

MANKATO AREA LIFELONG LEARNERS

 MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MANKATO

Promoting vitality in later life

Winter 2018

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

David W. Allan

As I sit by my living room picture window, soaking up some delicious sunshine, I have been thinking about our very successful fall. The variety and excellence of our presentations/classes along with a wonderful series of "Great Decisions" certainly makes us all so very proud. The social opportunities, dining together — just "Jaw-Boning" — and participating in a recent community industrial tour or the Saturday Morning New Member Coffee and Reception, as always, have been wonderful.

Talking about new members! We now have over 250 members. This has happened because of the wonderful, continuing effort on everyone's part to welcome new members. A special thank you goes to the Membership Committee, as well.

The inner-workings of our organization, the Council and the Committees, continue to make progress. The November 15th Strategic Planning Workshop has proven to

be a most successful event: offering good opportunities for sharing ideas. A brief but poignant list of new goals for our organization has been approved by the Council.

"Our Office Manager, Pamela Blair, needs to be recognized. We so appreciate her work and the special way she connects with all of us. She is the cement that makes things work. Details are always in the forefront while her pleasant smile graces every conversation. Thank you Pam."

Our Public Relations efforts are continuous, broad and assertive. Grant writing and the receipt of grant money and special donations to the Minnesota State Minnesota Foundation all help to further the oneness and togetherness of our life-long learning experience.

Yes, everyone, every member and those members that give freely of their knowledge and time (individually and on committees) all help to make our special organization one of the best in the Upper Mid-West.

A BRIEF LOOK AT MARY JO SURPRENANT

Treasurer

I was born in southwest Minnesota, raised on a farm near Slayton, and attended a one room country school for the first six years of my education and then attended a "big" school in Slayton, Minnesota. Even the big school wasn't really very large as there were only 56 in my graduating class. I met my future husband, Ken, in 1956 and we were married in 1960. We had four children, two sons and two daughters. All four graduated from Mankato East High School and went on to graduate from colleges in the Midwest. Three reside in Minnesota and the other in Kansas City. There are five grandchildren now to enrich my life. Ken died of kidney cancer in 2011, but my biography can't be complete without including the 51 years of marriage we lived. It was a journey in itself. After our first three children were born, we decided Ken should return to college to finish his engineering degree. We moved to Ames, Iowa where he attended Iowa State University and received his Bachelor Degree in Civil Engineering and I got my PHT (Putting Hubby Through) certificate. They actually issued certificates stating that status at that time. His first job after graduation was as an Assistant City Engineer in Mankato and that was how we came to live here. We lived here for several years then moved to New Ulm for a few years and that is where our fourth child was born. We moved back to Mankato in 1971.

In 1973 Ken and another engineer started I&S

Engineers, Incorporated. Little did I know that a year later I would go from working as bookkeeper/clerical assistant to full-fledged partner as Ken's original partner left to pursue other interests. Over the years that company almost became the fifth child in our lives. We worked together long hours at the office and often our children were there running blueprints and any other chores they were able to do; truly a family business. It was an exciting time to watch the company grow and to be an integral part of the growth of Mankato and the surrounding area. After our youngest son graduated from Iowa State with his Engineering Degree he came to work with us and that is when the company really expanded. Over the years it has evolved into the company ISG serving clients throughout the United States: it is a company of nearly 300 people with eight offices in four states, offering services in all areas of engineering, architecture, and land development.

My biggest hobby has always been to learn in any capacity or venue I found myself. Ken and I did many road trips with our children using these trips as learning tools. I have visited all 50 states and have been fortunate to have traveled to many foreign countries and hope to be able to still cross off a few more from my bucket list. Mankato Area Life Long Learners has been a life saver to me after Ken's death as a different approach to learning and socializing with a new group of friends.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to our new members.

Betsy Bissen
Ed Bumbalough
Genette Carleton
Chris Christie

John Davidson
Jerald Erickson
Louise Hoogenboom
Margaret Johnson

Kathy Knish
Judy Krautbauer
Terry Lutz
Marge Schmidt

Carolyn & Jay Becker
Mary & Steve Fralish
Elizabeth & Steve Kipp
Jerry & Terryl Pietz
Bill & Polly Webster

We look forward to meeting you at our events and welcome your suggestions.

Ordinary people seek entertainment. Extraordinary people seek education and learning. ~Benjamin Hardy.

WRITERS FROM MANKATO AREA TO PRESENT

Tricia Nienow

The Presentation Committee has secured three Mankato area authors to present this to Lifelong Learners this spring.

Kathy Baxter will speak on March 15 with [It's A Road to Stardom! Highway 14 and Three Fine Writers.](#)

Kathy, originally from Walnut Grove, Minn., earned a graduate degree in Library Science from the University of Minnesota. This led to a varied career that has taken her from New York City to Anchorage. As a young woman, Kathy loved the Betsy-Tacy books of Maud Hart Lovelace. While visiting in Mankato, Kathy unexpectedly met three people on whom the book's characters were based, as well as Mrs. Lovelace. This is described in her new book, [My Betsy-Tacy Miracle](#), which will be available for purchase at the time of her presentation.

On March 27th, Bryce Stenzel will present [After Lincoln: Andrew Johnson, U.S. Grant, and the Perils of Reconstruction.](#) A native of Mankato, Bryce is well known as a local Civil War historian and teacher. Bryce

holds both undergraduate (social studies) and graduate (history) degrees from Minnesota State University, Mankato. In addition to eight books, Bryce developed his own first-person, living history portrayal of President Abraham Lincoln, which he has presented to audiences throughout the country. Bryce chairs the ongoing Boy in Blue Civil War Veterans Memorial Project and is deeply involved with other Civil War initiatives in the region.

Later in the spring, author Jason Willis will talk about his transition from young adult fiction to adult fiction. Jason teaches high school English, indigenous studies, creative writing, and mythology, but every morning during the school year, he wakes up at five a.m. to write a thousand words. After writing five self-published novels (2008-2013), Jason created Lura Publications, LLC to showcase his diverse writing interests. Jason grew up in South Dakota and currently lives in Minnesota, where he lives the life of a hobbit by gardening, writing, walking around barefoot, wearing vests, fishing, and going on adventures with his wife Julie.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

MANKATO **AREA** LIFELONG LEARNERS includes members from the following communities: Albert Lea, BellePlain, Cleveland, Delevan, Elysian, Good Thunder, Henderson, Janesville, Lake Crystal, Le Center, Le Sueur, Madelia, Madison Lake, Mapleton, New Prague, New Richland, New Ulm, St. James, St. Peter, Vernon Center. The word is out about Mankato **Area** Lifelong Learners!

And the Answer is _____

The results of the totally unscientific survey of the favorite restaurant for evening dining groups is Pappageorge Restaurant and Bar. A second totally unscientific outcome of the survey was that those in evening dining groups don't follow directions very well.

*The most successful people in the world are always lifelong learners.
They fully understand that their level of education directly determines their quality of life.*

~Jim Rohn

2018 WINTER SPEAKER SERIES

Bruce Birkemeyer

You, our Great Decisions members, raised so many good questions after Bill Christ's talk in November on energy, I feel we need to continue the discussion. What should the U. S. policy on energy be? You opened the door on the future of solar, wind, natural gas, ethanol, oil reserves, water aquifers, and (soil, water and air) pollution. I've asked fellow members Lou Schwartzkopf, Rallah Madison and Dick Nienow to help me. For a good read, I recommend The Songs of Trees by David George Haskell

and The Ground Beneath Us by Paul Bogard. On January 10th, we will take up this discussion.

On February 14th, the High School Debaters are back, and on March 14th, a team of attorneys will tell us "How not to write a will!" All events will begin at 2 p.m., the second Wednesday of the month, at The Children's Museum. Cost is \$5/session for Lifelong Learners and \$10 for non-members.

GREAT DECISIONS

Elizabeth Peters

GREAT DECISIONS is a non-partisan foreign policy discussion group using topics researched and presented by the FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, an arm of the State Department. There are over sixty Great Decisions groups in Minnesota. Mankato's group formed in 2011. Utilizing GLOBAL MINNESOTA'S Speakers Bureau as a resource, speakers are invited to present to our group and lead the discussion. Speakers may also include community members, college professors, and members of our group.

A MEMBER OF MANKATO'S GREAT DECISION GROUP is required to maintain CURRENT membership in Mankato Area Lifelong Learners.

Topics for 2018:

- > The waning of Pax Americana?
- > China and America: the new geopolitical equation
- > Turkey: a partner in crisis
- > South Africa's fragile democracy
- > Russia's foreign policy
- > Media and foreign policy
- > U.S. global engagement and the military
- > Global health: progress and challenges

Great Decisions is:

- eight month course, April through November
- meets the second Wednesday of each month except July (third Wednesday, July 18)
- meets 2:00-3:45 in the Rotary Room of the Children's Museum
- speaker presents for 45 min-1 hour, followed by question, answer, and discussion
- briefing book is a part of the course

Registration fee for 2018 is \$75. See registration insert to sign up or contact the office at 507-389-2011. Registration is also available online. See our website at <https://www.mnsu.edu/lifelonglearners/>

We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad. ~C.S. Lewis

BENCO AWARDS GRANT TO MANKATO LIFELONG LEARNERS

The Benco Electric Trust Operation Roundup Grant has awarded Mankato Area Lifelong Learners the requested funding of \$480 to cover the cost for one quarter of the newsletter. The Operation Round-Up is a program designed

to provide financial assistance to worthwhile activities and community projects. Appreciation is extended to Benco for their generosity and recognition of Lifelong Learners as a positive asset to the greater community.

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Free Community Event

Veteran diplomat **TOM HANSON** returns **Saturday, January 13** with his insightful look at the world as it is today and the expanding role of China. Tom's fourth appearance will begin at **1 P.M.** at Minnesota State Mankato's Ostrander Auditorium with free parking in the sunken visitor's lot across from the Student Union.

The extent of the struggle determines the extent of the growth. ~ Ryan Holiday

Clip and Save

Mankato Area Lifelong Learners Coupon

This coupon allows any prospective member to attend for free (a \$10.00 value) one presentation when accompanied by a current Mankato Area Lifelong Learner member.
(Excludes Great Decisions and Special Events)

Limit one coupon per person. No duplicated coupons are accepted.

Coupon is valid January 1 – March 31, 2018

Name _____

Email _____

\$10 Value

\$10 Value

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