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THE SIFTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

FINANCIAL MATTERS WEBINAR

Estate Planning Series Wills versus Trusts

BY TOM EGGERT AND RICK DALUGE, MEMBERS,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RETIREMENT

Estate planning is an essential task for anyone who wants to assure that their assets are distributed according to their wishes after their death with minimal legal oversight and cost. Join us as attorney Peter Osman discusses wills and trusts, including the specifics of each, their relative benefits and shortcomings, and how to decide which you need.

Osman's practice specialties include estate planning, business planning, estate administration and settlement, and elder law. The attorneys of Borakove/Osman LLC focus their practice on assisting clients at all levels of estate planning and have developed customized strategies to fit client needs at many different service levels and price points. The goal is to ensure that each client receives an estate plan that is right for their family, their goals, and their budget. ■

If you have preliminary questions for the speaker, please send them to program coordinators Tom Eggert at tleggert@wisc.edu and Rick Daluge at rhaldaluge@wisc.edu by Wednesday, February 1.

Peter C. Osman is a partner and cofounder of Borakove/Osman LLC, a boutique estate planning and business planning law firm in Madison, Wisconsin. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School.

He regularly offers educational workshops on planning estates and for special needs, use of wills and trusts, charitable planning, Medicaid qualification, probate, estate settlement, trust administration, and planning for taxable estates. He is a member of WealthCounsel, LLC, a collaborative, nationwide network of top estate-planning attorneys, as well as the Madison Estate Counsel.



WILLS VS. TRUSTS

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

2:00–4:00 P.M. Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: February 3

Advance registration is required. Register online at:

UWRAmadison.org/event-5041479

There is still time to register for JANUARY webinars and meetings. See p. 4 for details.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Ring in the New Year!

BY SANDI HAASE

My January message last year challenged you to open the first page of a blank 365-page book for you to write your 2022 story. As you reflect on 2022, I hope that it was exciting and a best seller!



Now it's time to close that book and start your new story for 2023.

May the new year bring you an abundance of amazing opportunities, beautiful moments, and joyful experiences.

May your positive actions and attitude inspire others.

May you be brave enough to take on and overcome rewarding challenges.

May you find yourself in high spirits and excellent health.

May you love with all your heart and find peace in even the most turbulent of times.

May the love you give always find its way back to you multiplied.

And may you forever be filled with the hope and strength necessary to make your dreams a reality.

Join me in celebrating the coming year and making 2023 the best ever.

Happy New Year everyone! ■



PARTNERS IN GIVING

Thank You for Caring for 50 Years

BY GIANNA TAYLOR, PARTNERS IN GIVING UNIVERSITY COMBINED CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Partners in Giving campaign, I offer my sincere thanks to the UWRA community. As of December 5, UW–Madison (including UWRA donors) had already generously contributed more than \$1M to the 50th anniversary campaign, with almost \$1.7 M raised when combined with our State and UW Health partners. A significant part of the success of our campaign over the past half a century hinges on the participation of retirees. We couldn't do it without you!



Contributions to the annual total are welcomed through May 15, 2023. If you are interested, the new year is a great time to participate. As little as \$1/month can support vital services that our neighbors depend on for food, medical care, housing, jobs, and more. Why be a partner in giving? Here are 10 reasons: it.wisc.edu/partners-in-giving/10-reasons-to-be-a-partner-in-giving/.

By visiting the website, giving.wi.gov/, you can:

- donate online with a credit card (click *Retirees* below DONATE NOW, top right)
- sign up to receive campaign information directly to your email or home (click *About*, then *Giving in Retirement* or giving.wi.gov/about-us/giving-in-retirement/)
- learn about the charities your gift supports (click *Charities*)
- learn about the impact of your donation (click *Why Donate*)
- view options for giving (click *How to Give*).

Again, thank you for your generous support. We wish you and your families happiness and good health in the new year. ■

WEBINAR FOLLOW-UP

Calculating RMDs for Single and Married Taxpayers

BY PAUL SWANSON, PRESENTER, AND CFMR MEMBERS FAISAL KAUD AND DON MINER

In November 2022, Paul Swanson presented a webinar on income tax preparation. An audience member, in the post-webinar evaluation, suggested that it would be helpful to provide tables for Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs).

To determine the RMD for 2022, take the value of the account balance on December 31, 2022, and divide it by the life expectancy of the individual (as determined by the Internal Revenue Service, or IRS).

The IRS “Uniform Lifetime Table” is used by single taxpayers, married taxpayers whose spouses are not more than ten years younger, and married taxpayers whose spouses are not the sole beneficiary of their IRA. The complete table is found in IRS Pub 590-B. Here is a portion of the table.

Age	Distribution Period	Age	Distribution Period
84	16.8	72	27.4
85	16.0	73	26.5
86	15.2	74	25.5
87	14.4	75	24.6
88	13.7	76	23.7
89	12.9	77	22.9
90	12.2	78	22.0
91	11.5	79	21.1
92	10.8	80	20.2
93	10.1	81	19.4
94	9.5	82	18.5
95	8.9	83	17.7

For example, consider an eighty-year-old person whose IRA has a value of \$100,000 on December 31, 2022. From the table, the Life Expectancy is 20.2 years. So, divide \$100,000 by 20.2 to get \$4950. The RMD for the year is therefore \$4950.



A “Single Lifetime Table” for use by eligible designated beneficiaries is also found in IRS Pub 590-B irs.gov/pub/irs-dft/p590b--dft.pdf.

Also in IRS Pub 590-B is a “Joint Life and Last Survivor Expectancy Table” for a participant whose spouse is more than ten years younger and is the sole beneficiary of their IRA. All three tables have been updated for distributions starting in 2022.

Other RMD Rules

- Determine the RMD for each IRA, but the total amount can be taken from any one or more IRA accounts.
- Determine the RMD for each 403(b) but the total amount can be taken from any one or more 403(b) accounts.
- RMDs from 401(k) and 457(b) must be taken separately from each of those plan accounts.
- RMD rules for Annuities are not the same as for IRAs. See IRS Pub 575 for details: irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-publication-575.

Visit the UWRA website (UWRAmadison.org) then select Resources/Presentations/2022–23 Sep–Dec to find a video and a PDF of Paul Swanson's entire November presentation on Income Tax Preparation. ■

✓ STILL TIME TO REGISTER

There is still time to register for January webinars.

Online registration for UWRA Zoom webinars is easy, but members may also email the UWRA office at 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

DO NOT LET YOUR FAMILY TREE GET TOP HEAVY

Monday, January 9, 2023

10–11:30 A.M. Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: January 6

Advance registration is required. Register online at: UWRAmadison.org/event-4813133



WHAT IS ESTATE PLANNING?

Thursday, January 12, 2023

1:00–3:00 P.M. Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: January 10

Advance registration is required. Register online at: UWRAmadison.org/event-5028148

HUMAN-ROBOT INTERACTION AND TEAMS

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

2:00–3:30 P.M. Online Webinar

Registration Deadline: January 13

Advance registration is required. Register online at: UWRAmadison.org/event-4966043

FOOD PANTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

In lieu of registration fees for UWRA 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. Learn more about it at 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. ■

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Interested in Foreign Relations?

BY RAY WILLIAMS, MADISON COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Madison Committee on Foreign Relations is dedicated to continual learning about relations among individual countries, multinational social/political/religious movements, and such global concerns as climate change, security, trade, resources, and health. We bring in speakers including current or former employees of U.S. government agencies, foreign diplomats, and experts from foreign and domestic universities and policy institutes.

We hold approximately seven events each year. In-person events take place at the Madison Club, including a sit-down dinner with wine before the presentation and the opportunity for conversations among attendees. Details about our organization, membership, event signup and costs, presentation topics, and speaker bios are all available on our website at mcfri.info. Upcoming events are:

February 15 Placing Hong Kong in the Broader Context of China Trying to Control the Narrative about China (Virtual)

March 23 Latin American Lithium Sourcing: The Next Great Hope, or an Emerging Nightmare? (In-person)

April 27 Whither the Global COVID-19 Agenda, or Hope for Global Health Security (In-person)

May to be announced. ■

TRAVEL**Take the Extended Family, Please!**

BY COLLEEN MCCABE, MEMBER, TRAVEL COMMITTEE

Do you want to take the whole family to a new vacation destination, but are not sure how to afford accommodations for the various ages and genders in your group? The solution is a rental property through [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) or [VRBO.com](https://www.vrbo.com) (Vacation Rentals By Owner). If nothing else, their respective online websites provide a wonderful adventure in themselves. You can use either site; many properties are cross-listed on both, but some will be unique to one site.

To begin, go to the website and type in the location and dates of your planned stay, the number of guests, the number of bedrooms and bathrooms you require, whole house vs. condo or apartment, and any other amenities you would like (pool, garage, hot tub, washer/dryer, WiFi, grill, etc.). Then, wait for all the possibilities that show up. You will be amazed.

In the past year, traveling with my adult son and his two teenage girls, we stayed at three rental houses—in San Diego, Costa Rica, and Evergreen, Colorado. Each had everything we needed, such as 3–4 bedrooms and 2–3 bathrooms, proximity to the beach in SD, a pool in CR, and a cabin in the CO foothills. Photos online showed us every room. In each case for us, the kitchens were fully equipped, plus offered the usual staples you would find at home. All had coffee makers and coffee!

If you find an intriguing place, be sure to read the reviews—all of them. Ask questions of the owner/manager of the property. Judge how well they communicate since this may be important. Most places have only keypad access, as the owner may not be around. Take special note of the cancellation policy. Some give you lots of latitude, others not.

Many sites offer suggestions for tours and experiences in their area, and you can even make reservations for those online. That worked well for us in Costa Rica. We chose not to rent a car, so tour vans picked us up at our “villa.”

Soon new legislation will require that properties in the U.S. show the total price, including all extra charges, such as cleaning fees and damage liability. Yes, the properties have rules, so be prepared to follow them to the letter. You will need to leave the places much as you found them. Cleaning crews come in between renters to vacuum, make beds, wash floors, and clean bathrooms. You may be asked to run the dishwasher as you leave and wash sheets and towels. Sometimes, with just hours between guests, these requirements help all parties.

Even if you decide not to use rental accommodations, do take a look at properties available in exotic places. It is very entertaining, and maybe you just won't be able to resist! ■

WEBINAR RECAP**An American Living in Gascony**

BY ESTHER OLSON, CHAIR, TRAVEL COMMITTEE

In November, UWRA participants heard about living in the historic French region of Gascony in the southwest of France, where the Pyrenees Mountains can be seen in the distance. Emeritus professor Ullrich Langer, who retired from the Department of French & Italian in 2020, bought a house in Gascony in 1996. Since then, he has split his time between Madison and the town of Lectoure, along the famous pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela.

Langer gave us a personal glimpse of life in France, including the beauty of the countryside, the vast antique market and thermal baths of Lectoure, the many opportunities to participate in local social clubs, buying groceries and regional Armagnac brandy, and viewing centuries-old buildings. He shared information about purchasing and renovating an old house, navigating the transportation systems, paying taxes, France's politics and low-cost health care, and learning to be a good neighbor.

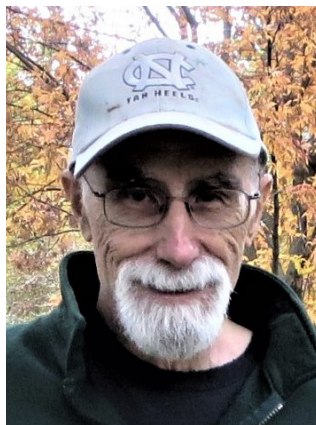
Visit the UWRA website ([UWRAmadison.org](https://www.uwramadison.org)) then select Resources/Presentations/2022–23 Sep–Dec to find a video of the entire program. ■

MEET A UWRA MEMBER

Embracing Lifelong Learning

BY KEN SHAPIRO

My hometown is Long Beach, New York. My first full-time job was caseworker for the New York City Department of Welfare.



Before retiring from UW–Madison in 2012, I was a professor of agricultural and applied economics (AAE); associate dean and director of CALS International Programs; and department chair at AAE. A favorite part of my work was the great people I worked with. It sounds trite, but it's true. Also: I

loved visiting farmers in small villages in Africa, India, and China, and making opportunities for other UW faculty and staff to do likewise to share their expertise.

The first thing I did after I retired (after a trip to Hawaii) was tutor reading for second and third graders at Gompers Elementary School and math at Blackhawk Middle School. Now I spend my time auditing courses on campus—mostly history, with a sprinkling of political science, agronomy, Shakespeare, geology, philosophy, and art history—about 20–25 courses so far since I retired. I recommend the Senior Guest Auditor program (acsss.wisc.edu/senior-guest-auditors/). I am also enjoying leisurely breakfasts while reading the papers with my wife Mary, more time for exercise and walks, and less stress.

My favorite UWRA activity is reading *The Sifter!* Least-favorite UWRA activities are the presentations that allege benefits of Medicare Advantage programs (like United Health) without discussing allegations of their improper denials of claims and

overcharging Medicare (see New York Times articles 10/13/18 and 10/8/22).

Books I've just finished or am still reading are:

- Ruth Conniff, *Milked*, about the symbiotic relationship between Wisconsin dairy farmers and undocumented Mexican migrant workers, without whom the Wisconsin dairy industry might be on its knees
- Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning*, about England's imprisonment, torture, and murder of Kenya's Kikuyu, as well as Elkins' *Legacy of Violence*, looking more broadly at England's terror tactics across the empire
- Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years*, a granular picture of the brave civil rights struggles against brutal suppression in the South
- Walter Russell Mead, *The Arc of a Covenant*, a very long view of how U.S. domestic politics and foreign policy shape the U.S.–Israel relationship.

My next travel plans include seeing our grandkids in Seattle and Virginia. After visiting more than 50 countries, mostly for work, my travel urges are minimal. ■

NOVEMBER 1–30, 2022

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Martine Debaisieux,

French & Italian

Harold Hill Goldsmith,

L&S Psychology

Jeffrey Hanson

Jordan Hanson, *University*

Relations

Susan Heidrich, *School of*

Nursing

Charles Prissel, *Msn–*

Division of Extension

Christopher Schappel,

Athletic Department

Thomas Szalkucki, *Center*

for Dairy Research

Richard Wolman,

Anesthesiology, SMPH

{ The UWRA is your network in retirement! }

ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT

A Continued Interest in Home Decorating

BY LUCY WALL, UWRA MEMBER

While recently rereading the writings in my 4-H record books, I learned that my interest in home decorating began way back then, while seeking to put a personal touch on my parents’ home. My 4-H project called “home furnishings” helped me learn some basic principles with my first project of constructing a linen tablecloth and napkins. It helped that my mother had a degree in home economics.

Over the years, I have lived in many homes and have always enjoyed making them calming and welcoming through the use of fabrics, color, texture, and arrangements.

My sewing abilities feed my interest in home decorating as I craft window treatments, dust ruffles, throw pillows, and whatever is needed. I paint walls, finish woodwork, and add accessories that reflect the lives and heritage of my family. I especially enjoy making seasonal tablescapes.

I have expanded this interest in home decorating to include learning about and using wood, houseplants, and light. After I retired as assistant dean for admissions at the School of Medicine and Public Health, my spouse and I designed our current home. We selected all the usual materials, colors, and fixtures before choosing the window treatments, rugs, accessories, and other furnishings. Landscaping was an important part of the project as well.



It all begins with a vision, and that is what I love most: envisioning a home as a whole in a certain setting. And yes, we also have a family cabin that reflects many iterations of my notions of a proper retreat—inside and out! ■

ATTIC ANGEL ASSOCIATION

January Continuing Education Programs Slated

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 but capacity is 80 persons. Program attendees must screen at the front entrance and wear a health-grade mask.



January 9 An Exploration of Your Preferred Thinking Skills (What Side of Your Brain Do You Use the Most?) Bob Darula, retired vice president of student services, Fox Valley Technical College, retired instructor, AAP resident

January 16 Experiencing the U.S. Civil Rights Trail: The Legacy of Those Who Changed History Don Schott, retired Wisconsin attorney and judicial nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit

January 23 The Hmong Institute: An Empowering, Supportive Community Mai Zong Vue, board president, the Hmong Institute

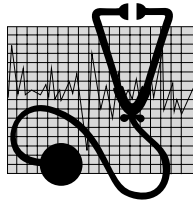
January 30 Bayview Rising and the History of the Triangle Neighborhood Alexis London, executive director, Bayview Foundation. ■

WELLNESS MATTERS

Jack Fell Down and Broke His Crown: Avoiding Falls

BY DAVID M. DECI MD, UWRA MEMBER

Most of us are familiar with the nursery rhyme about Jack and Jill, whose English origins date back to the mid-18th century. In the first verse, “Jack fell down and broke his crown, and Jill came tumbling after.” The image is pretty frightening, even for adults.



Fall injuries have a startling impact on our health and wellbeing. I was surprised to learn that, according to the Centers for Disease Control, 42,114 Americans died due to accidental falls in 2020. That number exceeded motor vehicle deaths by 2,000. We actively take measures to make automobiles and driving safer, yet do we consider ways to reduce fall risks?

Moreover, falls affect older persons disproportionately. Age-related factors that contribute to this risk include:

- decreased muscle strength
- slowed reflexes
- impairment of vision and depth perception
- impairment of feeling in feet (neuropathy)
- loss of balance-control due to previous strokes and/or Parkinson’s disease
- dizziness due to medication use
- greater sensitivity to alcohol
- weaker bones due to osteoporosis.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services reports that the fall injury rate for Wisconsinites approaches the national average. However, the death rate from falls in our state is twice the national average, a statistic that certainly warrants action.

The good news is that there are evidence-based interventions that can reduce the risk of falls and subsequent injuries. As we begin a new year, I

challenge each of us to take measures that can help keep us safer.

Get a functional health assessment Medicare covers simple in-office assessments such as the “get up and go” test that has a high predictive value for fall risk. A physical therapy appointment might uncover conditions that impact gait and balance. Talk to your health care provider about medications that might inadvertently lower blood pressure when you stand up or might cause unnecessary drowsiness or dizziness. Alternative medications may be available. Also ask about testing and treatment for osteoporosis. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.



Do a home safety assessment Most falls occur at home, especially in the bathroom or kitchen. Remove throw rugs, reduce clutter, install grab bars near the toilet and shower, consider replacing tubs with low-barrier showers, wear properly fitting shoes with good tread, and use night lights to improve visibility. Double-check to ensure that stairs have sturdy handrails. Avoid using ladders or step stools, and never climb up on a chair to reach higher objects. Reorganize your workspaces to be closer to eye level, and use “grabbers” to aid in retrieving items. Avoid going outdoors when surfaces are wet or icy.

(Continued on p. 9)

(Continued from p. 8)



Work to improve your balance and stability

Research has shown that general muscle-strengthening goes a long way toward reducing fall risk. The Wisconsin Institute for Health and Aging offers a seven-week program called Stepping On that has led to a 31% reduction in falls among participants. Tai Chi has also been found to be highly effective in improving balance and lowering the risk of fall injuries. In addition, the regular use of appropriately prescribed canes, walkers, and rollators can make a positive impact. (But they work only if you use them!)

Plan for the unexpected We never know when we might fall. Consider ways to summon help in case of a fall. Emergency call buttons, wrist bands, and pendants can be lifesaving and are a wise investment. Various agencies and phone companies offer this service.

Resources to explore:

Stepping On
wihealthyaging.org/programs/falls-prevention-programs/stepping-on/

Medical Alert Systems

usnews.com/360-reviews/services/medical-alert-system

Home Safety

cdc.gov/steady/pdf/STEADI-Brochure-CheckForSafety-508.pdf

Assess Mobility [youtube.com/watch?v=VUq6lgQAVJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUq6lgQAVJM)

Let’s all make a New Year’s resolution to make ourselves and our loved ones safer! ■

BREAKFASTS AT ELIE'S CAFE
 909 E. Broadway, Monona, WI
 9:00–10:30 A.M. In-person gathering

Join fellow UWRA members for breakfast (or a cup of coffee or tea) at Elie’s Family Restaurant. Members gather once a month for breakfast and lively conversation. No registration needed.

Tuesday, January 24
Tuesday, February 28
Tuesday, March 28

WEBINAR RECAP

The War in Ukraine: How It Happened, and What Happens Next?

Professor Mark Johnson joined Tom Eggert for a discussion about the war in Ukraine. Starting with a brief history, Johnson outlined the cultural, historical, and economic antecedents to the Russian invasion of early 2022. Apparently expecting a quick victory (as Russian president Vladimir Putin had accomplished in Crimea), Russian forces instead ran into sustained and spirited Ukrainian resistance and a unified West supporting Ukraine. The future is very unclear, as Putin cannot withdraw without significant loss of face. Nonetheless, Johnson predicted that the war will end in 2023 because Russia cannot afford the continuing cost. ■

If you missed the webinar, you can view it by visiting the UWRA website (UWRAmadison.org) and selecting Resources/Presentations/2022–23 Sep–Dec.

REFLECTIONS

Pedal to the Metal!

BY MARY BARNARD RAY

I enjoy driving; it's in my blood. I come from several generations of women who liked to drive. My grandmother, born in 1879, spent much of her life driving a team of horses but took to driving a car readily as soon as they got one.

An expert horse breeder, my grandfather was able to trade his Morgan mare for their first car, a decision he often grieved over when he saw how the new owner was treating his beautiful mare. "She wasn't made to be harnessed to a plow," he said. However, as my grandmother and their five daughters explained to him, they could all ride in the car, while only one person could ride the horse.



My father nearly ruined his chance to marry my mother when, while driving up a hill on a gravel road, he had the temerity to pass my grandmother while she was driving. That did not sit well with her, even though she was driving a model T with a full load of daughters while my father only had my mother-to-be in his car. My parents were still telling that story in 1979, long after my grandmother had passed away.

My mother, born in 1913, got her driving license as soon as she was old enough. No driving test was required; you simply filled out the form and paid the fee. She learned to drive from her mother, so no one could keep up with her on a gravel road. She was not a speeder, but she drove with confidence and no patience for lollygaggers.

Grandmother drove frequently because part of her job working for the Missouri Unemployment Division involved driving weekly through the county to take claims. The only time that she had any trouble managing behind the wheel was driving home in a snowstorm. Her little red VW Beetle slid into a

shallow ditch. Fortunately, two truck drivers stopped and together lifted the little Beetle and set it gently back on the road. On she drove, as fearless as ever.



Photo credit: Ryan Fletcher / Shutterstock.com

I began learning to drive in that same Beetle, with a four-on-the-floor stick shift. My father took me to the steepest road in the local park and made me stop and start the car midway up the hill without rolling back down the hill. When I could do that, he deemed me nearly ready to drive on my own.

Meanwhile, in drivers' education, I learned to drive a standard with the gear shift on the column, which was what I had to use when learning to parallel park. To complete my education, I also drove my dad's car, which was an automatic with power brakes and steering. That was the Chrysler, which we named Sampson. The red Beetle was, of course, Delilah.

When it came to our three children, it was my turn to teach driving. We had a standard shift car and an automatic at the time, so they learned on both. I taught them always to know where their wheels were, because you don't want to run into a ditch when turning around on a gravel road. They learned how to handle a clutch without making the car chug before I even let them turn on the motor: "in fast, out slow" I would chant as they practiced. Toward the end of their training, they learned to parallel park between traffic cones as I stood where the next car would be. Drivers' education class was not scary for them after that. Our daughter lives in Chicago now, and she can parallel park on either side of a one-way street with ease.

Now I have three granddaughters, the fifth generation, who will soon learn to drive. I trust that their parents will put them through the paces. It's a family tradition. ■

BOOK MARKS

We Don't Know Ourselves

REVIEWED BY TOM BROMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS & CHAIR, PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

We *Don't Know Ourselves* (Head of Zeus, 2021) by the journalist and critic Fintan O'Toole describes the profound transformations in Ireland since the 1950s, during which time a country defined by anti-British nationalism, social conservatism, and Catholicism slowly and painfully became a modern European state.

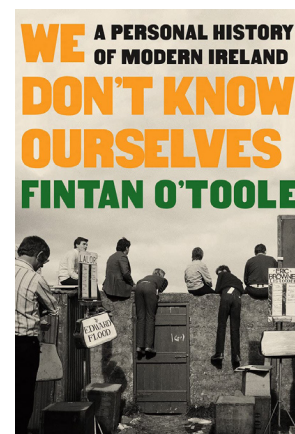
O'Toole's story begins in 1958. Ireland was overwhelmingly rural and impoverished, the least developed country in non-Communist Europe. Its two principal exports were beef and its people, who emigrated in large numbers. Some 40% of all the people born in Ireland in the 1930–40s left the country. Those who remained saw no prospects for a better future. (Ireland's marriage rate in 1958 was one of the lowest in the world.)

Amidst this gloom a few seeds of change were planted. In 1958, Ireland began negotiating for inclusion in the new European Common Market, a lengthy process that would finally succeed in 1972. Even before membership in the EU, other economic reforms were implemented to break open Ireland's almost feudal economy.

O'Toole claims that modernizing Ireland also

required demolishing two conservative pillars of Irish society. One was Fianna Fáil, the political party that had ruled Ireland almost without a break since the 1920s, when the Irish Free State had achieved limited independence from the UK. The other was the Catholic Church, which nationalistically declared itself the spiritual home of western Catholicism. O'Toole's account of how both institutions collapsed from corruption, hypocrisy, and revelations of shocking brutality and sexual abuse in the country's school system, operated by the Christian Brothers, constitutes the core of his narrative. Northern Ireland also plays a prominent role, as the six counties that refused to join the Free State inflamed Irish nationality and radicalized its politics.

The book received two Irish Book Awards (Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year and the *An Post* Book of the Year) in 2021. ■



Please email brief book reviews for Book Marks to column coordinator Laurie Mayberry at laurie.mayberry@wisc.edu.

■ UW-Madison Retirement Association Calendar Dates ■

Continue to monitor the UWRAMadison.org website for further updates.

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

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|--|
| • Monday, January 9, 2023 | 10:00–11:30 A.M. | Webinar <i>Do Not Let the Family Tree Get Top Heavy</i> (V) |
| • Thursday, January 12, 2023 | 1:00–3:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>What Is Estate Planning? And Why Do It?</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, January 17, 2023 | 2:00–3:30 P.M. | Webinar <i>Human-Robot Interaction and Teams</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, January 24, 2023 | 9:00–10:30 A.M. | Breakfast at Elie's Cafe (IP) |
| • Tuesday, February 7, 2023 | 2:00–4:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>Wills versus Trusts</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, February 28, 2023 | 9:00–10:30 A.M. | Breakfast at Elie's Cafe (IP) |
| • Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 1:30–3:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>Electronic Health Records</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, March 7, 2023 | 1:00–3:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>Planning for the Dissolution of Your Estate</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, March 21, 2023 | 1:00–3:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>What's Happened to the Republican Party?</i> (V) |
| • Tuesday, March 23, 2023 | 1:00–3:00 P.M. | Webinar <i>Nuclear Power and Climate Change</i> (V) |

For information on Board and Committee meetings and deadlines for **The Sifter**, visit UWRAMadison.org.

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