



Who's New in Madison

February 12, 2026



Find complete information and details at whosnew.org

President's Message



Happy Galentine's Day, members! This is a wonderful occasion to celebrate the friendships we share with one another.

The slate of WNIM officers for the upcoming 2026–2027 year will be announced at the March luncheon and posted on the website, and in the newsletter, at that time. Voting will commence following the announcement and will close at the April luncheon—stay tuned!

If you have ideas for luncheon venues or program topics, please contact the [Luncheon Committee](#) or the [Program Committee](#) via email. Your recommendations are always welcome.

As always, please consider volunteering for a committee in the upcoming year. Serving is a rewarding way to support WNIM while making new friends along the way.

Warm regards, **ELLEN**

Luncheons and Programs

25 Years of the Wisconsin Book Festival: Celebrating Literacy & Sparking Conversation



Date: Thursday, March 12

Location: Top of the Park, Park Hotel, 22 S. Carroll Street, Madison

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm Cocktails & Visiting; 12:00 pm Luncheon Seating

Deadline to register: February 26 or when capacity is reached. [Click here to register](#)

There will be valet parking available at the hotel for \$8:00, or at nearby parking garages. Please consider carpooling to this Luncheon.

Once registration is closed, no credit will be issued. We will try to find another member to purchase your lunch, if there is a waitlist.



Jane Rotonda, the Wisconsin Book Festival Director, is our March Luncheon speaker. She will be talking about the landmark 25th Anniversary Year of the [Wisconsin Book Festival](#), which will be held October 15-18, 2026. The festival is a mix of in-person and virtual events that are free and open to the public. She will also talk about this year's line-up, how books are selected and give tips on selecting books for personal reading and book clubs.

Not Just Wine and Cheese



Hostess: Ann-Marie Preece

Location: 4599 Sunburst Drive, DeForest

Time: 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

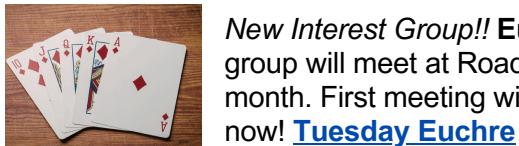
Date: Friday, February 20 [Click here to register](#)

This is a great way to meet new people. Partners and guests are also welcome! If you would like a "wine buddy" to assist you with introductions, contact njwc@whosnew.org

Interest Groups

If you take photos at an Interest Group gathering, please share them by emailing them to Allnews@whosnew.org. We love showcasing our fun and active groups!

We currently have **68 Interest Groups**, and **48 are accepting new members** — so jump in and join a group (or two)! Check them out here [Interest Group Home Page](#)



New Interest Group!! **Euchre – Tuesday Euchre & Ladies Lunch!** The group will meet at Roadside Grill in Windsor on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. First meeting will be Tuesday, March 10. Click the link to sign up now! [Tuesday Euchre](#)

Trivia Night: Fun While Fundraising!

Squash winter doldrums while raising money for Luke's Closet at the first **WNIM Trivia Night**, 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm Feb. 25 at Me & Julio, Fitchburg. Register as an individual or as a team. Spouses/partners/nonmember friends are welcome to join the fun; event capacity is 74. More information and registration [here](#).

Mah Jongg Tournament

Registration is open for this fun event. Open to members and non-members, all skill levels welcome! **The 2026 National Mah Jongg League card will be used.** Net proceeds benefit Luke's Closet.

Date: April 29 **Cost:** \$35 per player **Time:** Check-in 11:30 am Play 12:45 pm – 4:30 pm

Location: East Side Club, 3735 Monona Drive, Madison

[Click here for more information & to register](#)

Deadline Feb 15 to Nominate a Service Partner for 2026-2027

Time is running short to nominate a local nonprofit partner for the WNIM 2026-2027 year. Please review the [Service Partner Nonprofit Selection Criteria](#) before submitting your nomination – deadline Feb 15. Email complete information for nominees to service@whosnew.org.

Volunteer at Luke's Closet**SORTING**

Please join us in the Luke's Closet sorting room to help sort Luke's Closet clothing donations. Training on site. These events are dedicated to WNIM members. [Click Here to Sign Up](#)

SHOP & EAT: SATURDAY - APRIL 11, 2026

Please join us for the spring Shop and Eat event. Breakfast and lunch will be available for the children and their families. The event provides an opportunity for families to shop for new shoes & spring clothes. [Click Here to Volunteer](#)

FOOD DONATIONS

Can't make it on April 11? You can help support the event by providing breakfast and/or a pizza for lunch. [Click Here for details about food and beverage items needed for the day.](#)

Service Partner**Items of Interest**

The Welcome Committee will be hosting a **New Member Happy Hour** on **Wednesday, March 11** from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm. The location is the community room at the Waunakee Public Library, 201 N. Madison St. Come meet the President, Vice President and a Service Committee member. They will share the latest information about WNIM. Meet other newbies while having some light refreshments. Invitations will be sent to new members.

Get to Know a Member - Who's New ~Isms

Each month, one or two Who's New members will be featured by filling out a questionnaire known as Who's New ~Isms. A member chooses 10+ questions from 26 available questions to answer. Have fun learning more about your peers! Created by Diane Wiersema.

Introducing: Anne Braiser ~Isms

1. **Member of WN**: Almost 8 years. I moved to Madison at the end of March 2018, and I joined WN on April 4, 2018. It was a lifesaver!

2. **Interest Groups**: Currently in Wednesday Hikers/Snowshoers, One & Done East and West, Biking, Weekend Biking, Books & Bites 1, Lunch Adventures, Cross Country Skiing, Gentle Yoga in the Park, Diversity in Madison, Make New Friends Morning Coffee, Who Wants to Go, & Summer Kayaking

3. **Favorite part of WN**: The connections made with vibrant, accomplished, and interesting women who are open to new friendships.

4. **WN leadership/volunteer position(s) past and/or present**: Past President 2020-21 through Covid year #1 & Vice President 2019-20; Currently lead two IGS – Wednesday Hikers/Snowshoers and Lunch Adventures

5. **Family**: Husband Allan, together for 48 years; daughter Karen, an architect in Texas; and son, Rob, who died during his freshman year at the University of Washington. This is written factually, but Rob's death altered all of our lives forever and in ways not necessarily expected.

6. **Career or work experience**: I left my dream job as Executive Director of the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund in Galveston, Texas when we moved to WI. It is a family foundation that gives broadly to the Galveston community. I currently work part-time at the Middleton Public Library 12-20 hours/week. I have a master's in library science and previously worked in academic, medical, & other libraries.

7. **Favorite beverages**: Water, wine, and I've learned to love a good Old-Fashioned!

8. **Favorite foods**: I love cooking and food. I'm an adventurous eater and will try anything once. Love Tex-Mex, Indian, Thai, Creole, and everything spicy! Not a huge fan of fried food. In my daily life, I try to eat pretty clean and non-processed food.

9. **Hobbies/collections**: I have four main hobbies - 1) I read at least one book/week; 2) Stained glass, now a winter activity here since the summers are too nice to be in my workshop; 3) Vegetable gardening; and 4) I am a triathlete that I train for year-round and compete around the world.

10. **Favorite sports**: I swam for Purdue in college. Now, I swim several times a week in Lake Mendota in the summer and indoors the rest of the year. I like watching almost any female sport, and love seeing strong women. We watch baseball, softball, tennis, track and field, swimming, volleyball, and football.

11. **Favorite places to travel**: I love to travel! Through triathlons, I've traveled to places for world competitions such as Beijing; Edmonton; Rotterdam; Lausanne, Switzerland; Malaga & Pontevedra, Spain and then great trips after the competitions. Poland and Croatia are two of my favorite countries. I have Greece, Mongolia, and Iceland on my 2026 schedule. I have also been to all 50 states.

12. **Special childhood memories**: I was raised on a hog farm near a town of 600 people in Northeastern Indiana. I have so many memories of a blissful childhood and being loved, safe, and unencumbered with responsibilities!

13. **Something you might not know about me but now do**: I spend about 10-12 hours/week swimming, biking, running, lifting weights, & doing yoga. Yes, I do it to be able to compete, but also to eat as much as I want. I have had two top ten finishes at World competitions, 6th place in Sprint Triathlon in Beijing & 2nd place in Standard Aquabike in Torremolinos, Spain.

14. **Favorite quotes/words of wisdom/advice**: Some things in life are out of your control; *You can make it a party or a tragedy* ~ Nora Roberts. And to my children – Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.



Member Photo Gallery



Wednesday Hiking

January Luncheon



Get to Know a Member - Who's New ~lsms

Introducing: Mary Bergin ~lsms

1. **Member of WN**: Joined in 2017
2. **Interest Groups**: Cookbook, Lunch Adventures, Morning Coffee, and One & Done Walkers
3. **Favorite part of WN**: Feeling a sense of sisterhood with all kinds of interesting women, which is especially valuable at this stage of life.
4. **WN leadership/volunteer position(s)**: Service Committee member; Formerly on the Programs Committee.
5. **Family**: My partner Dick Franken & I have been together since 1996. We share our household with Siena & Doolin, 11-year-old felines who are siblings, but don't like each other much.
6. **Career or work experience**: I've always made a living with words, working as an editor or reporter at daily newspapers until 2002. I then shifted to freelance travel/food writing & produced six books & thousands of articles. It's been a busy, lean, satisfying career.
7. **Hobbies/collections**: Magnets from around the world cover our refrigerator. I have smaller assortments of masks and pottery.
8. **Favorite local places**: Breakfast at The Parkway, little reunions at Union Terrace during summer, and year-round at The Laurel.
9. **Favorite movie genre**: Clever, intelligent comedies and dramas; Movies based on real-life people/events
10. **Favorite sports and/or teams**: Badger volleyball, men's basketball, and – of course – Packer football.
11. **Favorite place(s) to travel**: No easy answer; much depends on time of year, who I'm with, and whether I'm doing research for my writing.
12. **A perfect day to me**: A mix of shopping at thrift stores/estate sales, good food/wine, and cozy confines with longtime friends.
13. **Something you might not know about me but now do**: I have never owned a pair of high heels. I was a track team hurdler during high school and one year of college.
14. **Favorite quotes or words of wisdom/advice**: Less is more. What goes around, comes around.



Member Photo Gallery



Board Games



Snowshoeing