



New Board Member  
Profile | p. 2

## LIVING LEDGER

A Compilation of Vital Personal Information

Living Ledger 2023 | p. 3



Webinar on U.S.  
Economic Outlook | p. 4



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UWRA-Madison



# THE SIFTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

## DAY TRIP

### Jersey Boys!

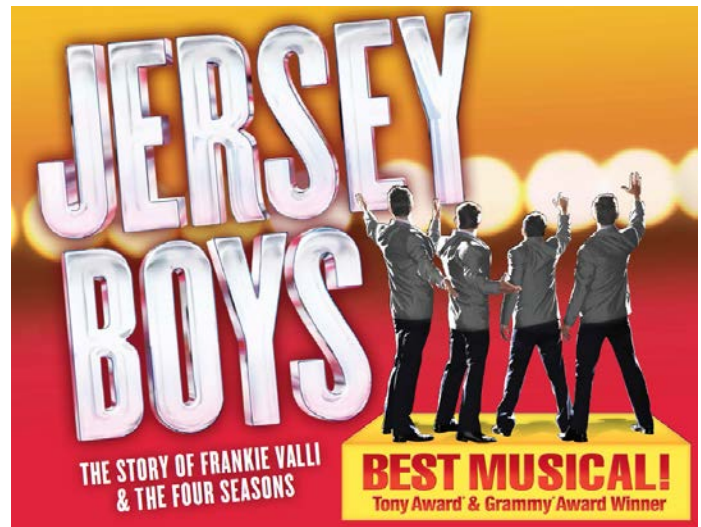
**K**ick off 2024 in style! Join other UWRA members for another partnership with the Verona Senior Center, traveling to a matinee show at the Fireside Dinner Theatre in Fort Atkinson. Seats are limited, and the registration deadline is December 18.

With phenomenal music, memorable characters, and great storytelling, the Broadway musical *Jersey Boys* follows the fascinating evolution of four blue-collar kids who became one of the greatest successes in pop-music history. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical, *Jersey Boys* takes you behind the music of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons to discover the secret of a 40-year friendship as the foursome rise from the streets of New Jersey to the heights of stardom.

Enjoy electrifying performances of chart-topping hits including "Sherry," "Big Girls Don't Cry," and "My Eyes Adored You," which took the Four Seasons to the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. (The show includes explicit adult language and is not recommended for children.)

There will be two pick-up and drop-off points: 8:45 A.M. at Verona Senior Center, 108 Paoli St. in Verona, and 9:15 A.M. at Dutch Mill Park and Ride in Madison.

The included meal at the Fireside Theater will feature loaded baked potato soup, four entrée choices, New York cheesecake for dessert, and coffee/tea/milk. Entrée choices are listed on the registration page.



Register online or by mail. Mailed-in reservations with the registration form and a check must be received no later than noon on Monday, December 18, 2023. See further details at the registration link below. ■

### JERSEY BOYS MATINEE

**Thursday, January 4**

8:45 A.M.–5:30 P.M.

(Times subject to change)

**Registration Deadline: Noon, December 18**

**\$135 per person** (includes bus, admission fees, meal, taxes, and tips)

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

[UWRAmadison.org/event-5462462](https://UWRAmadison.org/event-5462462)

**FROM THE UWRA PRESIDENT'S DESK**

## **Volunteer to Plan UWRA Luncheons, Travel Opportunities**

BY TOM BROMAN



One of the more common sentiments I hear from other UWRA members is the desire to have more in-person events. I share the feeling completely. During the COVID pandemic, we shut down our in-person gatherings in favor of such options as webinars for presentations, zoom meetings, and the like. As useful as those formats were (and still are) for reasons of convenience and health safety, they represent a second-choice substitute for being able to meet and talk with other people.

The goal may be clear, but getting there requires your help. The two committees most directly related to social events, the Luncheon and Reception Committee and the Travel Committee, need new members. The Luncheon Committee plans the member lunches that before COVID were a backbone of our organization's social life. That committee also plans the UWRA annual meeting, which will be held on June 6, 2024, at the UW Arboretum.

The Travel committee organizes group travel opportunities for UWRA members. These could range from small day trips to Old World Wisconsin or Pendarvis in Mineral Point to longer tours to other countries. And everything else in between!

Understandably, membership on both committees shriveled during COVID, but now there's a chance for you, the UWRA's members, to reactivate them. What new social events might we think of hosting? Where else might the UWRA go for its group outings? If you want to lend your ideas and energy to helping us get back to what so many of us value, please consider joining one of these committees. If you are interested, email me at [tbroman@wisc.edu](mailto:tbroman@wisc.edu). ■

**NEW ON BOARD**

## **Retired, with a Small r**

BY CATHY MIDDLECAMP, UWRA BOARD MEMBER

Just last week, I mentioned to a former student that I had retired. "Hmmm," was her response. She quickly added "I think you are retired with a small r." Hmmm is right, I thought to myself. And either way, retired or Retired, I've definitely moved on. My office in Science Hall belongs to somebody else. My name no longer is in the timetable. And my former grad students have flown off to new pursuits.



One of these days, my brain will throw the switch to Retirement, capital R. Meanwhile, I'm busy with co-editing a volume on sustainability education, traveling to the Weizmann Institute of Science (Israel) on a Fulbright award, and working with colleagues in California on a project to teach chemistry in the context of climate change.

While in my early years of retirement (small r), I'm honored to serve as one of your Board members. The company is great. And the mission is clear: find good things to do, find great people to do them, and make the world a better place. What's not to like? ■

✓ **THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER!**

**THE SHADOW DOCKET: HOW THE SUPREME COURT USES STEALTH RULINGS TO AMASS POWER AND UNDERMINE THE REPUBLIC**

**Tuesday, December 5**

10:00 A.M.–NOON Online Webinar

**Registration Deadline: December 1**

Advance registration is required. Register online at: [UWRAmadison.org/event-5304009](https://UWRAmadison.org/event-5304009)

## UWRA NEWS

## Living Ledger Redux

BY THE CFMR 2023 LIVING LEDGER SUBCOMMITTEE

One score minus four years ago, a committee of UWRA members brought forth a tool, the *Living Ledger*, to assist members in making records of financial assets. The intention was to help us keep track of scattered bank accounts, investments, insurance policies, and such—and to provide our heirs with the information they would need to resolve our estates after we have passed on. It is a remarkable document, and we owe thanks to the original group that produced it: Faisal Kaud (chair), John Chandler (vice-chair), Lana Chandler, Joe Corry, Peter Monkmeyer, Edna Paske, Steven Saffian, Ann Wallace, and June Weisberger.



Laws and investment mechanisms change over time, and the *Living Ledger* began showing some signs of age. In 2017, a committee of Faisal Kaud (chair), Sandi Haase, Karen Holden, Gerald Kulcinski, and Millard Susman gave the *Living Ledger* a Botox treatment to get rid of some of its accumulated wrinkles. Well, more time has passed since 2017, and we noticed new wrinkles again this year, so we have given the *Ledger* yet another treatment.

*Living Ledger* is a benefit of UWRA membership and can be accessed by signing in as a member on [UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org), then selecting Resources > Living Ledger. It is available for download in four formats: MS Word, PDF, fillable PDF, and Pages. A paper version is available for purchase (\$10.00) by signing in as a member on [UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org) and clicking on “Our Store.” Select the item and proceed to purchase.

*Living Ledger 2023* is our best effort to provide a useful tool for UWRA members, but we do not pretend that you can rely on it for legal advice. You should ask a lawyer or accountant for professional advice on fine points and exceptional circumstances. Nor do we claim that our product is flawless. Let us know if you find errors or omissions in this new edition, *Living Ledger 2023*. ■

## CAMPUS NEWS

## UW–Madison and Extension Retirees Losing Access to LinkedIn Learning Service

BY KRISTY BERGERON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, DOIT ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY

LinkedIn Learning is a tool for UW–Madison employees and students that provides online learning courses. The DoIT Academic Technology Learn@UW-Madison team manages the service. Currently, LinkedIn Learning is available to anyone with an active UW–Madison-affiliated NetID. However, LinkedIn Learning is undergoing an eligibility review to ensure that access to the service aligns accurately with the license agreement. This means that some individuals who currently have access will no longer be able to log on to, and use, LinkedIn Learning via the UW–Madison license.

As part of the review, UW–Madison and UW Extension retirees (with or without Emerit status) have been identified as affiliate groups that will no longer be able to access LinkedIn Learning as of January 9, 2024.

Retirees of UW–Madison and UW Extension who have used LinkedIn Learning within the past year and will be impacted by this change will receive (or have received) emails to alert them about the eligibility change. We understand that this change may cause inconvenience and disappointment. However, it is important that UW–Madison abides by its contractual obligations with the vendor regarding usage of the product. ■

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

## Transport Other Seniors in Need

Volunteering with RSVP’s Driver Services program is a rewarding way to give back to your community by providing for seniors in need of transportation. Find out more at [rsvpdane.org/programs/driver-services/](http://rsvpdane.org/programs/driver-services/).

To volunteer, contact Steve Jaeschke at 608-441-7892 or [sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org](mailto:sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org), or Camela King at 608-441-7896 or [cking@rsvpdane.org](mailto:cking@rsvpdane.org). ■



## FINANCIAL MATTERS WEBINAR

# U.S. Economic Outlook

BY JOAN GILLMAN AND KAY REUTER-KROHN, MEMBERS, COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT

**J**oin us when Steve Rick, director and chief economist at TruStage (formerly CUNA Mutual Group), helps us understand what really is going on with the U.S. economy.

The economy has done well in 2023 despite the Federal Reserve raising interest rates at the fastest pace in 40 years. Inflation has been reduced but remains above the Fed's 2% target. What will higher interest rates do to the economy in 2024 and beyond? Are fundamental changes in the jobs market apt to cause long-term labor shortages and wage pressures? This presentation will cover all the relevant economic issues currently being addressed by households and policy makers.



**Steve Rick** is director and chief economist at TruStage, where he conducts strategic research, analysis, and forecasting of the financial services industry, with special emphasis on the consumer and credit union markets. He publishes the Credit Union Trends Report, a monthly "pulse check" on the economic state of the credit union movement.

*If you have preliminary questions for the speaker, please send them to program coordinators Joan Gillman at [jgillman@wisc.edu](mailto:jgillman@wisc.edu) and Kay Reuter-Krohn at [kreuterkrohn@gmail.com](mailto:kreuterkrohn@gmail.com) by Wednesday, December 13, 2023. ■*

### U.S. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

**Wednesday, December 20**

10:00 A.M.–NOON Online Webinar

**Registration Deadline: December 15**

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

[UWRAmadison.org/event-5419908](https://UWRAmadison.org/event-5419908)

## TECH CLINIC

# Understanding Personal Fitness Trackers, Smart Scales, & More

BY SANDEE SEIBERLICH, MEMBER, ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**A**re you thinking of purchasing a personal fitness tracker or watch, but would like to know more about what is available?

Maybe you already use fitness technology, such as an app on your phone, and

would be willing to share your experience. Or, you might have received a health and fitness tech item as a gift but aren't quite certain how to get started. If so, please plan to join Electronic Technology Committee (ETC) at the Fitchburg Public Library for a personal fitness information exchange.

ETC members will be on hand to discuss their experiences with Fitbits, Apple Watches, smart scales, various fitness apps, and fall detectors. If you have questions regarding a device or app you already own, please bring your device with you. If we don't know the answer to your question, we'll do our best to help you find a solution.



*If you have a specific question that you would like addressed during the clinic, email [UWRA.tech@gmail.com](mailto:UWRA.tech@gmail.com) prior to the event. ■*

### TECH CLINIC: PERSONAL FITNESS

**Wednesday, January 10**

1:00–2:30 P.M. In Person

Fitchburg Public Library, 5530 Lacy Rd., 2nd Floor  
Fitchburg, Wisconsin

**Registration Deadline: January 5**

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

[UWRAmadison.org/event-5411936](https://UWRAmadison.org/event-5411936)

WEBINAR RECAP

## Contested Black Freedom in Wisconsin

BY MICHAEL BERNARD-DONALS, MEMBER, RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

In October, the Retirement Opportunities Committee welcomed Christy Clark-Pujara, professor of African American studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for a webinar entitled “Contested Black Freedom in Wisconsin: From Slavery to the Modern Civil Rights Movement, 1725–1968.” She described the sometimes-occluded histories of Black Wisconsinites, particularly those in rural areas of the state, and the ways those lives were affected by slavery, its legacy after the Civil War, and the discrimination African American people experienced through legal and extra-legal means.

Clark-Pujara made clear that there have been Black people in Wisconsin since long before statehood. Some of them were people enslaved by white settlers who came to Wisconsin from other regions of the U.S. and its territories on the continent; others were emancipated former enslaved people who settled in the region for the opportunity to make new lives. Still others were free Black people who came to the state in the mining, agricultural, and trading industries. There were, in addition, a number of communities comprised of African-Americans across the state, formed to make and establish their own enterprises—including schools, dance halls, and other businesses—where they would not face discrimination and violence.

The talk also described the task faced by historians interested in telling the stories of these Black Wisconsinites and communities. Often, the records

of even the existence of Black people do not exist on their own; instead, as Clark-Pujara described, you have to look in the records for prominent white people and scan for their property, as enslaved African-Americans were listed. Or they have to pore through boxes of material for the chance encounter with documents written by or making reference to them, because “finding aids,” prepared by archivists to list the important material inside of their collections, simply don’t consider these records important enough to be listed.

During the discussion period following Professor Clark-Pujara’s talk, she made reference to some of her source material, essays from the *Des Moines Register* on the importance of the history of the Black Midwest, from the *Wisconsin Magazine of History* on Black suffrage in early Wisconsin, and from the online magazine *The New Territory: the Magazine of the Lower Midwest* on an enslaved Black woman at Fort Crawford. These items are available on the UWRA website, along with the slides from Professor Clark-Pujara’s presentation.

Visit the UWRA website ([UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org)) then select Resources/Presentations/2023–24 Sep–Dec to find materials from this presentation. ■



### FOOD PANTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

In lieu of registration fees for most UWRA webinars and programs, donations are encouraged to the Open Seat Food Pantry that serves food-insecure UW students. The pantry is a project of ASM, Associated Students of Madison, and strives to provide healthy, accessible sources of food, household products, and personal-care goods to any enrolled student in need. Learn more about it at [asm.wisc.edu/the-open-seat/](http://asm.wisc.edu/the-open-seat/). Checks payable to UW Foundation, with “Open Seat” on the memo line, may be mailed to: UWRA, 21 North Park Street, Room 7205, Madison, WI 53715-1218. ■

Online registration for UWRA Zoom webinars is easy, but members may also email the UWRA office at [retireassn@mailplus.wisc.edu](mailto:retireassn@mailplus.wisc.edu) or call 608-262-0641 to register for events.

Webinar links and call information are included in registration confirmations and reminders emailed to registrants 7 and 2 days prior to events.

**Need help with Zoom?** Contact [UWRA.tech@gmail.com](mailto:UWRA.tech@gmail.com)

**MEET A UWRA MEMBER**

## Volunteering with University League and Demeter

BY JUDY STANG

Although I didn't attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison, I am tethered to it by my late husband, emeritus professor Elden Stang (horticulture), as well as our three alumni children and a grandchild who is a current student.

I grew up in Minnesota and graduated from Iowa State University. I later received the MS from The Ohio State University with degrees in food science and dietetics.

My first job was at General Mills Research Labs followed by various positions in my field as we moved around the country. Finally settling in Wisconsin, I decided it was time for a career change and I got my real estate broker's license. This gave me the opportunity to meet and assist many wonderful people over the next 35 years.

Upon retirement, I suddenly had a lot of spare time that was quickly tapped by the University League at UW–Madison. I had been a long-time silent member; now I have served as president, on the board, and/or on committees continually, including the committee that funds scholarships to all campus schools and colleges. I enjoy the League's four creative programs each year and many of the 18 interest groups available to League members—especially Artiques (art and antiques), Armchair Travelers, and my passion, Bridge.

I am also a member of Demeter, which provides student support for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. I work on the Education Fund Committee, and longevity gave me the job of historian for the organization.

The best part of retirement is spending time with family. Four of us just returned from a somewhat

successful search for our “roots” in Norway.

I am also involved with my church. I live happily in my own home with my dog Haddie in rural Cottage Grove. Life is good!

You may not know that Elden and I were members of the first Peace Corps cohort (1961). We met and married in Santiago, Chile. ■



**October 1–31, 2023**

### WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Joan Gage**

**Joe Goss**, *Division of Information Technology*

**Greg Heatley**,  
*Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences*

**Ann Palmenberg**,  
*Biochemistry*

**John Parrish**, *Animal & Dairy Science*

**Paula Schumann**, *School of Medicine & Public Health*

**Debra Shapiro**,  
*Computer, Data & Information Sciences, iSchool*

**Joseph Talmadge**,  
*Electrical & Computer Engineering*

**{ The UWRA is your network in retirement! }**



## ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

### An Ongoing Interest in Ham Radio

BY DAVE PARKER, UWRA MEMBER

I was born with an interest in electricity. In grade school, I spent a lot of time in the library and started building things. In high school, my guidance counselor steered me toward a three-year electricity/electronics program and joining the audiovisual crew. I also discovered the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program and had many interesting experiences involving radio communications. After high school, I served four years in the U.S. Air Force, where I learned more about radio communications and computers.

In 1975, I discovered amateur radio (ham radio) and attended a class sponsored by a club in Waukesha. I learned Morse Code, radio theory, and studied the FCC regulations that we had to follow. After I passed my exam, which included being able to send and receive messages using Morse Code, I set up a station at home and made contacts via radio. It's fun to have conversations with other Hams all over the country, and I also make some overseas contacts.

There is also a public service side of ham radio, and I have handled communications for events like bicycle rallies and even the Milwaukee circus parades. I continue to serve as a volunteer communicator for my county emergency manager in (the state of) Oregon.

I became interested in vintage amateur radios, including older Army surplus radios. I remembered the vacuum tube circuits I learned in high school and, with help from older Hams, learned how to restore and build vintage radios and operate them on the air. In the photo accompanying this article, I am shown in my "Ham Shack" with a replica 1929-vintage Hartley Oscillator Transmitter that I built.

In 2011, I joined UW-Madison as a digital controls specialist with the Facilities Planning and Management Electric Shop. I became a member of the Badger Amateur Radio Society, a student-led group that



met at the College of Engineering, where I enjoyed working with students.

After I retired from UW-Madison in 2016, my wife and I moved to Bend, Oregon. I continue to enjoy ham radio and have friends all over the country with whom I stay in touch. We moved around a lot in my working years, but I always found Hams that I could share my hobby with. Ham radio is a great hobby—some people just operate, some build, and some support public events. ■

## ATTIC ANGEL ASSOCIATION

### December Talks at Attic Angel

The Continuing Education Programs of the Attic Angel Association, open to the public, are held Monday mornings at Attic Angel Place, 8301 Old Sauk Road, in Middleton. Coffee is served at 10:00 A.M. and the program begins at 10:30 A.M. There is no charge, and no reservation is required. Program attendees will be asked to screen at the front entrance.

**December 4 The Work of Play at Madison Children's Museum** Deb Gilpin, president and CEO, Madison Children's Museum

**December 11 Attic Angel Choir** Jessica Courtier, director of Community Partnership for MYARTS

**December 18 & 25** No public programs. ■

## WEBINAR RECAP

# The Neurology of Aging

BY MARY BETH PLANE, MEMBER, RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

It may be difficult to imagine, but as adults we have about 18 billion neurons in our brain! Neurologic disorders result from the loss of these neurons, with our ability to perform basic tasks affected by the specific area of the brain that is diminished. This could include our speech and other cognitive processes such as decision making, memory, concentration, mood, attention span, or even the ability to plan ahead. Our neurons also govern our ability to walk or do other physical tasks, and they help us make sense of our visual and spatial relationship to the world.



Dr. Ali Zandieh of the UW Department of Neurology presented an interesting and fact-filled program on the symptoms, treatment, and prognosis of neurological disorders that we may face as we age, the most common of which are Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Other conditions include dementias, which may be vascular dementia, Lewy body disease, frontal temporal dementia, or alcohol-related dementia. Peripheral neuropathy has neurological causes, as do some forms of headache.

### **A major takeaway from the talk: keep our minds and bodies active!**

Mild cognitive impairment is not uncommon; it may be found in an estimated 10% of us who have reached our early 70s and 25% in our early 80s. Evaluations may include testing vitamin B12 or hypothyroid levels, or for depression and anxiety. Treatment of vascular disease can help reduce progression, as can exercise, cognitive interventions, memory cues, and organizational aids. Treatment of sleep disorders and prescriptions/treatment of neuropsychological disorders can be helpful. No medications or supplements have been found to have either symptomatic or preventive benefits. Unfortunately, most neurodegenerative disorders

progress without remission, so attention to prevention is recommended.

*At The Sifter press deadline, UWRA awaits a copyright interpretation from the department chair. This will determine what may be posted on the UWRA website. ■*

## WEBINAR RECAP

# Employee Trust Fund (ETF) Update and *It's Your Choice*

BY KATHY ZWEIFEL, MEMBER, FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT COMMITTEE

In October, Eileen Mallow, director of health policy at the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds, led her team including Tom Rasmussen, Arlene Larson, Molly Dunks, and Luis Caracas in presenting information about the 2024 *It's Your Choice* Health Plans for retirees. We also heard from Liz Doss-Anderson, the ETF ombudsperson, who assists with resolving insurance questions and issues. UWRA is grateful for the excellent and timely presentation about these important retirement benefits.

*Visit the UWRA website ([UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org)) then select Resources/Presentations/2023–24 Sep–Dec to find a video and a PDF of this presentation. ■*



**SAVE THE DATE**

### **DO YOU STILL NEED LIFE INSURANCE?**

**Tuesday, January 23**

2:00–4:00 P.M. Online Webinar

[UWRAmadison.org/event-5308799](http://UWRAmadison.org/event-5308799)

Join us for a discussion with wealth management advisor and insurance agent, Steven L. Penn, about whether life insurance in retirement is needed. Should you cash in or sell your policy? What role does life insurance have in planning my estate? Penn will address these and other questions.



**ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY**

## Podcasts Anyone?

BY RACHEL BAKER, MEMBER, ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**A** podcast is like a radio program—but you can listen to it any time, on your smart phone, tablet, or web browser.

To get podcasts on a mobile device, first download a podcast “app” from the Apple Store or Google Play. Popular apps include Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Pocket Cast, Audible, or Stitcher, to name just a few.

If you don’t use a mobile device, you can still listen to podcasts through such websites as:

[podbean.com/all](http://podbean.com/all)

[podcasts.google.com](http://podcasts.google.com)

[open.spotify.com/genre/podcasts-web](http://open.spotify.com/genre/podcasts-web).

You will find literally thousands of programs to select from. Pick a topic to search—current affairs, movies, music, science, literature, religion, cooking, etc. When you discover a podcast that you might like, your podcast app will allow you to subscribe to that podcast so that the latest episode will automatically download for you. Most apps will allow you to create a playlist so that you can listen to multiple podcast episodes in sequence.

Podcasts are great for long drives, exercising, housework, etc. With a set of headphones, a smart speaker, or your car audio, you can gain knowledge and skills or just be entertained at any time.

Here are some favorite podcasts to search for, recommended by UWRA ETC members:

- Bible in a Year
- The Dispatch (politics and pop culture)
- The Rest Is History
- Vanishing Postcards (for backroad wanderers),
- The NPR Politics Podcast
- Imaginary Worlds
- The Josh Marshall Podcast

- Marketplace (from NPR)
- Marketplace Tech
- Make Me Smart (from the Marketplace staff)
- Tips from AARP
- Stuff You Should Know

*Want to share your own recommendations? Drop us an email at [uwra.tech@gmail.com](mailto:uwra.tech@gmail.com). ■*

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

## Tax Preparers Needed

BY GAIL BERGMAN, UWRA MEMBER AND VITA VOLUNTEER

**G**oodwill of South Central Wisconsin (SCWI) is proud to offer again this year Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) clinics, and we need your help. The VITA clinics are designed to provide free tax-preparation assistance to low-income taxpayers such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and people with limited English-language skills.



By volunteering, you can be a part of bringing millions of dollars each year into the homes of low-income families, allowing them to pay bills, prepare for home ownership, and be an active part of local economies. You don’t have to be an accountant to volunteer, just committed to our community. You can decide how much volunteer time to provide and whether to prepare taxes remotely or at a site implementing social distancing.

This year, training will again be provided via Zoom and through self-paced, e-learning courses through the IRS Link and Learn training program. Training sessions will begin in early January and continue until the start of the tax preparation season in February. For more information, email [vita@goodwillscwi.org](mailto:vita@goodwillscwi.org) or call 608-852-8355. ■

## REFLECTIONS

### School Daze

BY MARY BARNARD RAY

Late fall and the holidays are often a time for reflection, and this year I have been reflecting on teachers. Because I was a teacher for well over



thirty years, this has been a sobering experience.

The problem is that I have realized how little I remember of what my teachers meant to teach me. From first grade, I remember that the punishment I experienced for

talking in line was having to sit under the teacher's desk. My mother remembered this too, because I apparently told her, "Oh, Mom, you haven't LIVED until you've had to sit under the teacher's desk!" I believe she had a difficult time keeping a straight face.

From second grade, I remember huddling in the back of the room with my friend Cozette as we struggled to read a book that was way above grade level. When I was in fifth grade, the second-grade teacher brought that book to my new classroom. By then I had no interest in it. As for fifth grade, I just remember that the teacher pointed at us with her middle finger outstretched when she was angry, which left us all struggling so hard not to giggle that we had no idea what she was saying.

My memories from middle school include a little content. I remember that the vocabulary words for the first day of English in eighth grade were "ajar" and "loquacious." The teacher chose words he used in the course of the class. I remember having to figure out the volume of a water tower in math class. Other memories include learning how to clean paint brushes thoroughly and reading *Archy and Mehitabel* in place of some other topic the class was doing, for reasons I have long forgotten. I do remember being assigned to read *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* as a special project. I still

have nightmares about that one. That's about it for content. Otherwise, the memories are things like Billy Otterbach stealing my cough drops when he sat in front of me. I think this was a form of middle school flirting because I remember blushing. Then there was all the time I sat staring at Barbara Mensch's hair, which I thought was absolutely perfect.

High school brought more teachers into my life and more content that eludes me. I remember getting a C on my insect collection in biology because I really hated killing bugs by spearing them with a pin. One English teacher firmly told us we should not refer to male students as "guys" but as "fellows." Such was the generation gap of the time. Finally, I am dumbfounded that I have a vivid memory of one teacher standing before my class extolling two great inventions of the mid-Sixties: cruise control and Sans-a-Belt trousers! I do not remember the teacher's name or what class he taught.

All this leaves me wondering what my students remember about my teaching. It also leaves me relieved that I do not know. ■



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The life enrichment team at Oakwood Village University Woods in Madison (a senior living community) is currently in search of volunteers to:

- perform as musicians
- assist our residents in getting to and from programming across the Oakwood campus
- help with some light office work.

If you or someone you know may be interested, individuals should contact our University Woods volunteer coordinator, Kim Viney, at 230-4238 or via e-mail at [kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net](mailto:kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net).

Additional volunteer opportunities are available; reach out to Kim with inquiries. ■

## BOOK MARKS

## The Shadow Docket

REVIEWED BY TOM EGGERT, COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT & RETIREMENT OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The title of Stephen Vladeck's book, *The Shadow Docket: How The Supreme Court Uses Stealth Rulings to Amass Power and Undermine the Republic* (Basic Books, 2023), draws a direct contrast with the so-called merits docket that we usually associate with the Supreme Court, which includes extensive briefings, comprehensive oral arguments, and written opinions signed by the justices, detailing their reasoning. But merits decisions turn out to be only a little more than 1% of the Supreme Court's decrees.

That's right—almost 99% of the Court's decisions take place on the shadow docket, a term coined in 2015 by the conservative legal scholar William Baude for those orders that aren't subject to the "high standards of procedural regularity set by its merits cases." Orders on the shadow docket are, in Vladeck's description, "unseen, unsigned, and almost always unexplained."

In the past, the shadow docket was about procedural matters that didn't need explanations. But since 2017, the Court has dramatically expanded its use of its shadow docket, regularly making decisions that affect millions of Americans.

The Court's conservative majority has used the shadow docket to influence laws on voting, immigration, executions, and COVID vaccine mandates. Vladeck uses this book to warn Americans of all political stripes about what the shadow docket means for the rule of law. The expanding use of the shadow docket connects to larger questions of trust. The conservative justices insist that they are working in good faith and in the public interest, going so far as to suggest that any criticism is a partisan attempt to delegitimize the institution. Vladeck counters by arguing that he wrote this book precisely because he cares about the Supreme Court, which seems to operate under the delusion that it can maintain trust while denying "the legitimacy crisis that the justices' own actions have precipitated."

"The shadow docket is a symptom of a larger disease," Vladeck writes. "The disease is how unchecked and unaccountable the court is today, compared to any of its predecessors."

Stephen Vladeck is the Charles Alan Wright Chair in Federal Courts at the University of Texas School of Law and CNN's Supreme Court Analyst.

Please email brief book reviews for Book Marks to column coordinator Laurie Mayberry at [laurie.mayberry@wisc.edu](mailto:laurie.mayberry@wisc.edu). ■

### ■ UW-Madison Retirement Association Calendar Dates ■

Visit the [UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org) website for updates and many additional future events.

#### Virtual events (V), In-Person events (IP)

- |                          |                      |  |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|
| • Tuesday, December 5    | 10:00 A.M.–NOON      | Webinar: <i>The Shadow Docket: Supreme Court Stealth Rulings</i> (V) |
| • Thursday, December 7   | 10:30 A.M.–7:30 P.M. | Lake Geneva Holiday Tour (IP)  |
| • Wednesday, December 20 | 10:00 A.M.–NOON      | Webinar: <i>U.S. Economic Outlook</i> (V)                            |
| • Thursday, January 4    | 9:00 A.M.–5:30 P.M.  | <i>Jersey Boys</i> at the Fireside Theater (IP)                      |
| • Wednesday, January 10  | 1:00–2:30 P.M.       | Tech Clinic: <i>Personal Fitness Devices</i> (IP)                    |
| • Tuesday, January 23    | 9:00–10:30 A.M.      | UWRA Breakfast at Elie's Cafe (IP)                                   |
| • Tuesday, January 23    | 2:00–4:00 P.M.       | Webinar: <i>Life Insurance in Retirement: Is It Needed?</i> (V)      |

For information on Board and Committee meetings and deadlines for **The Sifter**, visit [UWRAmadison.org](http://UWRAmadison.org).

For information on upcoming PLATO trips, visit [platomadison.org/page-18561](http://platomadison.org/page-18561).



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## IN THIS ISSUE

Day Trip: *Jersey Boys* p. 1

From the UWRA President p. 2

New Board Member Cathy Middlecamp p. 2

There Is Still Time to Register p. 2

*Living Ledger*, 2023 edition p. 3

Retiree Access Canceled for LinkedIn Learning p. 3

Volunteer with RSVP Driver Services p. 3

Webinar: *U.S. Economic Outlook* p. 4

Tech Clinic: Personal Fitness Devices p. 4

Webinar Recap: *Contested Black Freedom* p. 5

Meet a Member: Judy Stang; New Members p. 6

Activities in Retirement: Ham Radio p. 7

December Talks at Attic Angel p. 7

Webinar Recaps: *Neurology of Aging & ETF Update* p. 8

Save the Date: Life Insurance Webinar p. 8

Podcasts, Anyone?; Volunteer Preparing Tax Returns p. 9

Reflections: School Daze; Volunteer at Oakwood Village p. 10

Book Marks: *The Shadow Docket* p. 11

UWRA Calendar p. 11