



Regent Neighborhood

November 2021 Newsletter | regentneighborhood.org

ASSOCIATION

Please join us for the 2021
RNA Fall Membership Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 7 p.m.
via Zoom

featuring
Karen Boran,
Madison West Principal

In November 2020, Madison Metropolitan School District residents approved a referendum supporting facility investments including a \$70 million investment in Madison West High School. Learn about the plans for this historic investment in our schools.

- Zoom meeting information will be posted on the RNA listserv the day before the meeting

RNA Website Refurbished

The Regent Neighborhood has a newly refurbished website redesigned to be a resource for the neighborhood! Want to find rummage sales in the neighborhood, or list your own? Head to the website! Looking to recommend a contractor or read others' recommendations? Head to the website! Have a new neighbor looking for the trash pick-up times? Send them to the website at regentneighborhood.org. The website's re-tooling was completed by the RNA's communications committee. Feedback is welcome. Send comments, questions, and suggestions to christine.p.stocke@gmail.com ■

THE REGENT NEIGHBORHOOD



The updated RNA website is a more useful resource featuring the many assets of our neighborhood.



Regent Neighborhood ASSOCIATION

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Madison, WI 53705

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Graphic Design by Mary Sarnowski

A Note from the President

In August the RNA Board met to review a proposal from the Campaign for Madison West following their presentation at the June Board meeting. The Board confirmed a \$5,000 gift split equally between Athletics and Performing Arts.

The \$2,500 gift to Performing Arts supports the development of a Performing Arts Music Technology Lab and Recording Studio. The facility is an investment in youth voice and expression supporting jazz, classical music, and Hip Hop. According to the campaign, "Hip Hop Studies is an entry point into the arts for many students and is the most diversely enrolled class within the performing arts program."

The \$2,500 gift to Athletics supports the expansion of the swimming pool replacement funded in the referendum to build additional lanes making the pool more flexible to community needs, with improved accessibility and ability to expand access including MSCR senior and other aquatic programs. This expansion is an investment in Madison West's storied swimming program replacing a dark, dingy, cramped, and unhealthy facility that forced the West High teams to turn swimmers away because of the limitations of the pool.

Recently the Madison West Pool Project received a \$1 million one-to-one matching gift from a multi-generational West Alumni Family to move the pool project forward. Congratulations to West High and its proud, competitive, and community swimming programs.

In November Principal Karen Boran will join our RNA Member meeting to offer an overview of the \$70 million facility investment in West High and to answer your questions. To learn more and to join the RNA in supporting the Campaign for Madison West, visit campaignformadisonwest.com

— Jon



*RNA Board President
Jon Miskowski*

Upcoming RNA Board Meetings

• **November 17, 2021**

• **January 25, 2022**

The RNA Board meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month via Zoom until further notice. Zoom meeting information will be posted on the RNA listserv the day before the meeting. These meetings are open to the general public. Agenda items are solicited through the RNA listserv or can be emailed to jonmiskowski@gmail.com.

A Call To Action

The shooting death of Jovan Freeny this summer stunned many of us. We were reminded that violence happens everywhere, even in the Regent Neighborhood. The RNA Board asked, “What can we do?” and voted to issue a statement calling for community engagement. At two recent Board meetings, we heard from Anthony Cooper, Sr. and Nicholas Loumos of Focused Interruption Coalition, a Madison non-profit implementing solutions to end gun violence; and Madison Police Department Captain Jason Freedman. We continue to focus on this subject.

The Regent Neighborhood Association Board sent the following statement to various elected officials, Madison Police and Campus Police departments, and the Wisconsin State Journal:

The members of the Board of the Regent Neighborhood Association express their great sadness over the death of 17-year-old Jovan Freeny in a drive-by shooting on Lathrop Street, August 14th.

According to news reports, this was Madison’s fifth homicide of the year, the fourth related to gun violence. The night Jovan Freeny died, there were shootings in another part of the city, too, and other confrontations requiring police attention.

What are we to do?

We urge the Mayor, County Executive, City and County officials, Madison and campus police to bolster resources aimed at ending gun violence. We call on the City and County to ensure financial support of Focused Interruption Coalition (FIC), a Madison non-profit working to implement solutions to address gun violence. We encourage City-wide discussions including a town hall on the issue.

Gun violence can happen in any neighborhood. It is everybody’s responsibility to take action to stop it.

Signed,

Members of the Regent Neighborhood Association Board ■

To Every Season—Remembering a Tree

by Christine Stocke, RNA Board Member At Large

When the big beautiful White Oak fell from Forest Hill Cemetery into our backyard at 1:30 a.m. on July 14, 2021, no one was hurt. Nothing but the garden was damaged. (They’re perennials; they’ll grow back.) Our five-year-old stood in the backyard and stared at the fallen friend in disbelief. With tears in his eyes, he asked, “Are there tree funerals?” “Yes,” I said. “There absolutely are.”

The truth is that I scrambled to think through this memorial. We gathered nature poetry, tree coloring books, scraps of fallen bark, and picnic blankets, and then I emailed the neighborhood listserv with crossed fingers. “Will people come?” Harker asked. I didn’t tell him I wasn’t sure.

I cannot fully express the love and gratitude I felt when this tree celebration teemed with life. Neighbors we knew and neighbors we had never met. Kids and adults, groups and individuals. Neighbors who couldn’t make it sent back their well wishes via email. One neighbor even offered his expertise, complete with buckets for collecting acorns, planting containers, and a science experiment. Please thank Jordy Jordahl for this pro tip: Acorns that sink in water are undamaged and best for planting.

Kids seem to know instinctively which moments are important. It’s just not all that often that a



Harker Stocke stands in Forest Hill Cemetery for a “tree-honoring.” The remains of the white oak, which came down unexpectedly, are nearby. Blankets were provided for sitting and nature books for reference.

community listens. If you couldn’t make it, you can still count the rings and rest on the stump. You’ll find it just along the fence line with Virginia Terrace, a bright spot instead of dappled shade. ■

Poet's Corner—To Every Season



Ronnie Hess

Standing Before the Ruins of a White Birch*

A tree that grew beyond its means, three massive wings
on a trunk that couldn't bear the height, cracked in a storm.
And so it all comes down, branch by branch this morning,
the leaves rustling as they are thrown, the woodcutter
high in his red metal cage, footed like a giant insect on the lawn.
I stand and watch the work, the shredder's teeth being fed
by another laborer's bare hands. It is not my house beneath
the birch and yet I claim it as I do the others along my street
that are not surviving—the plum tree with its memories
of purple studded cakes and jams, the thinning
arbor vitae. Summer edges now to its usual close.
A friend says she has celebrated too many birthdays,
long enough, just let them go, no candles, singing.
The winds pick up. Darker, cool, these short evenings.

—Ronnie Hess

*The poem first appeared in *Bramble Literary Magazine* in February 2021.
Hess is the editor of the RNA newsletter.

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Alder Report—District 5

Dear Neighbors,

It's now been more than 18 months since the pandemic began. We have all been undergoing collective trauma as a result. Some of us know and love people who have become ill, experienced long-term symptoms, or died. All of us have had our lives upended in one way or another, whether through changes in our daily work, the schooling of our children, and/or the way we socialize with friends and family. We have contended with masks, limits on gatherings, event cancellations, and the hope of vaccination. And then the "delta blues" came around, and it felt like we were back to, if not square one, at least not to the square we wanted to be at. We are all tired of it. And it comes out in the way we treat one another.

One of the things I have observed in my few months on the Common Council is the power of kindness. When people come to me, other Alders, the Mayor, or City staff with questions, leading with humility, we are all more than happy to assist. That is the fundamental reason each of us is in our positions: we wish to serve our beautiful city. Unfortunately, many people express resentment, entitlement, and anger instead. But we are all human, and these words, whether they are intended to or not, do hurt. That hurt is causing many elected representatives around the country – particularly in local government – to leave their positions. We should all be concerned about this trend, because the people who are leaving are the people who care most about serving their communities.

The staff in our City are some of the most exceptional, caring, and humble people I've had the pleasure to work with. I have been heartened when someone writes or calls with news of how City staff have helped them, because that is their job, and, like all of us, they aim to do it well. When staff are denigrated, even in a space so seemingly insignificant as a listserv, it acts like a cancer on the psyche, and reduces the likelihood that we will be able to retain them as employees. Again, we all lose when caring, committed staff seek employment elsewhere.



Alder Regina Vidaver
Photo: Jeanine Schneider

When my children were in middle school, one of the posters displayed prominently in the halls aptly summarizes my ask of my neighbors as you consider how to interact with our elected leaders and City staff:

THINK

Before you speak

T is it true?

H is it helpful?

I is it inspiring?

N is it necessary?

K is it kind?

I believe we have a better community when we care for one another keeping these seemingly simple guideposts in mind. I recognize how difficult it can be to practice these skills when we are all under the stress of the pandemic in addition to our regular lives, but nothing worth doing is easy. So, please, above all, be kind to one another, and to the people who seek to serve you.

With gratitude,

Regina Vidaver ■



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Dane County Board Report—District 10

I hope this edition of the RNA Newsletter finds you and your family safe and healthy. The Dane County Board continues to meet virtually, something that I hope may end this year.

The fall is when the County starts its annual budgeting process. The State's imposed levy limit, which allows a levy increase equal to the greater of zero percent or the increase in equalized value due to net new construction, constrains the cost to continue for many departmental programs. The County Board held public input sessions on September 13 and 14 to solicit public comment and to listen to department heads present their budgets. We expect to receive the County Executive's budget on or around October 1, after which the Board's committees will go through an amendment process.

Recently, the Board heard a report on the County's needs assessment for a potential Community Justice Center. A community justice center incorporates procedural fairness, restorative justice, and community-centered transformative initiatives. Community justice centers include social services available for community members, regardless of their involvement with the criminal justice system. I'm sure there will be further discussion on whether a Community Justice Center is the right model for Dane County.

In 2016, the Dane County Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance Amendment 2016 OA-32, which created a nonpartisan independent citizen Redistricting Commission. The Commission was appointed by the County Board Chair and County Clerk following an application process in 2020. Over



Supervisor Jeremy Levin

the last several months, Dane County's Redistricting Commission has met to lay the groundwork for the short time frame they will have to recommend new supervisory district maps to the County Board. Following delays of the data delivery from the US Census Bureau, the Commission is scheduled to begin its work on maps in early October.

According to data from the Census Bureau, the population of Dane County increased by approximately 15 per cent during the past decade, making Dane County the fastest growing area in Wisconsin. There have been 73,431 new arrivals to Dane County over the past decade, representing roughly one third of Wisconsin's net 206,732 person population growth. The population of Madison was up to 269,840 in 2020, with a total county population of 561,504.

Finally, after seven terms representing District 10, I have decided not to seek reelection. The timing of new district lines and two young boys that are starting to get busier with their own activities made the timing right. Candidates wishing to run can begin circulating nomination papers in December, with the potential for a primary election in February and general election in April. It has been my honor to serve the district and my community. I viewed my role as more than just protecting parochial concerns, but balancing the many priorities that faced the County, whether human service, public protection, natural resources or economic development. I believe that Dane County is in a stronger position than when I started, and I would be happy to talk to anyone interested in running for the position.

Should you or your family have an interest in specific Dane County projects or initiatives, please contact me at levin.jeremy@co.dane.wi.us or call me at 608.577.9335.

Jeremy Levin ■



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From Representative Shelia Stubbs Wisconsin, Assembly District 77

Thank you, members of the Regent Newsletter Association, for giving me the chance to contribute to this newsletter. It is an honor to continue representing the Regent Neighborhood, as well as the rest of the 77th Assembly District. A lot has happened in the Wisconsin State Capitol, and I hope you find these updates informative.



*Representative
Shelia Stubbs*

On August 6th, 2021, Governor Evers signed Senate Bill 120/Assembly Bill 108 into law. This bill, resulting from months of hard work by the Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities, created a standard use of force definition for law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin. Accountability, transparency and training are key to meaningful reform, and I am proud to say that the addition of this definition will promote better practices among our law enforcement agencies.

On September 23rd, I was proud to introduce LRB-2751 which would mandate universal background checks. This popular and proactive safeguard to our community is supported by 81 per cent of Wisconsin residents, including 78 per cent of gun owners. Incident after incident of gun violence in our community cannot go unaddressed. These shootings are impacting our parks, our gas stations, and our sidewalks. Inaction is unacceptable, and it is our duty to create a community that protects our children.

On the same day, I attended Department of Public Instruction Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly's State of Education address in the State Capitol. During this address, Dr. Underly echoed the need for equal opportunity in our schools, the priority of putting our students first, and the vital role of staff in our

public education system. As a part of Dr. Underly's transition team, I am proud to see our public schools in such capable hands. In addition to attending this address, I had the opportunity to visit Toki Middle School with Dr. Underly and Governor Evers to welcome our wonderful students back to in-person classes. I cannot wait to see the progress we make during Dr. Underly's term, helping students flourish.

On September 28th, the State Assembly passed legislation that would ban anti-racism and anti-sexism teaching in schools (Assembly Bill 411 & Senate Bill 463). These bills put racial blindness above racial justice and are an attempt to ignore racial inequity today. By ignoring these issues, we are doing a disservice to our community, our teachers, and especially our students. As the Chairwoman of the Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus, I will continue to fight against legislation that perpetuates racial inequality and jeopardizes the education of our next generation.

During this same floor session, the State Assembly passed Assembly Joint Resolution 80, which supports the currently gerrymandered legislative maps. Legislative districts impact every major issue our society faces. Your government officials should reflect your values and bring your voice to the forefront. I opposed this resolution because it supports an unjust status quo and ignores the need for districts divided fairly. ■



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Kicking Off a New School Year at Franklin School

Hello, my name is Kristi Kloos and I am the new interim principal of Franklin Elementary School. I have been with the Madison Metropolitan School District for 24 years and 18 as an administrator. I feel very lucky to follow Mrs. Z.* and join the amazing Franklin staff!



*Kristi Kloos, Franklin
Interim Principal*

We had a great kick off to our school year and have welcomed the Falcons back to our nest. We have

worked hard to make sure our students will continue to stay safe, learn, and have fun. Last spring our staff worked with families, students and staff to gather feedback and co-created school-wide values that include Family, Joy, Kindness, Trust.

We look forward to sharing updates with you throughout the year.

Thank you for all you do for this great community. For continuous updates, follow Franklin Elementary on Facebook or Instagram!

**Editor: Sylla Zarov is the new principal at Northside Elementary, in the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District. ■*

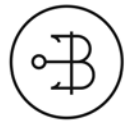


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Greetings from Randall

As night transitions from spooky to cozy, we begin our training for long winter's naps. Sandwiched between flannel sheets, we savor the aroma of furnace-baked dust and await the Sandman's magic.

Our scholars' call to quarters has been rolled back this year. You may know that a shortage of school bus drivers has necessitated the adjustment of school starting times. Our youngsters are summoned to lay themselves down to sleep while the sun still beckons them to play. We've hoped the shorter days would facilitate an early to bed-early to rise ethic. We've seen no sign of that yet. Mask-muffled yawns are the norm.

Last week during morning announcements, I told the students about a startling start to my day that rendered me thankful to end my slumber before the alarm sounded. I recounted with them a nightmare in which I was trying to scream for help but could only generate a strained whisper. Perhaps you've known such nocturnal numbness, akin to dreams of attempting to strike an assailant with a fist that evolves into a marshmallow mallet or trying to run away only to find yourself simulating a slo-mo scene from "Chariots of Fire."

I couldn't resist exploring the pop psychology around the interpretation of these events. I would have bet every coin the tooth fairy ever put under my pillow that the dreams meant I was feeling powerless in my waking life. I came to find another explanation.

Our minds are wired such that, when placed in fight or flight situations while dreaming, our neurons shut down so as to disallow a full-throttle response. Otherwise, we'd take walking and talking in our sleep to a whole new level by running down the streets—screaming and giving what for to anything in our way. For those of you who have watched your sleeping dogs lie, you've witnessed them whimper and seemingly try to kick start their motorcycles. It seems they possess the same safety phenomena we do. The dogcatcher joins us in being thankful.



Randall Principal John Wallace demonstrates the slow-motion departure.

In that morning message, I brought the connection between such dreams and some of our recess situations. When we are confronted by agitators, we want to scream for help, hit them or run away. We might learn from our sleep state that, most often, the better choice is to slowly walk away and speak softly with someone who can help. Asking for help doesn't mean we're powerless. It means we are wise.

Go Raccoons!

John ■




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News from Blessed Sacrament School

We have welcomed the 2021–2022 school year with open arms and embraced the warm weather that has allowed us to continue to enjoy the outdoors on our campus and in the neighborhood. Our enrollment has continued to increase, and we have welcomed many new families into our community. It is going to be a great year and our theme could not be better chosen: “Rooted in Love.” Blessed Sacrament Parish will celebrate its roots as well as its 100th anniversary; Blessed Sacrament School (BSS) will graduate its 97th class this year. Look for more information on the anniversary celebration later this fall!

To kick off the school year, we held our first “BSS Back to School Scramble” golf outing at Yahara Hills Golf Course. Our golfers enjoyed nine holes of golf, some fun activities and ended the evening with dinner outside and a live auction. This was our first event of the year and our first major event since COVID. The support surrounding the event was phenomenal and it will be an annual event moving forward.

Our annual Hunger March (on October 8) has been a wonderful BSS tradition for over 40 years! Two years ago, our students raised almost \$12,000 which was distributed to local, national and international organizations to support the fight against hunger and food insufficiency. Students from all grades walk around the school block on staggered schedules to allow for social distancing. If one of our student Friars comes to you asking for a pledge, please give



Students at Blessed Sacrament participated in the school's annual March for Hunger in 2019. Last year's fundraiser was canceled because of COVID.

generously! The impact of your support is felt right here in Madison, but also in rural Wisconsin, across the United States and in Africa. While the full list of recipients varies from year to year, and the charities are selected by the students, the following groups always receive funds: Madison area food pantries; a rural Wisconsin farming initiative sponsored by the Sinsinawa Dominican sisters which offers land, education, infrastructure, and mentorship to beginning farmers to help them build capacity, develop their businesses and contribute to their local food economy; and the Tanzanian Orphan Project where children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic learn trades in tailoring and carpentry so that they may feed themselves and their families and lessen their vulnerability to human trafficking.

Enrollment is open for 2021–2022 with pre-registration for 2022 through 2025. For more information, please contact the school office at (608) 233-6155 or visit school.blsacrament.org.

September Liller and Elizabeth First,
Business Office ■



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West High School Report

Happy Fall!

It's been a fast and joyful start to the school year. Having all the students return and in person in September was a pleasure. Your children have been amazing partners in keeping their peers and West staff safe by complying with our COVID mitigation strategies. They, too, have a stake in keeping the school open.



Karen Boran, West High School Principal

As you know, West has been involved in a fundraising campaign—you can find out more about the Campaign for Madison West at campaignformadisonwest.com/. We are thrilled to say that we have raised \$1.6M toward the expansion of the new pool. Thank you to all of you who have contributed. Our work is not yet done as we continue to raise funds for a Digital Design Studio for our performing arts program. For those of you who are West alumni, think about Fine Arts Week and what it would mean for our students to have 21st century

digital recording, editing and publishing capabilities within the classroom. We are also raising funds to enclose the courtyard; we have 2,200 students and seating capacity for 180. Given the nature of our building, and the overcrowding of our classrooms, we need to utilize every square foot we have. After the construction upgrades are completed in late fall 2024, the only space left will be the courtyard.

Thank you for your patience as we worked through the opportunities and challenges of hosting homecoming in a pandemic. Our parade was extended this year to include an outdoor "Homecoming Aud," or assembly, and an ice cream social hosted by our partner Summit Credit Union. The dance was held at Mansfield Stadium, and we are deeply appreciative of the parents and community members who came out to help support these efforts.

These are complex times and schools are complex places. We know how lucky we are to have such amazing students and thank you from the bottom of our hearts for choosing to send them to West High School.

Karen ■

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Architecture Update—Randall School and Nakoma School

A few newsletter issues ago, Michael Bridgeman described Alvan Small's domestic architecture in the Regent Neighborhood. In this edition, we're reprinting, with the permission of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, portions of an article Bridgeman wrote recently for the Trust about Small's design of Randall School. Small was known for non-residential designs including schools, commercial buildings, and structures for manufacturing and warehousing around the city, as well as houses. As Bridgeman puts it, "different in scale, requirements, and cost than his domestic jobs, these projects were, for the most part, no less successful than Small's residential work." Bridgeman is host of PBS Wisconsin's Remarkable Homes of Wisconsin, and Madison Trust for Historic Preservation volunteer docent.



Randall School
Photo: Michael Bridgeman

Two Schools

Randall School is Small's most visible and best school design. The school is within the University Heights National Register historic district and the nomination credits it to "Alvan Small of Lew F. Porter Assoc." The first schoolhouse dates to 1906 while Small was in Porter's office and shortly before Porter left to become supervising architect of the new state capitol. Small opened his own office in 1907.

The original façade opened to Spooner Street and is now obscured by a lushly planted "outdoor classroom." The National Register nomination ascribes the school to the Craftsman style, considered among the "progressive styles" of the early 20th century. Small combined Craftsman with Tudor elements resulting in a notable work of civic architecture. The Tudor touches include the low, wide arch at the entrance, drip moldings over the first-floor windows, and half-timbering effects in the gables.

When he was contracted to design an addition to Randall School six years later, Small continued the rhythms, materials and details of his earlier design. Edward Tough did the same as the architect for a further expansion completed in 1925. Today the school serves about 350 students in grades 3 through 5. Over more than 100 years of continuous use Randall School has retained remarkable architectural integrity.

Small's most progressive school design was demolished 50 years ago. In 1917 Small was hired to create a new school to serve a nascent suburb in the Town of Madison. The Madison Realty Co. understood that replacing an old one-room frame

schoolhouse would make the suburb more attractive to young families. Small gave them Nakoma School, a two-room Prairie-style building that cost \$15,000. Its Prairie character was augmented seven years later when Small & Flad planned an addition that included 12 classrooms. Further additions were made in 1928 (Flad & Moulton) and 1937 (Law, Law & Potter).

Describing Nakoma School, Gordon Orr wrote, "... this school, unlike others of the time, blended with the residential neighborhood, while being clearly understood as a school. It psychologically allowed the elementary pupil to feel at home."¹ It was absorbed into the Madison school district in 1931 when the Nakoma area was annexed to the city. The building was razed in 1970 and Thoreau School now stands on the site.

- 1 Orr, Gordon D. "Prairie Architecture in Madison, Wisconsin. Influences, Forms and Form-Givers." (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1971) pp. 81-82. ■



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Regent Neighborhood Walk-About Returns

by Ron Rosner, RNA Board Member At Large

The Regent Neighborhood is largely composed of owner-occupied single-family homes, interspersed with a small number of rental properties, such as duplexes. The exception is the eastern edge of the neighborhood, close to Camp Randall, which is almost exclusively UW student housing. In consequence, living on Hillington Green or Virginia Terrace can be quite different from living on the 1700 block of Van Hise or Chadbourne Avenues, where neighbors at times encounter behavior they find troublesome—largely noise and drinking issues, especially on weekends.

No doubt this situation has existed for some time, but the density of student housing in this area has increased over the years due to zoning changes which allow single family properties in the eastern edge of the neighborhood to be converted to student rentals.

Beginning in the 1990s, as some residents became increasingly troubled by their student neighbors (problems such as parking on lawns and backyards, littering, late-night noise, and loud parties), they initiated an annual walk-about under the auspices of the RNA. At the start of each academic year, neighbors formed into several small groups, often with children in tow, to visit students in an effort to give a face to the neighborhood. Beyond the welcome, walkers provided information on tenant rights and city ordinances. A few years later, the Madison Police Department joined the walk-about offering guidance on personal and property safety.

Participation in the walk-about waned over recent years as homes turned over and some of the more active players left the scene, but certain events including a drive-by shooting in mid-August motivated a revival of the walk, which occurred on the evening of Tuesday, September 14. About ten neighbors, plus District 5 Alder Regina Vidaver, five MPD officers from the Mid-town district, and a UW Assistant Dean for Student Conduct, formed into three groups for the visits.



Lathrop Street, one of several blocks where student apartments were visited by Regent neighbors during the walk-about.

The students who responded to a knock on their door were gracious, thoughtful and willing to talk. Some related problems with landlords, others complained of unruly student-neighbors; all were appreciative of the show of concern on the part of the walkers. Students were sometimes asked why they chose to live here. Apart from proximity to campus, and to Camp Randall, most said they appreciated the quiet, and for many this was not their first year living at the same address. Some exchanged cell phone numbers with the walkers so that neighbors could contact them directly.

No one believes that an annual walk-about will solve problems with student residents. In fact, some neighbors chose not to walk precisely because they felt the walk-about were ineffective in resolving long-standing issues. Yet others joined in despite personal concerns that problem properties would continue to be a challenge. So long as neighbors are willing to walk, the walk-about is likely to continue. ■

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Recipe Corner—Evan Gruzis

Evan Gruzis, co-owner-operator of The Heights, the collaborative restaurant at 11 North Allen Street, has a dessert he's sharing for the upcoming holidays. Beyond being creative in the kitchen, Gruzis is a multidisciplinary artist who has exhibited widely. His work is part of several collections, including New York's Whitney Museum of American Art and the Milwaukee Art Museum. Gruzis, who received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from UW-Madison and his MFA from Hunter College, New York, was born in Milwaukee in 1979, which may explain why his "favorite carrot cake recipe" comes from a cookbook called *Gatherings*, published in 1987 by the Junior League of Milwaukee. Says Gruzis, "It is perfect for this time of year."

Carrot Cake

For the Cake:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 cups sugar
- 1½ cups vegetable oil (Evan says, "Try melted coconut oil!" The editor says, "Try olive oil!")
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups finely-grated carrots (either by hand or in a food processor), about 1 lb.
- 1 cup (canned) crushed pineapple, well-drained
- 1 cup shredded, unsweetened coconut
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 375°F. Butter and lightly flour a 13 x 9-inch pan. In a small bowl, sift 2 cups flour, soda, salt and cinnamon; set aside. In a mixing bowl, beat sugar, oil and eggs until well blended. Slowly add flour mixture. Fold in carrots, pineapple, coconut, walnuts, and vanilla. Pour into pan; bake 1 hour. Cool.

For the Frosting

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 4 cups sifted powdered sugar (Evan says, "I use a bit less.")

Beat cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Gradually add powdered sugar, blending until smooth. Frost cake. ■



Evan Gruzis hard at work on a busy Sunday morning at The Heights.

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What I'm Reading—Larry Bechler*

While I normally read only history, this summer I embraced the very serious as well as light and entertaining—*God's Shadow: Sultan Selim, His Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World* by Alan Mikhail, and *Perestroika in Paris* by Jane Smiley. I highly recommend both.

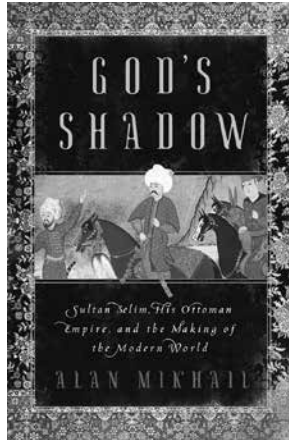
Mikhail writes a compelling narrative, placing the Ottomans firmly within world—and particularly European—history. *God's Shadow* covers the crucial time period of the late 15th and early 16th centuries. While my grounding in the late Middle Ages was substantial, I'd never realized how significantly the Ottomans influenced Western culture at the time.

For example, the Portuguese and the Spanish led the Age of Exploration to Africa, India and the New World, respectively, in part because the Ottomans, after defeating the Byzantine and Italian seafarers who previously dominated sea trade, controlled commerce in the Mediterranean Sea.

Also surprisingly, the Ottoman Empire of the late 15th century was majority Christian. As Selim conquered new places, rather than imposing Ottoman power and Islam on people, he kept local administrators, lowered taxes and made no effort to convert people from their existing religions. This Ottoman ecumenism was in marked contrast to the weaker European powers, who imposed their power and religion over new lands with a much heavier hand.

Overall, the book yielded a treasure trove of new insights about an era I thought I knew well and broke a lot of current stereotypes about Islamic history.

Specifically, when Selim conquered Yemen, his troops discovered a plant that produced a beverage prized by the Yemenis as a stimulant. Within a generation, this plant—coffee—was an Ottoman monopoly and consumed throughout the world. Unfortunately for the Ottomans, the coffee plant grew well nearly everywhere it was planted, so this Middle Eastern monopoly was broken. Even today, however, coffee is the #2 traded world commodity—behind only oil.



Perestroika was a much lighter, thoroughly delightful read. Imagine a prisoner—though well-fed and quite well-exercised—who gets out of her dark cell through the carelessness of her guard. She makes friends in Paris who speak her language, but not that of the Parisians. Eventually, she and her pals become friends with eight-year-old Etienne who lives with his blind, deaf nonagenarian great-grandmother. Oh, and the inmate—the *Perestroika* (or *Paras*) of the piece—is a thoroughbred steeplechase racehorse and her friends are animals.

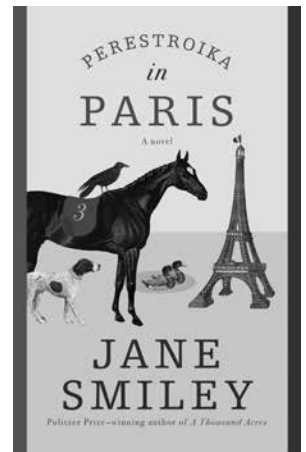
Smiley has great fun with her characters. They all speak to each other in complete sentences, clearly know a great deal about their narrow lives, and yet know very little about anything else.

One might think a book with talking animals is a children's book, but a child would miss the nuances of the characters and the compelling depth of the story. For example, Frida, a purebred stray dog, understands that living people exist, but that the dead “vanish” and leave their “husks” behind. Not a human description, but accurate, indeed.

The driving theme is what will become of Etienne, Paras and the other animals after Madame Eveline, his great-grandmother, dies. Etienne is living outside of the system, and his whereabouts are unknown to the authorities—much like the animals. Smiley foreshadows the coming crisis regularly, and when it comes, a surprising ending ensues tying the storylines together.

Finally, for those who know and love Paris, the city plays a major role as well.

Perestroika in Paris celebrates curiosity, ingenuity and the desire of all creatures for love and freedom. Thus, a rather mismatched pair of books, but great bedtime reads.



* Larry Bechler is a Madison attorney and Regent neighborhood bibliophile. ■

Animal Husbandry—Beekeeping in the Backyard*

by Al Gunther, Professor Emeritus in the UW–Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication

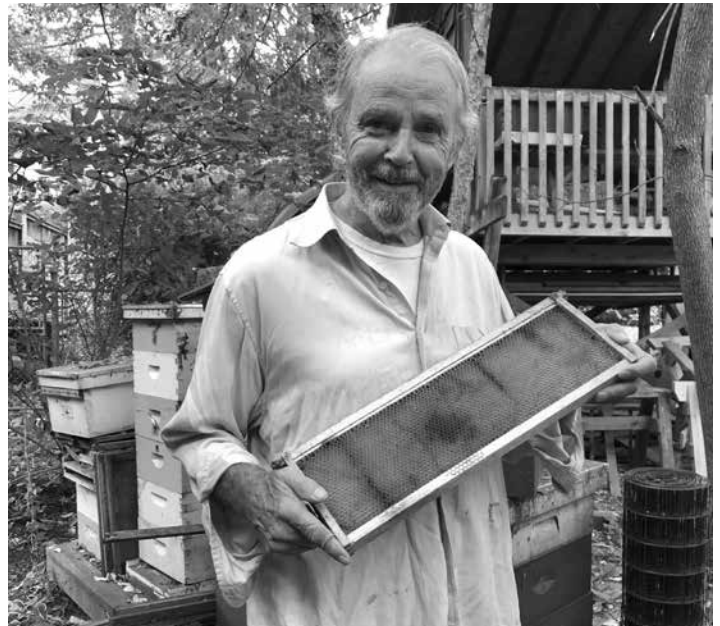
I'm back in the kitchen after inspecting a hive. It's exciting every time. Partly because you're not sure what you'll find—lots of honey? Healthy frames of eggs and brood laid by a vigorous queen? And partly because you don't want to get stung. Getting stung is no fun. I used to wear the classic beekeeper's armor: white coveralls with a pith helmet and veil, and thick canvas gloves. Now I just put on old jeans, a long-sleeve shirt and a mosquito head net like northwoods campers use.

I smoke the bees first; it does seem to calm them. Then open the hive slowly, gently. Pull out frames of honeycomb from the top boxes to see if they have capped honey. By August a box of 10 frames of honey can weigh 30 pounds. I work my way down toward the brood boxes where the queen is laying tiny eggs and her thousands of (all female) worker bees are feeding the eggs and, once the eggs have hatched into C-shaped larvae, capping the cells. A mature bee will emerge about three weeks later.

At the height of summer these worker bees, at first on hive duty and later foraging for nectar and pollen, will only live about six weeks. Thus, the queen has to be constantly replenishing the population. This time of year, a thriving hive can hold more than 50,000 bees.

A good hive can produce a lot of honey. We have commonly harvested 50 pounds from a single hive, leaving more than that for the bees to consume over the winter. Foraging bees can fly two miles or more searching for nectar but most of our Hillington Green Honey likely comes from the many beautiful gardens, flowering shrubs and trees in our neighborhood. (An interesting fact: it is possible, by analyzing the microscopic pollen particles in honey, to establish just what plants the honey has come from.)

About 13 years ago my daughter did a report on honeybees for her Hamilton Middle School 6th-grade class. That report was fascinating, and her ever-thoughtful mom signed us up for a dad-and-kid beekeeping class. The class opened a door into an endlessly beguiling and profoundly beautiful biological world. Who could imagine that the queen can lay 1,500 eggs a day, that the colony can swell to 50,000 bees at the height of summer, that the worker bees can turn a regular egg into another queen just by altering its diet (classic example of epigenetics) and a thousand other amazing facts—more than enough to fill the entire Regent Neighborhood newsletter if only the editor would give me more space.



Al Gunther, with empty beehive frames in his backyard, waiting for a new queen. His bees flew off this fall, a process called “absconding.” There can be several reasons for this, including predators or parasites.

You have probably heard about the bees' incredible communication skills; the waggle-dance the foragers do when they get home that tells other bees in what direction and how far to go to find a lawn full of dandelions (like mine) or that patch of Monarda (aka bee balm) in Martha's yard next door.

Among those thousands of bees in each colony is just one queen. A good queen can live for years, laying eggs feverishly through the spring and summer and then stopping for a winter break. As temperatures drop the bees gather inside the hive into a cluster, some as big as a soccer ball, with the queen right in the center. The bees survive our Madison winters by shivering their wing muscles which generates some heat, just as we shiver after swimming on a cool afternoon, and keep the center of the cluster, and the queen, warmer than 90 degrees. No matter how cold outside.

Is beekeeping difficult? In many ways it's not. Given the right accommodation, the bees know what to do. But as you may have heard, honeybees are struggling through a challenging time; it has become increasingly difficult to see a colony survive the winter. I have lost many over the past dozen years. Numerous possible culprits are proposed—herbicides or pesticides, crop monocultures, lack of forage, various pathogens, climate issues. My personal villain is a tiny mite that infests most hives, feeds on the bees and carries

(continued on page 17)

Animal Husbandry—How Clucky We Are!

Nearly 200 households raise chickens within the city, according to the City of Madison Treasurer's Office. Some of those households are in the Regent Neighborhood whose neighbors have raised, are raising or planning to raise hens—among them, Rhode Island Reds, Barred Rocks, New Jersey Whites, Ameraucanas, Faverolles, Orpingtons, Australorps, Brahmas and Wyandottes. Here's one neighbor's account.

A Scratch from the Pen of Juliet Page—

My son, Nash Hollander, a third-grade student at Randall School, has wanted chickens for quite some time. I grew up with backyard chickens in Santa Cruz, CA, and have been missing them myself, so building a climate-appropriate coop is a project we're taking on this coming spring together.

Nash, why do you want chickens? "They are cute. They can give your parents and your brother eggs. [But not me, I don't like eggs.] Again, they are very cute. They are just nice to have around. If you like to see them just once a day, it'll make your whole day better. They are just cute.

What else? "They are related to dinosaurs and lizards, and I like the idea of diversity in my chickens, not all the same exact breed."

Can you cuddle a chicken? "If it's not like in your face where it could peck your eyes out, you could cuddle a chicken."

Will you learn to bake with their eggs? "If we get that many eggs, I will make cakes and custards. Cookies: I already know how to do that."

Final thoughts? "I think maybe six chickens is a more reasonable number than four, but I'm going to start out by following the rules.* Don't let them peck your eyes out but they're very cute!"

** City of Madison regulations state, "keeping up to four chickens is allowed as an accessory use on lots with up to four dwelling units." Six chickens are*



Biscuit, a Salmon Faverolle, at nine weeks old.

"My children say they love raising backyard chickens because they are so funny to watch," says Katherin Rozas.

allowed as an accessory use to a museum, school or day care center. Roosters are prohibited. City specifications regarding licensing (fee, \$10 a year), as well as other rules and regulations, are here: cityofmadison.com/dpced/bi/obtaining-a-city-of-madison-chicken-license/65/ ■

Beekkeeping *(continued from page 16)*

harmful viruses. I don't think science has come to a consensus, but my guess is that it's a combination of adverse factors. What can we do? Grow flowers and plants friendly to pollinators, support research on colony survival. Or maybe start your own backyard beehive. I'm always available for advice, as is the Dane County Beekeepers Association—madbees.org.

** Editor: According to the City of Madison Treasurer's Office, 64 households have filed applications to license raising bees in the city (fee, \$10 per year). For rules and regulations, see cityofmadison.com/dpced/bi/obtaining-a-city-of-madison-beekeeping-license/108/ ■*



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Transitioning an Old House to All Electric

by Susan Millar, Co-lead, 350 Madison's Community Climate Solutions Team; and Senior Scientist Emeritus, UW-Madison

Are you wondering how to convert an older single-family home with a forced hot-air heating system, a gas water heater, and a gas stovetop from gas & electric to electric only? I have done that with a 90-year-old house on the near west side of Madison. Here's how I did it.

Context for Transitioning to All-Electric

- “Natural” gas is fossil gas. It must and will be phased out over time as our society gets more serious about reducing climate-warming emissions. In some states, it already is illegal for new buildings to use fossil gas.
- Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are the energy-efficient electric-powered alternative to gas heating systems. ASHPs both heat and cool your house (no separate AC device needed). They have a high coefficient of performance, so while they use electricity, the amount is much less than an electric space heater or traditional AC unit. See, for example, PBS’ “This Old House” video—youtube.com/watch?v=-vU9x3dFMrU&t=4s
- Air source water heaters (also called “hybrid” water heaters) work the same way as ASHPs except they exchange air with your basement instead of the air outside. They are far more efficient than traditional electric water heaters.
- Our state’s Focus on Energy program provides rebates for air source air and water handling systems. The installers handle this process.
- MG&E’s monthly service charge is \$22. If you stop your gas service and start it again, they will bill you for monthly service charges for up to 12 months prior to the time you start again. You cannot stop your gas service except for, say, the month of January without paying for up to 12 months of service.
- If you have not yet, or cannot, install solar panels on your roof, you can arrange with MG&E to receive their 100% renewable (wind- and solar-generated) electricity. This is a good way to help them transition from coal and gas. Go to their website for information. mge.com
- If you have an EV and are willing to charge it, plus run your dishwasher during MG&E’s low-rate period (9 p.m. to 10 a.m. on weekdays; weekends and holidays), you can substantially reduce your electricity bill. Ask MG&E to add you to their Time of Use program.
- Yes, you must lay out money ahead of time to transition from gas. Many people cannot do this, but the financial payoff comes over time. For example, while paying both gas and electric service charges, and charging my EV at home, my MG&E bill this summer was between \$20–30/month, largely due to having rooftop solar and Time of Use. While my utility bills will be higher this winter, they will be reduced by the \$22 monthly gas service charge and will be substantially less than prior winters. I am emitting essentially no carbon dioxide to run my home and car.



Susan Millar waves from the door of her all-electric house.

Steps for Transitioning to All Electric

1. Get an energy efficiency analysis. If you switch from a furnace powered by an unlimited amount of gas to an ASHP, it's important that your house holds its temperature year-round as effectively as possible.
2. Improve your insulation. If your energy efficiency analysis indicates that your house needs insulation, arrange to get it. I felt the difference immediately.
3. Replace your gas stovetop.

Electric House *(continued from page 18)*

(New research indicates respiratory health problems caused by gas stovetops.) I purchased two Cuisinart Double Induction Cooktops, which I placed over the gas burner area on my stove and just plugged in.

4. While doing steps 1 & 2, get contracts with a like-minded HVAC and plumbing company. I tried one local company that required I retain my gas furnace for back-up in the winter. I turned them down. Same response from three other local companies before I expanded my search to a company near Milwaukee. Given the energy efficiency and size of my house, they proposed to replace my gas furnace and AC units with a Mitsubishi P system that will efficiently heat my house to -14°F, and then shift to an electric element (low efficiency) back-up system for super cold snaps.

5. Meanwhile, after checking different local plumbers, most of whom do not install hybrid water heaters, I found a small local plumbing company that proposed to install one of these at a decent price.

6. Both the HVAC and plumbing companies I used had installation delays. These problems were either due to COVID shipping issues or because the manufacturers are sending their stock to states ahead of us in installing these systems. Demand pushes the market.

7. The ASHP and hybrid water systems are now installed, and MG&E has turned off my gas service at my request. The water heater has easy controls and works superbly.

For more information, feel free to contact me at sbmillar@gmail.com ■

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Solar Installation at First Congregational Church

from Julie Sheahan, Communications Coordinator

First Congregational United Church of Christ (FCUCC) is excited to share some news. This fall, construction will begin on the installation of solar panels. A large solar array will be installed on the roof that is 61 kW in size and will provide about 65 per cent of the electricity for all church activities. The project, related to FCUCC's mission, grew from congregational discussions around environmental justice and caring for creation.

The conversations about environmental justice re-energized the congregation's dedication to environmental and climate change issues by focusing on efforts that would also promote justice. This shift



recognized that environmental harm and benefits from many environmental programs are not distributed equitably. Climate change is no exception; people of color and those in poverty already bear the heaviest burdens of climate change, which will only increase if action is not taken.

When members considered the significant utility bill savings the project would create each year (about \$8,000–10,000) they raised the necessary funds to install the panels. In addition to reducing the church's carbon footprint significantly, the congregation will be donating the money saved in utility costs to social justice causes throughout Madison. ■

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Local Scouts Lend Helping Hands in the Neighborhood

by Phil Bower, Committee Chair, Pack 16, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 16

Scouts from Troop 16 and Cub Scout Pack 16, both based at Blessed Sacrament Parish, recently completed several service projects in the neighborhood.

In June, Troop 16 collected U.S. flags for storage until 2022 from the graves of veterans in Forest Hill Cemetery. The flags are placed each year for Memorial Day. In just two hours, the scouts walked almost the entire cemetery and gathered the flags.

Troop 16 also spent an afternoon assembling rain barrels, in partnership with Friends of Lake Wingra. Community members were able to order the barrels and diverter kits from the Friends. Troop 16 received a shipment of barrels from Dane County, assembled them with spigots and other diverter pieces, and then provided times for the barrels to be picked up.

Earlier this year, the Troop and Pack participated in the national Scouting for Food service project to collect food for the Catholic Multicultural Center Food Pantry. The scouts placed flyers on the doors of homes in the Hillington Green area with a list of items needed by the pantry and with instructions on how to place items on porches the following week. Thanks to the generosity of the neighborhood, the scouts collected two pallets worth of food and sundries, as well as monetary donations, for the pantry. The pantry was grateful for the support.



Boy Scout Troop 16 spent a summer afternoon assembling rain barrels, in partnership with Friends of Lake Wingra.

Photo: Phil Bower

For more information about the Troop or Pack, email blessedsacramentscouting@gmail.com. Troop 16 is for boys ages 11 to 18. The Troop meets weekly and camps monthly. Pack 16 is for boys and girls in 5K through 5th grade. The Pack enjoys hikes, family camping, pinewood derby, an annual pancake breakfast, and crafts. ■



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Above: Earrings by Nettles Jewelry, bowl by Delores Fortuna, card by Burdock & Bramble, mug by Colleen Deiss

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New Regent Neighborhood Association Scholarships Awarded

Several years ago, The Regent Neighborhood Association created a scholarship fund with the purpose of acknowledging and celebrating the diversity, energy, and enthusiasm that West High School students add to our neighborhood. Needs-based awards are given to two graduating seniors who have demonstrated engagement in multicultural activities both in school and in the greater Madison community while modeling a commitment to academic pursuits.

This year's \$2,500 scholarships go to Yara Al-Rayyan and Nadia Valdez.

Yara Al-Rayyan writes, "At West I was involved in the principal advisory group ONE West and was a leader in the Muslim Youth Association of Dane County. This fall I will be attending UW-Madison majoring in Biochemistry with a certificate in Global Health on the pre-med track as I pursue a career in medicine. Many thanks."

Nadia Valdez writes, "Throughout my four years at West I was involved in Female Empowerment Group, ONE West, a student and teacher advising group; and Black Student Union, a multicultural



Yara Al-Rayyan



Nadia Valdez

organization dedicated to encouraging diversity. My plan after high school is to continue my education at UW-Madison and pursue a degree in nursing, all while being a part time CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant)!"

To contribute to the fund, mail your scholarship gift to Regent Neighborhood Association, PO Box 5655, Madison, WI 53705. Thanks! ■

A Time for Sorrow at West High

Simon Bilessi, a West High School senior, died in a car accident in September along with two Middleton High School seniors, Jason Kratochwill and Jack Miller. Bilessi was on the boys soccer team at West. Madison schools spokesperson Tim LeMonds, quoted in the Wisconsin State Journal, called him "an excellent student, a tremendous soccer player, and a good friend to all who had the opportunity to meet him." There is a GoFundMe campaign [atgofundme.com/f/bilessi-kratochwill-miller](https://www.gofundme.com/f/bilessi-kratochwill-miller) ■



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