Luncheon Committee Report for 2012-13

by Gail L. Holmes, Chair

Our first UW-Madison Retirement Association luncheon was on Wednesday, October 24, 2012. A pianist and four actors who are students from the Department of Theater and Drama presented songs and excerpts from the musical “The Cradle Will Rock.” Student speaker Scott Harmon’s paper provided an excellent introduction to the history and background of the 1937 musical by Marc Blitzstein, originally directed by Orson Welles and produced by John Houseman, about corruption and corporate greed in Steeltown, USA. Our luncheon speaker was Charlie Carlson, a collective bargaining specialist advising four chancellors from 1977-89, including serving as chief negotiator for the University during the 1978 TAA strike. The theme of “Does Collective Bargaining Matter Anymore” spoke to today’s changed political and personnel environment. He explained the importance of relationships and the long-term process that is involved prior to reaching the bargaining table. Queen Anne’s Catering served the meal at Covenant Presbyterian Church. There were 96 at the morning program and 117 at the luncheon.

On Friday, November 30, 2012, we were privileged to hear the gifted Perlman Trio (plus two) directed by Professor of Music Parry Karp. The students, sponsored by Mrs. Kato Perlman, bring outstanding artistry and chamber music participation. The talents of a pianist, two violinists, a violoncellist, and a violist performed movements from Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Brahms that fed our hearts and souls. Emeritus Professor of History and Law Stanley Kutler was our luncheon speaker. The author of Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes spoke about former President Richard Nixon, the most influential political author of the past 60 years. He was influential with consequences for good and for ill with many examples provided by Stan. We met at the West Side Club where Queen Anne’s provides the catering. The morning program had 119 registered, and 134 were registered for lunch.

The Tuesday, February 12, 2013, luncheon was held in a new venue, The Coliseum Bar and Banquet. Bill and Bobbie Malone, on guitar and mandolin respectively, played right into the Valentine’s theme of hearts and love with a wide variety of country music, including unrequited love, cheating love, familial love, broken love, and, of course, happy or successful love. Toes were tapping and bodies swaying and smiles were on everyone’s faces as we listened and sang along to the tunes. Meg Gaines, a Clinical Professor and Associate Dean at the Law School, spoke on “Precious Mettle—Touchstones for Effective Health Care Advocacy.” Her Top Ten points lent an urgency to have important conversations and make decisions now about end-of-life topics. Her calm manner of delivery and sense of humor provided intense listening to these common sense suggestions. Favors of Dove chocolate hearts and large conversation candy hearts were set on doilies at each place setting for tasty sweet treats. Eighty-two registered for the morning program and 87 for lunch served by the Coliseum.
We gathered at the UW Arboretum for environmentally themed programs on Tuesday, May 21, 2013. In the morning, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi shared a wealth of knowledge about the County’s lakes, new manure digester, landfill operations, and responses to effects of climate change. Questions were welcomed throughout his presentation, and the audience had some tough, knowledgeable ones! After the Association’s Annual Meeting, lunch was catered by Gaylord’s Catering Service. Dr. Leigh Richardson, a volunteer from the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, was our luncheon speaker. She shared the timeline of the life of Aldo Leopold, the father of wildlife ecology, and his UW-Madison roots as the Arboretum’s first research director. She also stressed scientific studies that show the need for outdoor activity for children and adults to be healthy and fit. Parents were encouraged to be aware of time devoted to relationships with each other, with nature, and with technology. Folks were invited to visit the Aldo Leopold Nature Center just off Monona Drive and to participate in the new interactive climate science exhibit. Registration for the morning program was 94, with 96 for lunch.

At each luncheon, the Board of Directors encouraged the donation of cash and checks to help with our community’s continuing need to procure food at pantries. The donations were distributed to Middleton Outreach Ministry, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, and Bethel Lutheran Church food pantries.

Darrell Barth, Buff Brennan, Gail Holmes (chair), Art Hove, Debbie Lauder, Joel Skornicka, and Barb Wiley form the dedicated Luncheon Committee whose goal is to provide relevant, educational, and entertaining programs for the UW-Madison Retirement Association’s members and guests.