



Founded in 1911, we are a strong and vibrant community, dedicated to helping U of M women students achieve their academic goals. We forge lasting friendships by welcoming everyone, caring about each other, and exploring new ideas and places together.

January-February 2021 *≈* No. 294

Conversation with a Woman Leader:

A Look at Modern Germany

Please join us Tuesday, February 9, at noon for our Conversation with a Woman Leader meeting, presented live via Zoom. Our speaker is Barbara Müller, Honorary Consul of Germany in Minneapolis.

With a district encompassing Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and western Wisconsin, Müller offers services to German citizens and works with a variety of organizations to enhance U.S.-German relations in a number of areas, especially culture, business and the economy.



Müller graduated from the University of Bonn, Germany, in 1987 and worked as a law clerk in various areas before she finished her German legal education in June 1990 with honors. In Germany, she focused on European legal and business issues. Before she came to Minnesota in 1996, she was chief of the division in the Department of European Affairs in the German state of Hesse. Müller obtained her J.D. in Minnesota in 1998. She currently is an attorney in private practice in Minneapolis.

With many connections to business and cultural organizations in the Twin Cities, Müller is well qualified to speak on a number of current American-European issues, as well as how Germany is facing its recent history.

So mark your calendar now and watch for your invitation to join us. And please invite a friend or two.

Meeting at a Glance

**Conversation with
a Woman Leader
Tuesday, February 9
Noon**

Speaker
Barbara Müller,
Honorary Consul of
Germany in Minneapolis

Location
Via Zoom

Please check your email in early February for your invitation and a link to the meeting as well as a meeting ID and a passcode to enter the meeting.

President's Message:

A cure for the blues

Leave it to our members to solve a case of the blues. Covid blues, not singing the blues, though the one might relate to the other. We are looking back and moving forward at UMWC.

Last month our Movies group did just that. This pack of pals has been watching their favorite musicals while homebound, and Zoom chatting once a month about music and dance productions. Ingenious during this pandemic, don't you think? Music lights up the brain during these dark times. It uplifts the spirit and can bring you to better places. The journey is like a genie in a bottle, and it takes many forms.



President Georgia Heisserer (front left)
in her *The Sound of Music* costume

My grandmother used to play her mandolin in the orchestra at the silent movies during World War I, and it got her in for free. After World War II, music and dance played a large part in our national recovery. My parents waltzed around the ice skating rink, the roller skating rink and the dance floor on a regular basis. Music relieves the suffering of a tortured mind and often brings us together.

As early as the 1830's, music education in schools began improving public life. Singing in homes and church choirs and playing instruments continued as popular pursuits. Growing up in small town America, we learned the discipline of music, all the while contributing to community life. Unbeknownst to our parents, a music revolution began to emerge, with jazz, Elvis and the lindy hop. Who knew that those square dance lessons, ballroom dance classes in physical education, sock hops in the gym at noon and American Bandstand on our televisions would

let loose a burst of exhilaration to a whole new generation of music-loving kids?

With this transformation, the jitterbug, rock and roll, the boogie woogie and the bunny hop awakened a sleeping giant. The movement of dance with aesthetic qualities in sync with the speed of music, melody and footwork, all created memories that make many of us smile even today. With our buddies, we learned the Freddie, the hitch hike and the locomotion. We jived to the mashed potato. The swim, the twist, watusi and the jerk filled our weekends. When I watched the college rugby players drop to the floor doing the alligator, I thought I would faint. The strut, limbo and monkey were more than music to us. Dance is a celebration to lift the spirit and make you feel young. It can revive your wrinkled resilient self.

Any feelings of helplessness or distress seemed diminished by the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Bob Dylan and Aretha Franklin. Summer dances at the pavilion on the lake melded them to that year, that place in time. It seems that each decade brings changes to the music genre. Years later, the We Fest Country Music Festival brought thousands to town. Together, local enthusiasts formed a gospel choir. We spent Sunday mornings singing on stage with Reba McEntire and, later, Dolly Parton. True story! Oh, the places music will bring you.

My community theater put together *The Sound of Music* one summer. Lutherans, Catholics and people of every faith came together to sing Gregorian chant pieces and so much more. Our Nun Bus brought us to churches across town to tout our production. My appreciation for the woolen habit, veil, coif and wimple that real nuns wore grew with each 80-degree summer full house. Together we lugged ice to the baptisms and filled them to cool down the church. Music is more than a stimulant to the brain. It can be a respite in periods of long confinement. To recall that first dance, that favorite hymn, the song that brings tears to your eyes every time you hear it changes us, enriches us. Those emotions are a balm to the soul in times such as these.

As always, my experience at a University of Minnesota Women's Club gathering gives me a rich, energetic Covid booster. Struggling with the coronavirus lockdown is an opportunity to sample many sections, each with its own charm. But I must say that my 'Brief but Spectacular Music Sampler' is a sensation that will help me on my next pandemic task. I am making a playlist of music that improves my day. What might your top five songs be to improve your day? Share a story or song with a friend. Keep in touch. We miss you. Every conversation matters. Stay connected. Self care and care for one another are also Covid boosters, don't you think?

Georgia Heisserer

Celebrating a generous spirit of philanthropy

Our board of directors was vaguely aware that long-time member Ruth Jones was making some sort of provision in her will for the UMWC. And then, suddenly last April, she was gone.

Ruth Vickroy Jones was born July 3, 1938, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and died April 21, 2020, in Minneapolis just weeks after returning from a trip to Ethiopia.



Ruth was nowhere near completing her “bucket list” when she left us. True, she had experienced Ethiopia, but there were 100 more countries on her list. Ruth had an insatiable desire to explore the unknown and in the process learn what was needed to upgrade the educational system in whatever country she was visiting.

Born to teach, she prepared herself with degrees from Bucknell and Penn State and a stint at the U of M for her permanent teaching certification. However, her first job was working for the Agency for International Development on foreign aid projects for Pakistan. Then came her move to Minnesota and a 30-year teaching career.

When Ruth discovered the University of Minnesota Women's Club, she quickly took leadership roles and generously supported the scholarship program. With her presidency, from 2016–2017, she quietly became the UMWC's “guardian angel.” Each year, through the U of M Foundation, she anonymously funded three of our scholarships. She also began working with the Foundation to modify her estate planning to include the UMWC.

When Ruth's estate was settled, we learned the extent of Ruth's generosity. The U of M Foundation informed us that she had established The Ruth Vickroy Jones UMWC Educational Pursuits Scholarship, endowed through the U of M Foundation. The interest from the capital in her scholarship is enough to fund 10 of our \$3,500 scholarships each year, beginning next fall. Furthermore, that endowed scholarship will grow in perpetuity and fund even more scholarships through the years.

Ruth tells us in a personal statement in her will: “I am a teacher. I chose my profession because of my love of and

commitment to teaching and learning, a life-long commitment and pursuit. My establishment of this endowment is an extension of this commitment. I admit to being an unapologetic — but practical — idealist. My idealism has prompted me to fund this scholarship; my practicality has made it possible for me to do so.”

Marian Champlin

Vice President for Scholarship Fundraising

Meet our recipients

Because we know you are interested in the young women who have received UMWC scholarships, we are delighted to introduce you to another impressive recipient.

Sheng Thao is studying interior design and wants to become a licensed interior designer. “I want to explore working in commercial design for a while but I eventually also want to venture into remodeling residential homes,” Sheng said. “I chose this career path because of its personal significance to me but also because I want to use my skill set and go back to the communities that I grew up in and help revive them through design.”

Like many other students, Thao is navigating the demands of student life while also dealing with the realities of a pandemic.

“Having and finding a physical environment outside of the classroom to learn has been very challenging,” Sheng said. “It's become hard to separate different sectors of my life with the pandemic because now I am attending class, completing projects, taking exams, working remotely and trying to balance a personal life all in one space. However, living on campus has definitely helped me greatly in being able to better separate and balance a school environment and a home environment.”

Fortunately, Sheng occasionally finds time to enjoy other hobbies.

“In my free time, I enjoy watching movies and taking walks outside to catch the sunset,” she said. “Occasionally, I also enjoy doing portrait photography.”

She remains grateful to UMWC members for helping her achieve her goals.

“I would like to again say another big thank you from the bottom of my heart for this scholarship,” Sheng said. “Especially with the pandemic, this scholarship has definitely helped me a lot and I cannot thank you enough.”



In the spirit of giving

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, UMWC members in December once again supported families of children hospitalized at the University Medical Center, contributing \$700 to the toy drive.

Fred and Dorothy Waltz and Marian Champlin graciously offered to accept toys at their homes, and President Georgia Heisserer delivered those gifts to the Medical Center. Given the difficulties of shopping during a pandemic, members were not able to contribute quite as many actual toys as in previous years but our financial contribution was almost as strong as in the past.



Alison Rusche and Kristin Moesch were ready to receive the toys from UMWC members that President Georgia Heisserer delivered to the University Medical Center.

Scholarship fundraising update

We are happy to report that through December 31, 2020, UMWC has received \$60,154 from 132 contributors, up \$13,014 from last year. Thank you!

That figure includes a \$10,000 bequest gift from the spouse of Nancy Weiss, who was president from 1997–1998.

In addition, the University of Minnesota Foundation has notified us that we now have two new endowed UMWC scholarships: The Peter and Margaret Reed UMWC Scholarship and the Ruth Vickroy Jones UMWC Educational Pursuits Scholarship. (See the article elsewhere in this issue about the Jones Scholarship.)

Nominating Committee begins work

Our newly established Nominating Committee kicked off its effort in December to determine which UMWC leadership positions need to be filled for our 2021–2022 season and to find candidates for those positions. Barb Swadburg and Maggie Hoover are co-chairing the committee, whose members also include Georgia Heisserer, Susan Hopp, Nancy Kluver and Georgia Nygaard.

The committee will announce its slate of candidates at the April board meeting and members will vote on the candidates either at or before the annual meeting in May, depending on whether we are able to gather in person. Last year we conducted the voting by mail-in ballot.

Membership update

We have mostly completed our renewal effort, and current membership is 287.

As renewals have come in, we have had several directory changes, including new addresses for Nancy Apfelbacher and Joann Youngstrom. Corriene Anderson, Mary Glaeser, Judy McConnell, Dorothy Peterson, Sue Shoemaker and Karen Wehner have new phone numbers. Janet Ekern has changed both her address and phone number. Greta Berg has a new phone number and a new email address.

For a current list of new members and their contact information and/or a list of directory changes, please contact Nancy Myers. Also, let Nancy know if your contact information changes.

Memorial gifts

For Flossie Caldwell (President 1990–1992) by Linda Boss and Constance Oriani

For Shirley Decker by Dorothy Boen

For Mary Louise Hill by Susan Hill

For Mary Ellen Johnson by Anonymous

For Dorothy Hopp (President 1973–1974) by Susan Hopp

For Ruth Jones (President 2016–2017) by Lola Christianson, Kathi Treston and Carol Steele

For Georgie Kershner by Marion Kershner

For Marian Raup (President 1978–1980) by Abby Marier

For Gladys Turnquist by Patricia Roelofs

Honoring gifts

For Elinor Morlock by Jan Morlock

Section News

Beautiful baby blankets

With great pleasure our Needle Arts Sharing section donates handcrafted items to the University of Minnesota hospitals. Pictured here are club member Mary Rae Sunderland (center) and her good friends Dianne Matson (left) and Barb Rusinak.



Over the past 10 years, the three friends have generously created and donated 26 adorable baby hats and 90 soft and colorful baby blankets. Dianne also has knitted 17 darling baby sweaters. All of the items have been absolutely beautiful.

Mary Rae, because of health reasons, is no longer able to knit but Dianne and Barb continue to share their wonderful knitting talents with us.

— Carole Senty

Art section members display their work

Two members of the Art section will be displaying their work in exhibitions at local galleries.

The Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA) has accepted Janet Robb's color pencil violets for its Foot in the Door exhibit. Since 1980, Foot in the Door has been an open exhibition for Minnesota artists of all ages to present their work at MIA. The sole curatorial criterion for the exhibition, which occurs every 10 years, is that the work of art must measure at or under 12 inches in height, width and depth—literally inviting artists to place “a foot” in the museum's galleries.

Foot in the Door is virtual this year and the



digital exhibition showcases the work of more than 2,000 Minnesota artists. The exhibit is on the artsmia.org website through January 10.

Nancy Wright's painting was included in the White Bear Center for the Arts online member exhibition.

“In my paintings, I like to show contrasting shadow and light, either in nature or structures,” Nancy said. “Birch and aspen trees are so elegant. I wanted to focus on them. So I chose to give the feel of walking in the woods and then coming upon a sunlit clearing of newer aspens. It's kind of a surprise behind the darker trees.”



You can find the White Bear exhibition at WhiteBearArts.org/Exhibitions.

Also, watch the March-April UMWC newsletter for news of the Art section's own art exhibition.

Nature section looks forward to 2021

The Nature section will meet Monday, February 22, at 10:30 via Zoom to hear Marcie O'Connor, a botanist and naturalist. She and her husband, Mike, bought an old Wisconsin farm in 2000 and decided to make a project out of restoring the land to the way it was before it was farmed. They planted prairies in all the old crop fields, cleared overgrown bluff prairies and savanna and restored and replanted wet prairies along the creek.

O'Connor will talk about some of their projects and adventures and show slides of the changes they've made on the land. She also will show some of the many birds and animals they've seen as the native habitat returns.

On Monday, March 29 at 10:30, the group will hear via Zoom from LeAnn Plinske, master naturalist. Plinske's topic is “Birding 101: Techniques, Tips and Tools to Help You Begin and Become a Better Birder.”

Section members will receive an email invitation the day before the program. Other UMWC members interested in attending should contact either Diane Schweizer or Margie Daniels at least one week before the presentations.

CLUB NEWS

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Don't forget to check out Online Extra

In this issue's Online Extra, we feature the extraordinary life and career of Cherie Hamilton, who joined UMWC in 1964 and served two terms as our president. Her love of flavors, cultures and adventure has taken her to many parts of the world and shaped her career and accomplishments.

You will find the story as an added feature to the online version of our newsletter.



Board of Directors Meets February 9

The UMWC board of directors will meet Tuesday, February 9, at 10 a.m. The board will conduct its meeting virtually via Zoom. If you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Connie Cundy to obtain the meeting ID and passcode necessary to get access to the meeting

Newsletter Deadline is February 12

The deadline for the March-April newsletter is Friday, February 12, 2021. Please submit articles, information and photos to Nancy Kluver, newsletter editor, at Kluver.nancy@gmail.com.

Cherie Hamilton: A life rich in flavors, cultures and adventures

“I have always enjoyed sampling cuisines from foreign countries, learning about their cultures and a few words in their languages,” said Cherie Hamilton in reminiscing on her long and interesting life. “I was also one who would volunteer in school for any project or assignment. These traits have followed me through my life.”

The diverse cultures and languages of New York City, where Cherie was born, also helped form the path she would take in life. Her parents moved to New Haven, Connecticut, when she was four years old, but they spent weekends in the Bronx visiting her grandparents. She grew up and went to school in New Haven. On her sixth birthday, her grandmother presented her with a violin and insisted she take lessons. She studied for 10 years, and by the time she graduated from high school, she was first violinist and concert mistress of the Johnson Junior Symphony Orchestra, the first female and person of color to hold that position.



After graduation, she attended Southern Connecticut State University, majoring in math and Spanish. Her violin playing was put on hold. She dated Russell Hamilton, who was a senior at UCONN majoring in English and Spanish. They married while he was working on his master’s degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In 1960, Russell finished his course work toward his doctorate at Yale and received a Fulbright scholarship to

do research for his dissertation on Brazilian literature.

“We didn’t think twice about it,” said Cherie of moving to Bahia, Brazil, with their small daughter. “I didn’t speak Portuguese and was thrown into a situation where I had to learn quickly to survive. My Brazilian neighbors were very helpful even though they didn’t speak much English. In three months I was able to converse and hold my own.”

She also received a call from the Consulate saying they had read the form she filled out on arrival and noticed that she majored in math in college. They needed a math teacher at the Pan American School as the current teacher had just died and wondered if she could take over. She accepted on the spot.

“I could work because I had help” Cherie said, and delightfully tells the story of the family’s “baba,” a 13-year-old girl who cared for their daughter during the day. “Her mother was our laundress and her uncle waxed our floors with kerosene once a month, a common practice at that time,” she said. And, of course, their daughter learned Portuguese.

“I have always been interested in learning how to prepare new foods, and my Brazilian neighbors invited me to watch their cooks prepare their local dishes,” Cherie said. “I was fascinated by the influence from Portugal and Africa and vowed to write about it one day.”

In 1964, Russell received his doctorate and began work at the University of Minnesota to establish a Portuguese program in the Department of Romance Languages. Cherie became an active member of the Faculty Wives Club, today known as UMWC, and a community volunteer serving on the United Way Allocations Board and Minnesota Affirmative Action Association, as a docent and lecturer at the Walker Art Center and as a resource volunteer for the Minneapolis Board of Education. She also made a video for public TV on Brazil for use in the public schools.

In 1970, she and Russell spent their first sabbatical in Portugal with their four children, and she continued to collect recipes with the idea of expanding a Brazilian cookbook to one that included all the Portuguese speaking countries and colonies in the world. This dream was realized when they took their second sabbatical in 1978 to the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique, with three of their children.

Cherie’s own career was flourishing, too. In 1973, she began working at General Mills as a trilingual administrative assistant in the International Division, translating correspondence from their companies in Central and South America. She returned to General Mills in 1979 after

her one-year leave and became manager of recruitment. She traveled to universities to recruit MBAs and engineers for their subsidiaries nationwide. She also registered at the University of Minnesota in 1979 to finish that last year of college in math, but instead went on to receive a B.A. in cultural anthropology and a B.S. in business administration.

In 1984, Russell was recruited to be the Dean of Graduate Studies at Vanderbilt University and Cherie and Russell moved to Nashville, which she described as “an oasis in the deep south.” Cherie became Vanderbilt’s director of recruiting and staffing services and continued her community involvement, serving on a number of boards, including joining the Vanderbilt Woman’s Club, where she served as president from 2002– 2003.

Her cookbook research continued when she was able to accompany Russell on yearly trips to Africa, where he was preselecting students for graduate schools nationwide. The decision to join him necessitated her resigning her position at Vanderbilt, but she decided that life was too short to miss out on the opportunity.

Eventually, Cherie’s cookbook dream came true and Hippocrene, Books Inc. in New York published her *Cuisines of Portuguese Encounters* in 2001 and *Brazil: A Culinary Journey* in 2005. That same year *Os Sabores da Lusofonia, Encontros de Culturas; the Flavors of the Portuguese Speaking World, Encounters and Cultures* was published in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



Cherie with Honorary President Susan Hagstrum in 2011

In 2005, Russell retired from Vanderbilt and they moved back to Minneapolis to be close to their children. Cherie reconnected with UMWC, where she served as president in 2008–09 and 2011–12. During her tenure she started the Knit & Crochet and Movie Rendezvous sections, chaired the committee for UMWC’s 100th anniversary and emceed the program, which was a fashion show. She also chaired the host committee for the Big Ten Conference in Minnesota and, in a gift that keeps on giving, suggested that the UMWC directory have a spiral binding so the book would lie flat.

Her list of other community services is long and equally impressive. She continues to hold leadership positions in the University of Minnesota Retiree Association and the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education. She also served on the board of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for six years, the final two as board president, and she teaches courses on Brazil and Portugal, taking members on tours to those countries after the course.

Cherie and Russell’s thirst and love for travel permeated both their business and personal life and for their 50th wedding anniversary, they embarked on an around-the-world trip visiting friends from their years of travels. Sadly, Cherie lost Russell in 2016.

With no plans of slowing down, she now looks forward to working with UMWC members on another productive and enjoyable year.



Cherie and Marian Champlin

