences led her to translating and editing the Springplace Diary (1805 to 1821), housed in the Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC and written in German by female Moravian missionary to the Cherokees, Anna Rosina Gambold (1761-1821). The two-volume publication of the Moravian Springplace Diary to the Cherokees, 1805-1813-1814-1821 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) is multifaceted, appealing to historians of the Early Republic, borderland conflicts, contested lands, and scholars of religious studies. In 2010 the Abridgment to the Springplace Diary was published by Nebraska. Another major publication, The John Howard Payne Papers of the Butrick-Payne Papers, vols. 7-14 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), are voluminous and rare documents collected by the peripatetic actor and ethnographer John Howard Payne and in 1911 domiciled at the Newberry Library (Chicago). Her book reviews and essays pertaining to multiple Indigenous cultures have appeared in journals, anthologies, and encyclopedias. In 1999 Rowena McClinton's tenure track teaching experience began at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, where she retired in spring of 2020 as Professor Emerita, Department of History. **Page 22.**

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**David Misch** is a former stand-up comedian, screenwriter ("Mork and Mindy," "Saturday Night Live," "The Muppets Take Manhattan"), author of *Funny: The Book*, ("A Beginner's Guide To Corruption"), teacher (his own courses on comedy at USC and musical satire at UCLA) and lecturer at Yale, Columbia, the Smithsonian, 92nd St. Y (NYC), Oxford University, Trinity College Dublin, University of Sydney, VIEW Cinema (Torino, Italy) and San Miguel (Mexico) Writers' Conferences, Raindance Film Festival (London), Austin Film Festival, American Film Institute, Writers Guild of America,

Sony, DreamWorks, Lucasfilm, Disney, Second City, Actors Studio. More at [davidmisch.com](http://davidmisch.com) **Page 23.**

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**Ric Mixer** is one of the busiest maritime speakers, rumored to be the most requested historian on the Great Lakes. Visiting museums, libraries, NASA, and his live music concert "STORM", thousands of audience members get a new appreciation for our unique inland-sea history through his spellbinding lectures. Millions of television viewers recognize Ric as a shipwreck researcher who dived over 100 shipwrecks in the Great Lakes, including the Edmund Fitzgerald. He has produced over 30 programs for PBS and the Outdoor Channel and appeared as an expert on the History and Discovery Channels. He leads the pack when it comes to sharing our unique underwater resources with the general public, thousands of dive show patrons, and countless school kids. Ric's stories appear in books, magazines (including Michigan History Magazine), and radio and TV news programs. Mixer's YouTube videos have over three million views, covering shipwrecks in four of the Great Lakes and adventures in several foreign lands. With over 20 years of experience in historical preservation, Ric was awarded the 2009 Award for Historic Interpretation by the Association for Great Lakes Maritime Historians. In 2011, he was elected to their board of directors. Ric was also the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association's third president. He has hosted the largest dive show in Ontario and also MC'd the Midwest's largest show in Chicago. He was a frequent speaker at Ghost Ships in Milwaukee and Michigan's largest show, "Great Lakes Shipwrecks," held annually in Ann Arbor. **Page 8, 25.**

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**Travis Novitsky**, a lifelong resident of the Grand Portage Anishinaabe Nation in northeast Minnesota, has been photographing the woods and waters of the north shore of Lake Superior for over 35 years. He is a self-taught nature and wildlife photographer whose work focuses primarily on his ancestral homelands in Minnesota. His favorite subject by far is the night sky. He devotes hours to capturing images of star-filled skies and the Aurora Borealis (northern lights).

He hopes that his passion for photography will inspire others to spend more time outside enjoying all the beauty that Mother Nature has to offer. He served as Co-Producer and Narrator of *Northern Nights, Starry Skies*, an award-winning documentary co-produced in 2022 by Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education and PBS North. His work was featured extensively in the film, which celebrates star-bright skies and dark sky places of the Minnesota-Ontario border region, Indigenous star knowledge, and our stewardship of the night sky. Travis is also the photographer for the book *Spirits Dancing - The Night Sky, Indigenous Knowledge & Cultural Connections to the Cosmos*, published on November 7, 2023, by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. **Page 12.**



**Andrew O'Brien** was born in England and graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in History from Oxford University. Andrew also has a teaching degree from London University and a Master's degree in teaching from Johns Hopkins University. After teaching school in England and the UK, Andrew presented just under four hundred lectures to lifelong learning communities. **Page 11, 20, 32.**



**Asya Pereltsvaig** received a degree in English and History from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from McGill University. She taught at Yale, Cornell, and Stanford and has been teaching lifelong education programs since 2010. Her expertise is in language, culture, and history, and the relationship between them. Asya has published five scholarly books and is a popular instructor for several Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes around the country and was the faculty host for the OLLI trip to the Baltic countries and St. Petersburg in July 2017. **Page 9, 14, 19, 33.**



**Lauren Radick** is a passionate educator and lifelong learner with a deep love for literature. A former early childhood center administrator, she now teaches the course "The Life and Times of Literary Favorites" and serves as an adjunct literature instructor for OLLI at Florida International University. Lauren holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and literature from Emerson College and a Master's Degree in Education from The George Washington University. When she's not teaching, you can find her immersed in a good book, always seeking to expand her knowledge and

share her passion for learning with others. **Page 15, 19, 33.**



**Dr. Marguerite Ragnow** is the curator of the James Ford Bell Library, which documents the history and impact of trade and cultural exchange around the world before ca. 1800 CE. She is also on the graduate faculties of History, Early Modern Studies, and Medieval Studies at the University of Minnesota, and recently taught the undergraduate course "The Viking World: Story, History, Archaeology." Dr. Ragnow is a Fellow of the Society for the History of Discoveries, for which she has also served as president and editor of its journal, *Terrae Incognita*. She is currently on the editorial

board of *The Portolan*, the journal of the Washington Map Society. She most recently contributed the chapter "Ideal and Idealized Explorer Typologies, 500 CE to 1500 CE" to volume 2 of *The Cultural History of Exploration* (forthcoming 2024). **Page 31.**





**William Raker**, an AARP Fraud Watch Network and Advocacy Team volunteer, is a retired President/CEO of US Federal Credit Union with prior experience at Control Data/Ceridian in sales, marketing, and operations. As a trained speaker on fraud, scams, and cybersecurity, he has served on multiple community boards and currently sits on Eagan's Sustainability Advisory Commission and the Flint Hills Resources Community Advisory Council. William also produces and hosts *Access to Democracy*, a public access TV program. He holds BS and MS degrees and is a CUES Certified Credit Union Executive. **Page 28.**

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**Captain Ben Rich** has a broad and diverse aviation background, including positions as an Airline Captain, Aircraft Accident Investigator, and Air Traffic Control Specialist. His experience includes 39 years and over 15,000 hours of active flying concurrent with 25 years of Aircraft Accident Investigation, in addition to 10 years of Air Traffic Control Operations experience. He commanded large Air Force Cargo and Aero Medical Evacuation aircraft as well as commercial airliners, including B-777 Jumbo Jets. He participated in seven National Transportation Safety Board accident investigations and numerous U. S. Air Force investigations. He was a fully qualified Air Traffic Control specialist in three Control Towers and one Terminal Radar Approach Control. Captain Rich has published numerous aviation articles and still consults as an Airline Operations Subject Matter Expert. **Page 13, 26.**

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**Deborah Robin** retired from a career as a university educator and administrator, then channeled her passion for lifelong learning into an ongoing relationship with Continuing Education programs nationally. She shares her enthusiasm for art by teaching a wide range of art history courses. Specializing in modern and contemporary art, she volunteered as a Docent at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. She has a BA in English and an MA in Humanities from Florida State University, and a Doctorate in Education from Nova Southeastern University. **Page 11, 16, 22, 28.**

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**Sarah Ruble** earned her B.A. at Seattle Pacific University, Master of Theological Studies, and Ph.D. in American religious history from Duke University. Since 2007, she has been a professor in the Department of Religion at Gustavus Adolphus College, primarily teaching the history of American religion and Christian theology. She is the author of *The Gospel of Freedom and Power: Protestant Missionaries in American Culture after World War II*. Recent work includes YouTube-based adult Sunday School curricula: one on history of Christianity and racism in the U.S., the other on the development of Christian doctrine, available at sarahruble.com. She is a teacher and guest preacher in churches and lifelong learning programs. She lives in St. Peter with her husband and son. **Page 14, 31.**

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**Jennifer Sauer** spent most of her career working for the U.S. Geological Survey on the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) program. She began her career as a biological technician on various ecological monitoring components, including macroinvertebrates, vegetation, and water quality on the Upper Mississippi River. Before retirement, she served as Chief for the Long Term Resource Monitoring branch, where she supervised 14 research scientists working on the UMRR. Jennifer continues to work part-time for the USGS under National Experienced Workforce Solutions (NEW Solutions), helping to archive historical documents. **Page 31.**

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**Dr. Matthew Savoca** is a Research Associate at Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station. He studies why marine animals mistake plastic for food and how microplastics move through ocean food webs, focusing on Monterey Bay as a model ecosystem. His research—supported by organizations such as California Sea Grant, the National Geographic Society, and the National Science Foundation—has been featured by NPR, the BBC, and *The New York Times*. An active science communicator, he has given a TEDx talk, advised California legislators, and written for *The Washington Post*, *The Marine Biologist*, and *The Conversation*. **Page 24.**



**Clarissa Schrooten** is a naturalist at Oxbow Park and Zollman Zoo. Her primary roles as a naturalist are to care for the animals and provide environmental education. Some of her favorite things to do are take people on guided hikes and share nature facts, do daily zoo animal care, and share information about any of the animals in the zoo. **Page 13, 21.**



**Brendan Shea**, Ph.D., is a Philosophy and Computer Science instructor at Rochester Community and Technical College. He's published over 25 academic articles or book chapters, focused mainly on issues in applied ethics, the philosophy of science, or areas where these intersect (such as bioethics or the ethics of artificial intelligence). He's been teaching for over 20 years and has given many LIFE lectures (which he enjoys!). He lives in Rochester, MN, with his wife Annea and son Harry. **Page 26.**



**Dr. Heather Sklenicka** is an Instructor of Chemistry at RCTC. She earned her Ph.D. in Synthetic Organic Chemistry from the U of M. Her favorite classes to teach are Organic Chemistry and Research. Outside of work, she teaches fitness classes at the Rochester Athletic Club, plays Dungeons & Dragons, and spends many happy hours on the couch with crochet, an audiobook, and a cat or two. **Page 21.**



**Dr. Stephenie Slahor** has retired from her law practice, university, and law school teaching. She now creates informative and enjoyable OLLI and adult education courses, primarily in the natural sciences, and about places where human history and/or geology have significance. **Page 9, 14, 20, 24, 33.**

**Betty Spitzmiller** received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. Betty is a retired college teacher of courses in writing, literature, classical mythology, and the humanities. **Page 5, 8.**



**Mary Stockwell** received her Ph.D. in American history from the University of Toledo. Following her graduation, she worked as a writer before becoming a professor of history and department chair. She is the author of history books used by young people throughout the United States, including *The Ohio Adventure*, *A Journey through Maine*, and *Massachusetts, Our Home*, the 2005 winner of the Golden Lamp Award from the Association of Educational Publishers for Best Book. Her latest book *The Other Trail of Tears: The Removal of the Ohio Indians* tells the forgotten story of the removal of the Delaware, Seneca, Shawnee, Ottawa, and Wyandot to Kansas and Oklahoma during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. **Page 12, 14.**





**Russ Swanson** grew up on his family's 1870 homestead along the banks of the Big Sioux River north of Canton, SD. At a young age, he developed a love for history while listening to stories about the early days of Dakota Territory. He continued farming and raising horses on his great-great-grandfather's homestead. Russ is in his 28<sup>th</sup> year as a high school FFA Advisor and Ag Education/Engineering teacher. April 2025 he released his first book, *A Chase To The Death* about the James-Younger Gang fleeing from a failed bank attempt at Northfield, MN in 1876. **Page 17.**



**Stephen Troutman** is a LIFE board member, facilitator, presenter, and lifelong learner. He worked at IBM for 33 years; he retired as an Executive Consultant. In the Navy for 23 years and retired as a Captain. In retirement, for 12 years now, he has been a community volunteer; he is currently active at LIFE (Learning Is Forever and SCORE (mentors to small businesses). In 2021, he received the Mayor's Medal of Honor for Senior Service. **Page 5, 10, 16, 35.**



**David Weinand** grew up on a dairy farm near Monticello, Minnesota. He attended the U of M, Waseca, and St. Paul, getting degrees in Animal Science and Dairy Science. David has had several careers over the years, but is currently employed at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. He worked for 20 years in grants management before taking his current position as Secure Food Supply Coordinator. **Page 7, 31.**



**Virginia M. Wright Peterson, Ph.D.** is a writer and activist who uncovers powerful stories to illuminate the present and inspire the future. She currently serves as Vice Chancellor of Finance and Campus Resources at the U of M Rochester and previously spent 20 years in administration at Mayo Clinic. A former Fulbright Scholar and Red Cross delegate to Iraq, she also taught writing and humanities for 15 years. Virginia is the author of *Women of Mayo Clinic*, *A Woman's War, Too*, and *Rochester: An Urban Biography*, each a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award. **Page 8.**



**David Yorks** of Lake Minnetonka is a graduate of the U of M, has a History degree and master's in American history, and a 55-year interest in the presidency of John Kennedy. Regarding the Kennedy assassination, David has attended several national conferences, has met assassination witnesses present in Dealey Plaza, and doctors who were present at Parkland Hospital, where they attempted to save the President's life. David's business career included being a buyer at Dayton's Department Store, with a business that sold apparel to J.C. Penney (headquartered in Dallas) which allowed David to visit Dallas frequently. He also worked for Minnesota United States Senator Rudy Boschwitz. **Page 27.**

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