



The Wisdom Institute

UMBC's Association for Retirees

FALL 2025

Vol. 7 Issue 2



UMBC



Provost Manfred H. M. van Dulmen and Rebecca Alban Hoffberger, founder and primary curator of the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) speak together at the WI 2025 Annual Event.

Photo credit: Michael Mower

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Upcoming Events

Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks

With Kathy O'Dell

Tuesday, September 16
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Lecture by

Dr. Kevin Omland
Charlestown campus

Friday, October 3
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Choral Homecoming Linehan Concert Hall PAHB

Sunday, October 5
7:30 p.m.

Shakespeare in Harlem Proscenium Theater, PAHB

Saturday, November 1
7:30 p.m.

5th Annual Holiday Happy Hour UMBC Research Park Drive

Tuesday, December 2
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

More on the back page!

A Message from the Director

By Diane Lee

Hello! Slides shared by Rebecca Hoffberger at last year's Signature Event featured bold colors and sculptures of every size. They depicted art on display at the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) where Rebecca was founder and primary curator. Exhibitions there are made of repurposed "discarded waste" or "junk" and are created by people with no formal training. The photos delighted our senses while the stories embedded in slides disrupted our complacency-- art at the AVAM carries a social justice theme. Yes, art at AVAM is intriguing and purposeful. The AVAM is a museum unlike any other. Go to the Wisdom Institute's website (wisdom@umbc.edu) and enjoy Ms. Hoffberger's talk again or for the first time. Then gather some friends and visit. It's right here in Baltimore!

Researchers tell us retirees experience a better world when they are engaged. Beth Pennington, whom you may remember as the heart and soul of our earliest undergraduate research efforts, wrote to me recently and revisited the campus acronym. We used to tell new students and their parents that UMBC stood for "You made the best choice!" Beth

offers a new meaning, especially for retirees. She maintains UMBC now stands for "You must be connected!" So, as you open the pages of this newsletter, make sure to have your calendar handy. There is a rich and exciting menu of activities that you will want to attend!

This year has been designated as Arts+UMBC, a year to celebrate the arts at UMBC. Offerings range from choral productions, a dance showcase, an adaptation of Shakespeare in Harlem, and a production of the Wizard of Oz. You can enjoy listening to UMBC's Camerata once again as well as the Gospel Choir and Jubilee Singers. There are also Happy Hours and Microtalks, a Writing Salon and a lecture on the Fallacy of Human Superiority. Consider, too, helping to collect donations for Retriever Essentials, volunteering with the McNair Scholars Program, and serving as a tutor in iAdelante Latina. And don't miss our Ninth Annual Signature Event on May 15th at the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena on campus. Our own Kizzmekia Corbett (now Corbett-Helaire) is the luncheon speaker this year!

(Message cont'd on page 2)

(Message cont'd from page 1)

Dr. Corbett-Helaire, or Kizzie as we knew her best, earned her BS from UMBC where she was a Meyerhoff Scholar and a National Institutes of Health Undergraduate Scholar. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and went



Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett-Helaire.

Photo credit: Dr. Corbett-Helaire

on to earn her doctorate in microbiology and immunology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she received multiple honors. Not surprisingly, Dr. Corbett-Helaire is also a passionate mentor and advocate for STEM education and vaccine awareness among underserved communities.

Dr. Corbett-Helaire is currently a Radcliffe Assistant Professor at Harvard Radcliffe Institute and the Melvin J. and Geraldine L. Glimcher Assistant Professor of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Before that, she played a key role as a research fellow and then scientific lead at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Vaccine Research Center in designing the mRNA-1273 based vaccine platform that served as the foundation for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Join us in welcoming Kizzie back to campus.

Regards, Diane

Message from the Vice President for Research and Creative Achievement, Karl V. Steiner

Impact of Executive Orders on UMBC's Research & Creative Achievement Community

Over the past six months, I have been asked frequently: how is UMBC – and in particular our Research & Creative Achievement community – coping with and responding to the various executive orders issued by the federal administration that affect higher education. Following the national press coverage, one might reach the conclusion that these federal actions just impact Harvard and a select few other major universities, and that the principal funding cuts in research are to the budget of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The reality is that federal actions are having dramatic effects on institutions large and small, private and public, and across all states in the union. In terms of research funding, we expect significant budget reductions not only at NIH, but across most of the federal agencies supporting research initiatives at academic institutions, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA).

The Presidential Budget Request (PBR) for FY2026 calls for historic levels of cuts to federal spending for research across the board. It proposes budget reductions of 7% to DOE, 15% to the Department of Education, 22% to USDA, 40% to NIH, 56% to NSF, and 47% to NASA's science missions, with significant impact projected for Maryland's NASA Goddard. Congress continues debating potential adjustments in response to the PBR.



Vice President for Research and Creative Achievement, Karl V. Steiner.

Photo credit: Karl Steiner

At UMBC we would not be immune from the effects of those cuts. We are working on all fronts to find ways to support the individuals and programs that constitute UMBC's robust research enterprise. We are implementing high-impact experiences and opportunities for affected students and are actively pursuing alternate funding options for students with demonstrated financial need. The impacts of executive actions go far beyond research support, and UMBC has established a dedicated website to track developments and provide resources to our campus community (<https://umbc.edu/ogrca/federal-changes/>).

Over the past decade, we have created a strong research culture across the campus community. We are proud of UMBC's recognition as a Research 1 institution by the 2022 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. That Carnegie R1 status was reconfirmed in 2025, placing UMBC among 187 R1 institutions in the Nation – one of only four in Maryland; among the top 5% of research universities in the Nation.

We have not rested on our R1 recognition; to the contrary – we gained energy and created a remarkable momentum in response. We have grown our research portfolio, as reported to the NSF Higher Education Research & Development (HERD) survey, from \$84M in FY 2021 to \$151M in FY 2024 – an increase of 79% over just three years.

In early 2024, UMBC researchers observed the Cape Kennedy launch of their scientific instrument, HARP2, into orbit as part of the NASA-led PACE mission. Our faculty are developing technologies to feed the world through sustainable aquaculture; we are creating solutions to meet tomorrow's energy demands by developing a nuclear fusion reactor; and we are globally recognized leaders in cybersecurity. Work by our faculty is featured at major exhibitions, such as at the Smithsonian, and high-impact publications by our faculty make visible the economic, cultural, political, and ecological entanglements between humans and their environment. We build on strong community research partnerships within the City of Baltimore and beyond; we have grown research partnerships with the Army Research Lab; and we provide health informatics expertise to advance the health and well-being of Maryland's citizens.

The recent federal actions raise significant concerns about our ability to sustain and advance such progress and, in turn, about the impact on the communities we serve. Since February, the federal government has issued a growing number of early grant terminations based on changes in agency priorities. To date UMBC has received about 30 terminations impacting active federal awards, with a net loss of about \$22M. This reflects an annual impact of about \$8M to \$10M or about 8% of our current annual federal research portfolio for the next couple of years - grants and contracts that had already been awarded

to UMBC researchers.

So – what are we doing in response? We have been working closely with our state and federal representatives to keep them apprised of the current and potential future impact of these massive changes. We are actively working with our faculty leaders to explore alternate options to secure funding to achieve their research goals. Like most other academic institutions, we are exploring a closer relationship with the private sector, and we are expanding our efforts to approach foundations and other sources for support. We do understand that the competition will be significant as each institution is redirecting their focus in similar directions.

We benefit from strong professional networks, and we are in frequent communication with colleagues across the University System of Maryland and with leadership in the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities - Council on Research (APLU-COR) to exchange information and best practices.

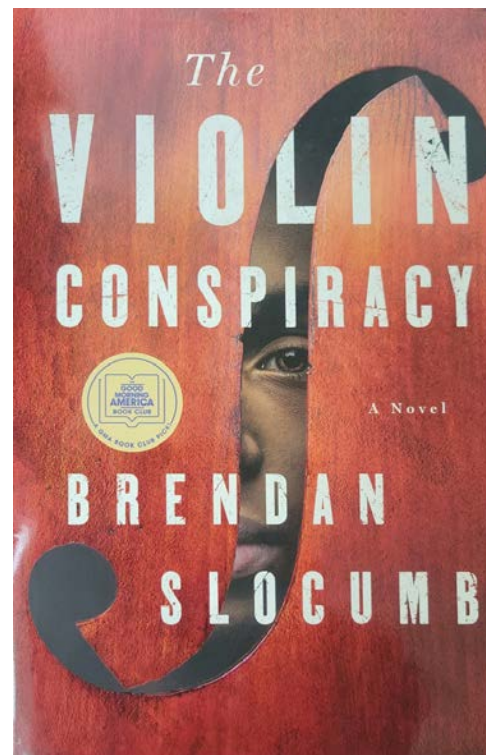
In times like this, we need to make sure that we continue to remain true to the core UMBC values – the ones that led to the founding of this institution in 1966, and the values that have served us well as we created the national model for inclusive excellence that we are known for. And it will serve us even better as we set our sights on creating the next version of UMBC – UMBC 3.0 – under the visionary leadership of President Valerie Sheares Ashby.

You may ask – what can I do? Our students and our broader research community need your help during this time of major transition as we commit to standing up for higher education and for scientific research. Your voices – as members of the community, and as constituents of state and federal elected officials, matter, and I urge you

to make your voices heard. In addition to this advocacy, I ask you to consider supporting our mission philanthropically. To learn about how you can help support UMBC students and our ground-breaking research, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) at 410-455-2902.



Book Talks



Reviewed by
Dr. Pamela Williams Morgan
The Violin Conspiracy: A Novel
by Brendan Slocumb

Who would ever imagine an old “fiddle” sparking so much interest that it takes on a life of its own in a novel that became a Good Morning America (GMA) Book Club Pick?

This “fiddle” was gifted to the main character, Rayquan McMillan, by his aging grandmother, Grandma Nora. It previously was played by his great-great-grandfather during his enslavement.

(Violin cont'd on page 4)

(*Violin cont'd from page 3*)

It had been stored in her attic for decades until Ray revealed his love and aptitude for playing the violin, with his grandmother as his chief, basically only, family cheerleader.

The story is set in various locations—both nationally and globally but originating in rural North Carolina. The plot revolves around this young African American man who is a talented violinist and the multifaceted challenges he encounters in pursuit of a professional career as a musician.

The result is an intriguing work of art, with plenty of twists, turns, surprises, and suspense that I refuse to spoil!! *The Violin Conspiracy* is most definitely a must-read!!

Slocumb, Brendan (2022). *The Violin Conspiracy: A Novel*. New York: Anchor Books. ISBN: 978-0-593-31541-5

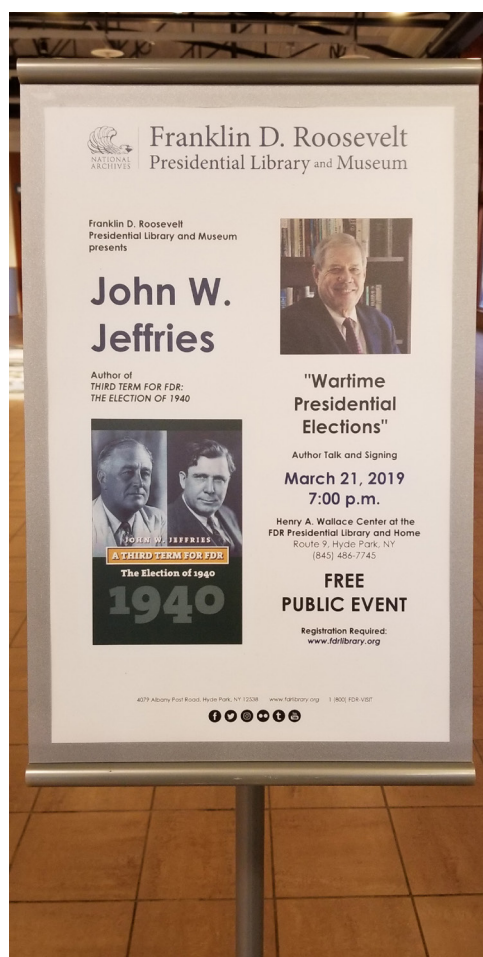
Scholars Corner

The Joys of Scholarship after Retirement

John Jeffries

As my retirement approached in 2013, I was somewhat apprehensive. I had worked long hours during my eight years as dean, and I worried about suddenly having nothing much to do. But I had earned the Ph.D. to be a historian, not to become a department chair or dean.

My books and articles had focused mostly on the politics and policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt's second and third terms, 1937-1945. I wanted to look more closely at the 1940 election, when FDR sought his unprecedented third term. But there was a problem:



Poster for John Jeffries's talk at Roosevelt Library.
Photo credit: John Jeffries

two good books on the election had recently been published. Nonetheless, I approached a university press with an excellent series on presidential elections and told them that I wanted to write a book that would be significantly different in content and interpretation. They invited me to submit a prospectus; I did--and was offered a contract. I had something to do.

The process of researching and writing was more pleasurable than my previous work. There was no pressure of tenure or promotion. I had no classes, meetings, or other university duties. I was able to do a good deal of research at home because the New York Times and other publications had been digitized and put online, as had many documents at the Roosevelt Library. I could consult periodicals in the UMBC library. My wife and I did travel to the Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park, NY, where I

could examine documents not yet digitized—and from where we could drive to a couple of fine meals at the Culinary Institute of America in nearby Poughkeepsie. We also traveled to the University of Indiana, the alma mater of GOP nominee Wendell Willkie, where his papers are located.

After the Nazi Blitzkrieg swept through western Europe in the spring of 1940, the leading Republican possibilities lost strength: Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft and Michigan Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg seemed too isolationist, New York District Attorney Thomas E. Dewey too young and inexperienced. Attention increasingly turned to Willkie, who had been a Democrat before registering as a Republican in late 1939 and who did not appear until April 1940 in the Gallup Poll, and then at just three percent.

Willkie, a wealthy utilities magnate, had come to public attention in the 1930s as an articulate opponent of New Deal regulation even though he supported much New Deal social legislation. On foreign policy, he favored anti-Axis measures short of active American involvement. With important support from Henry Luce's publications, *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*, Willkie surged in the two months before the Republican convention in late June. At the tense and tumultuous convention, which took place just days after the collapse of France, galleries packed by Willkie supporters set up thunderous cries of "We Want Willkie!" Willkie won nomination on the sixth ballot with his support coming especially from the internationalist and more moderate eastern Republicans.

Who would be the Democratic nominee was also unclear in early 1940. The anti-third-term tradition was powerful, and polls down to late 1939 indicated a reluctance to elect FDR again. Conservative, especially Southern, Democrats

increasingly opposed the president and the New Deal, and sharp Republican gains in the 1938 mid-term elections made a third term seem all the more unlikely. But with the declarations of war in Europe in September 1939, public opinion began to swing toward re-electing the experienced president.

FDR teased the press, the public, and even confidantes with respect to his intentions, earning the sobriquet of the “Sphinx.” Nonetheless, it seems likely that Roosevelt was inclined as early as 1939 to run again to protect the New Deal and the liberal direction of the party. As the war turned badly against the Allies in the spring of 1940, he also wanted his anti-Axis foreign policy sustained. But FDR coveted a draft, or at least the semblance of one, to justify seeking the unprecedented third term.

When the delegates assembled in Chicago in mid-July, the keynote speaker announced on FDR’s instructions that the president had no desire to serve another term. Then a voice came booming through the loudspeaker system: “We Want Roosevelt!” As the cry was repeated time and again, the convention erupted into a pro-Roosevelt demonstration that one reporter aptly called “premeditated pandemonium.” Later it was discovered that the voice blaring over the loudspeakers belonged to a party operative, Chicago’s superintendent of the sewers—and the chants became known as “the voice from the sewer.” The convention overwhelmingly nominated FDR.

Willkie’s campaign reflected his proud claim that he was an “amateur.” He had little discipline and made extravagant promises and increasingly wild claims and charges. Republican professionals, never happy with Willkie, urged him to hammer on two issues: the threat of dictatorship because of the third-term effort and the threat of war because of FDR’s anti-Axis policy. As the cam-

paign developed, his message boiled down to charges of dictatorship and war.

FDR meanwhile bided his time, wagging what one historian has called his “noncampaign campaign.” He made “non-political” tours of busy military installations and defense plants, deftly undercutting Republican charges that he had left the nation militarily unprepared and economically stagnant. Then, in the last two weeks, Roosevelt made five major addresses to enthusiastic audiences, with his motorcade attracting clamorous crowds. He recounted programs and progress under the New Deal and pledged he would continue fighting for peace, prosperity, and the “common man.”

The most noted of Roosevelt’s five addresses came in Boston on October 30. FDR declared that “I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” Always before, he had added “except in case of attack,” but not this time—on the grounds, he rationalized, that if attacked it would not be a foreign war. Listening on the radio, Willkie exploded: “That hypocritical son of a bitch! This is going to beat me.” But Willkie had little room for accusing Roosevelt of hypocrisy. Having first supported the President’s foreign policy, he then accused him of taking the nation to war and in fact made essentially the same promise about no war himself.

Nor was such expediency on both sides the low point of the campaign. Willkie had eggs, fruit, and other missiles hurled at him and his motorcades, particularly in working-class areas. Willkie and his family were accused of being racists (in fact, Willkie had been a fierce opponent of the Klan in the 1920s); and because of their German background of being sympathetic to Germany. FDR was accused of being a communist and a secret Jew, too accommodating to

African Americans, anti-religion, an aspirant dictator, and even a traitor.

One unsavory exchange was obviated by political calculation on both sides. The GOP had obtained “Dear Guru” letters that Democratic vice-presidential nominee Henry Wallace had written in the early 1930s to a mystic, where among other things Wallace had called FDR the “Flaming One” and himself “Galahad.” Worried that Republicans would use the letters, FDR mused about someone “way, way down the line” making public Willkie’s ongoing extramarital affair. Finally, he decided against it on the grounds that it would “boomerang”; and the Republican National Chairman refrained from publicizing the Wallace letters for fear that it might be seen as a desperate last-minute smear.

Roosevelt won reelection with 54.7 percent of the popular vote and a top-heavy 449-82 margin in the Electoral College—though those totals fell below his 60.8 percent and 523-8 Electoral College rout in his 1936 reelection. As had been the case in the 1930s, when the Great Depression and the New Deal had made Democrats the majority party, the Roosevelt Coalition was based especially in the big cities, among working-class, unionized, lower-middle-class, and ethnic voters, among Catholics and Jews, and from the still overwhelmingly Democratic Solid South. African Americans, though largely disfranchised in the South, continued their departure from the party of Lincoln to the party of Roosevelt. Outside the Solid South (78 percent Democratic) and the 106 cities with populations over 100,000 (61 percent Democratic), Willkie won the nation’s small cities, towns, and rural areas with 53 percent, and he carried about three-fifths of the white Protestant vote outside the South.

(Scholarship cont’d on page 6)

(Scholarship cont'd from page 5)

FDR won some 69 percent of the lower income vote, 53 percent of middle-income, and 28 percent of upper income.

The contours of the vote were much like those of 1936, one indication (there were others) that the war and foreign policy had not been a determinative factor in voting—though it had, of course, been crucial to the two parties’ nominations and in that way to the election itself. Not only did the war matter less in voting than did domestic concerns, but contrary to the view that Roosevelt would have lost had it not been for the war, the war and foreign policy on balance evidently cost him votes, especially among isolationists and Italian-Americans and German-Americans who feared war against the Axis and their homelands. Roosevelt’s victory signaled support for an active internationalist and anti-Axis foreign policy; but the war was not the decisive or dominant factor.

The 1940 book plus a revision of my book on the WWII home front and other projects got me back for a spell in the mainstream of New Deal era scholarship. And perhaps best and most rewarding of all, I gave a talk on the election of 1940 to a full house at the Roosevelt Library, where I had spent so much happy and productive time as a graduate student and professor. Scholarship after retirement can be a joy indeed.



Knit caps donated to the Retriever Essentials. Photo credit: Karen Wensch

Creative Endeavors The Wonder of Linus, the Catonsville Senior Center Project

Karen Wensch
Project Linus, named after Linus in the Peanuts cartoons, is a group of ladies who volunteer their time and talent once a week knitting and crocheting hats and scarves for infants and often newborn hospitalized babies, children, and chemotherapy patients. I approached the ladies and asked them if they would be interested in adding UMBC as one of the groups that they support. As a result, they now include both UMBC and Catonsville Community College.

I have found that the general public is often not aware that university and college students are in need of food and clothing. They assume that because students have financial aid funds for tuition that there is not an issue with them having access to food or clothing. Recognizing the seriousness of this situation, most colleges have developed both food and clothing banks to help

meet student needs and attempt to eliminate unnecessary anxiety and stress.

Every two weeks, for the last several years, I have collected the items the ladies have made for UMBC students and have taken them to Retriever Essentials. There is no record of how many of these beautiful hats and scarves they have made for our students, but on many occasions, I have delivered as many as 50 or more items at a time.

Last year, representatives from Retriever Essentials visited the Catonsville Senior Center to personally recognize and thank the ladies for all that they have contributed to UMBC.

Karen Wensch worked as an administrative assistant in the Office of the President and retired as Emeritus Executive Administrative Assistant III. To honor her, Dr. Hrabowski created the Karen L. Wensch Endowment Award for Outstanding Non-Exempt Staff in 2014.

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Armchair Travel

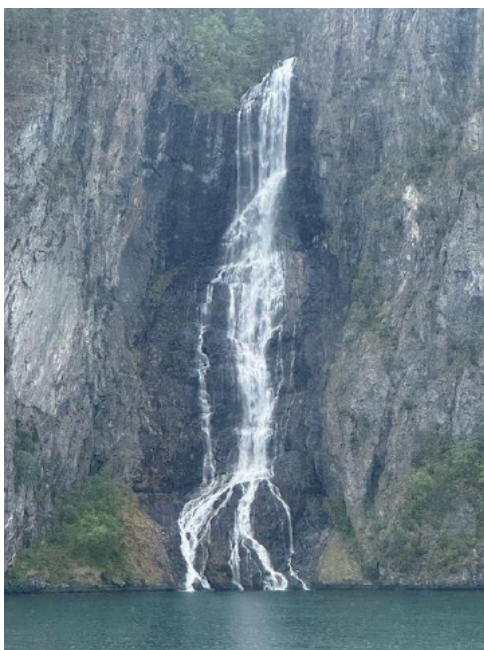
Cruising versus Designing Your Vacation: Blending Travel Experiences

Linda Oliva

As an undergraduate student, I headed to Europe with a backpack, a Eurail pass, no set agenda, and unwarranted confidence. I continue to be an enthusiastic traveler as I enter my retirement years, but my approach to travel has evolved. Traveling to over 70 countries has been a wonderful experience as I have had the freedom to expand my comfort zone, explore new cultures, learn about the world, meet diverse people, and create cherished memories. Combining cruises and independent travel creates a dynamic and harmonious approach to exploration.

From the moment you step aboard a cruise ship, you can enjoy top-tier amenities, including fine dining, spas, swimming pools, activities, and entertainment venues. You have staff members who look after your every need. The ship has comfortable areas to enjoy the sun, socialize, have a drink, or read a book.

I started my latest cruise from



One of the countless waterfalls found near Geirangerfjord, Norway. Photo credit: Linda Oliva



Cruising the Norway Fjords known for its dramatic cliffs, waterfalls, and scenic beauty, and it's a popular stop for cruise ships. Photo credits: Linda Oliva.

Southampton, England, and visited the fjords of Norway. There is something magical about spending days basking in the incredible beauty of the fjords, waterfalls, unending landscapes, and sunsets from a comfortable lounge sipping a cappuccino or beverage of your choice. Most days, you can get off the ship to venture to amazing places.

A cruise offers predictable expenses and removes the burden of planning and arranging sightseeing and other

excursions. You can visit multiple destinations in a single trip. Best of all, you only need to unpack once. Cruises provide a sanctuary, perfect for unwinding and recharging. Every cruise I have been on has offered destinations I plan to revisit for a longer stay.

After the well-planned itinerary of a cruise, I entered the more autonomous and spontaneous adventure of independent travel. I rented a car and traveled around England, Wales, and Scotland. Driving the car took a bit of a learning curve to negotiate the plethora of roundabouts as you remember to drive on the left side of the road. There can be more risks and challenges when you are traveling independently, but if you remain curious and optimistic and you have good luck, these trips are the ultimate vacation.

Independent travel provides unparalleled freedom and flexibility. It is such a pleasure to settle into a region, come upon unexpected treasures, sample local specialties, and be guided by great advice from the people you meet along the way. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to create experiences based on unending options and decisions.

(Travel cont'd on page 8)



A Birdseye view of Geirangerfjord, Norway; a UNESCO World Heritage site. Photo credit: Linda Oliva

(Travel cont'd from page 7)

We booked our stays day to day with the help of many technology tools that support travel.

Another aspect of independent traveling that I have enjoyed is staying in Airbnbs. I have had unique experiences in more than forty Airbnbs all over the world. This last trip, I spent three wonderful nights in a cottage on a working farm with a resident cat and a herd of sheep. I got to live like the locals, visit unique neighborhoods, get off the beaten path, and embrace the culture.

During independent travel, you have the liberty to customize your journey. You can linger in a place that captures your heart, take roads less traveled, or design a trip that matches your specific interests—be it architecture, nature, family heritage, or cuisine.

By combining these approaches, travelers can explore both the iconic landmarks of cruise itineraries and the hidden gems uncovered during independent travel. This blend also encourages adaptability and a spirit of lifelong learning. Together, they provide a balance of comfort and adventure, structure and spontaneity, and relaxation and discovery. Embracing both styles of travel enables you to savor the richness of the journey.

Linda Oliva was honored to serve as faculty in the UMBC Education Department for 27 years. She recently retired during the summer of 2025 and hopes to embark on many more journeys.

UMBC Stories

Expo Watch Camera - Shooting a Tiny Pocket-watch Sized Camera

Chris Peregoy

After retiring two years ago from the UMBC Visual Arts Department, where I managed the photography facilities for over 40 years, I am volunteering at the Special Collections of the Albin O. Kuhn Library. My main tasks are updating an inventory spreadsheet of photography equipment that has been housed in the collection since it was founded in 1975. I match an object's tag number and check the database for accuracy. While checking, correcting, and adding information to the inventory sheet, I've found interesting and unusual items and have chosen to digitally photograph some of them. Hopefully my images will add to a broader understanding and wider interest in these historic cameras and lenses. Realizing my excitement over these objects, the curator has allowed me to shoot with some of the cameras and lenses from the collection. I've selected just one of my favorites from this collection to discuss here, but you can find more on my Instagram account listed below.

Found in the Photography Collection, the Expo watch camera was designed in the early 1900s by Swedish engineer Magnus Neill. It was first made in England as the "Ticka" but then it was patented in 1904 in the USA and sold as the Expo. The Expo is made to resemble a pocket watch but without a watch face. Inside the camera under a plate was the shutter spring. I needed to clean and lubricate this spring to restore the shutter functionality. A little lever on the side will then cock the shutter. The cap is removed from the stem and a button on the side fires the camera's shutter with about a 1/20th of a second. The cap then needs to be replaced because when re-cocking, the shutter opens briefly as it's locked into place. At the bottom there is a lever to open the camera. Inside there should be a compartment for a spool of film, but unfortunately, this was missing on our camera. I used my 3D printer to make a replacement film plane so I could insert film.

This camera was also missing its viewfinder, so I tried to keep the Expo level when shooting. The shutter choices are marked as "I" for instantaneous or "T" for timed or long exposures.



*The Expo Watch Camera.
Photo credit: Chris Peregoy*



Albin O. Kuhn Library on the UMBC Campus.
Photo credit: Chris Peregoy

The image above was made on a sunny day on the UMBC campus. I shot more images in a variety of conditions, but due to space limitations in this newsletter, this image of the Albin O. Kuhn Library seemed to be the best to show here.

In conclusion, the Expo camera was challenging to use, but with some practice it became a cool camera that made for conversations with my subjects.

You can see some of the other cameras from the collection that I'm helping to catalog at <https://www.instagram.com/collectionofcameras/>

This article was written for "35mmc," a community-authored blog about photography and cameras. It has since been edited for the Wisdom Institute's newsletter. If you want to read the full version with extra images visit <https://www.35mmc.com/23/07/2025/5-frames-with-an-expo-watch-camera/>.



Prescription Update

Kathlyn Miller

Save the date! Medicare Part D Open Enrollment this year is October 15 through December 7, 2025. What's that you say? You signed up last year? It's important to review your Part D plan every year. Why? Because most Part D plans change every year.

The plan you have for 2025 may not

Join us at Microtalks

Kathy O'Dell

WI's Happy Hour Microtalks, held on Zoom once or twice a semester since March 2024, are a great way to connect with colleagues near and far. Lounge and listen, or regale us with a story about something meaningful to you: a favorite trip, cooking feat or hack, exhibition, book, movie, art-work/craft, volunteer activities, sports passion, research focus, silliest prank, favorite possession, surprising moment, whatever! After all attendees have a minute to introduce themselves and say what they're up to, presenters each have 6 minutes to regale us. (If showing a slide deck/videos, we have on-the-spot tech support to troubleshoot.) Maximum 6 minutes per presenter and 6 presenters per Happy Hour. Watch for the Google form and sign up to present or just to attend. Either way, lift a glass with us during the AY25-26 WI Happy Hour Microtalks, 5-6pm Eastern on: September 16, 2025; November 12, 2025; February 10, 2026, and April 16, 2026.



Participants in the March 2025 Microtalks. Screen shot.

be the best plan for you in 2026. Plans change their premium, drug list, deductible, copays/coinsurance and preferred pharmacies. Some plans discontinue, so if you don't review your plan, you might not have prescription insurance in 2026, and then you could have a late enrollment penalty. Other plans make minor or no changes, but you won't know unless you review your plan's changes and the other plans available. You may find a plan that is better for you and will save you money next year.

Your current Part D plan will send you information to review in September which shows how your plan will change in 2026. Update your drug list and compare your drug list with the 2026 plans. Visit Via Benefits at my.viabenefits.com/maryland or phone 1-855-556-4419 during open enrollment to learn about other plans available and to determine which Part D plan will be best for you in 2026.

Take a few minutes to review your Part D plan options during open enrollment this year. You'll be glad you did. 🕯

The Orser Center

Nicole King, Center Co-Director and Professor, American Studies

In April 2025, the new Orser Center for Public Humanities debuted with a celebration of public humanities work and a panel discussion on the Chicory exhibition "The Soul of the Butterfly" in the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery at UMBC.

The Orser Center was founded in 2011 when Ed Orser retired from the Department of American Studies at UMBC. Orser came to UMBC in 1969, just one year after the uprisings of 1968 following the assassination of MLK Jr. and just three years after UMBC was formed. Ed Orser was doing public humanities before it was cool.

In 2016, one year after the uprisings following the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody, we launched a working group to build a program in Public Humanities at UMBC. This

(Orser cont'd on page 10)

(Orser cont'd from page 9)

work culminated in our minor in Public Humanities in 2019, which brought together all the diverse public humanities work going on in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

For more information on the work of the Center, follow us on Instagram or give to the Orser endowment.

Members Corner

Name: Jack Sinnigen

Role at UMBC: Professor Emeritus of Spanish and Intercultural Communication

Retirement year: 2015

Since retirement I have been volunteering as a tutor for ¡Adelante Latina! <https://adelantelatinabaltimore.org> and as a legal Spanish/English interpreter/translator for Latino immigrants, primarily young people faced with possible deportation. I participate in a weekly vigil in Baltimore for a free Palestine. In September 2025 I will teach a course (in English) through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson on *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez <https://www.towson.edu/campus/partnerships-research/osher/documents/osher-fall-2025-catalog-arts.pdf>

Name: Melanie Berry

Role at UMBC: Undergraduate Program Director, Visual Arts

Retirement Year: 2019



When the Cow is Free.
Mosaic and photo: Melanie Berry

Since retiring, I've focused on mosaic work, with recent exhibitions, including Mosaic Arts International (Juror's Choice) and the 2025 Lowe House exhibit in Annapolis, where "When the Cow is Free" won First Place. In June, I had my first solo show, followed by the invitational exhibition "Constructions", at the Peninsula Gallery in Lewes, Delaware. For more:

<https://www.melanieberrymosaics.com/>
or <https://www.instagram.com/melanieberrymosaics/>.

Name: Roy Rada

Position at UMBC: Professor Emeritus in Information Systems

Year of Retirement: 2016

My final goal is to contribute to AI research via philanthropy. After retirement in 2016, I moved all my assets into revocable, self-directed trusts, with one to support AI research. Last year, I endowed a scholarship at UMBC called the Rada Scholarship in AI and Healthcare. Currently, I am coding an AI program to automate my philanthropy, but if you are willing to collaborate, then the project would be more fun and more likely to succeed. 🙌



WI Tour at the American Visionary Arts Museum.
Photo by Kathy Raab



Members from the Charlestown community visit UMBC during URCAD 2025
Photo credit: Michael Mower



Wisdom Institute members participate in the annual Retriever Essential collection.
Photo credit: Michael Mower

Upcoming Wisdom Institute Events Fall 2025 & Spring 2026

This Academic Year has been designated as a year of the arts, entitled Arts+ Please join us in supporting the arts performances: <https://umbc.edu/life-on-campus/arts-and-culture/>.
For ticket information: <https://umbctickets.universitytickets.com/w/default.aspx>



September 16, Tuesday, Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks, 5 -6 p.m.

See the details in a separate announcement in this newsletter.

October 3, Friday, Lecture by Dr. Kevin Omland, Professor of Biological Sciences, 10 - 11:30 a.m. Charlestown campus, Auditorium.

“The Fallacy of Human Superiority: Human Evolution and the Tree of Life.” For information about this and other ELLIC programs at Charlestown, see ccicharlestown, Education, ELLIC. Fee for nonresidents: \$5.

October 5, Sunday, Choral Homecoming, 7:30 pm, Linehan Concert Hall, PAHB

Celebrate the return of UMBC’s Camerata, Gospel Choir, and Jubilee Singers from their summer performances in Paris and Prague. The event will feature live performances, multimedia presentations, and student reflections.

November 1, Sunday, “Shakespeare in Harlem,” 7:30 p.m.

Observe the centennial of the Harlem Renaissance with an adaptation of “Shakespeare in Harlem” by Langston Hughes in collaboration with the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company. Matinee Nov.9, with performances Oct.30-Nov.9 and at the CSC Theatre in Baltimore, Jan. 15-18.

November 12, Tuesday, Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks, 5 - 6 p.m.

December 2, Tuesday, 5th Annual Holiday Happy Hour, 5 - 7 p.m.

UMBC Research Park, 5523 Research Park Drive, Rm 2302

December 5, Friday, Fall Dance Showcase, 8 p.m. Proscenium Theatre PAHB

January 27, Tuesday, Writing Salon with Susan Weis-Bohlen Zoom, Time: TBA

Ms. Weis-Bohlen (susanweisbohlen.com) will lead us in a self-improvement/meditation/writing exercise.

February 10, Tuesday, Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks, 5 - 6 p.m.

April 11 and 12, Saturday and Sunday, “Wizard of Oz” matinee, 2 p.m. Proscenium Theatre, PAHB.

Performances run April 2-12.

April 16, Tuesday, Happy Hour Zoom Microtalks, 5 -6 p.m.

May 15, Friday, Ninth Annual Signature Event, featuring Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett-Helaire, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Chesapeake Arena. See the Director’s Message for information about the speaker.

Newsletter Committee:

Linda Baker, Co-chair	Cheryl Miller	Betty Glascoe	Art Pittenger	Marilyn Demorest
John Jeffries, Co-chair	Pam Morgan	Kathy O’Dell	Joyce Tenney	Mike Mower, Design



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Reception at the 2025 Signature Event. Photo credit: Michael Mower



Luncheon at the WI Signature Event. Photo credit: Michael Mower



UMBC Jazz Ensemble at the 2025 Signature Event. Photo credit: Michael Mower