

WINTER QUARTER 2026 PRESENTATIONS

Presentations \$7 each for **Silver** members

Registration prior to attendance requested.

Non-member fee: \$15 each session

Gold members: **Register** via email or phone.

#1: Monday, January 5th, 2 – 4 p.m. – The Prairie - A Noble Piece of the American Landscape

What is a prairie? Why are prairies important? What makes for a healthy prairie? How are prairies maintained? And who are Prairie Enthusiasts? Henry Panowitsch and Susan Stevens Chambers will answer these questions, present examples and toss in a couple prairie poems as well.

Presenters: **Henry Panowitsch** is a retired psychologist and mediator.

Susan Stevens Chambers is a retired attorney and mediator. Both are Prairie Enthusiasts.

Location: The Pillars of Mankato, 3125 Prairie Rose Dr., Mankato

Sponsor: Tricia Nienow

#2: Monday, January 12th, 2– 4 p.m. — Use of Force: Training Police for Better Outcomes

Police officers are human beings functioning in high stress, urgent, and deadly situations. We ask them to keep our communities safe, deal with violence, arrest criminals and protect themselves and others all the while making split second, life and death, decisions. The decisions individual officers make can prevent a tragedy or cause a tragedy. How should police be trained differently to produce the better outcomes? We will explore the illusions and realities of police training and performance.

Presenter: **Dr. William (Bill) Lewinskis**, a leading behavioral scientist whose work has focused on the intensive study of human dynamics involved in high-stress, life-threatening encounters. He has a Ph.D. in Police Psychology and is a professor emeritus of Law Enforcement at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where he taught for more than 28 years. For the last quarter century, he has been involved as an expert witness or consultant in some of the highest profile police shootings in the US, UK, and Australia. He is a founding partner and co-owner of Force Science, a nationally recognized leader in public safety research, training, and consulting.

Location: Pioneer Bank, Adams St., Mankato (Victory Dr. & Adams)

Sponsor: Larry Nicol

#3: Thursday, February 5th, 2 - 4 p.m. — The Truth About Diets: Finding Long-Term Weight Management- ZOOM Meeting

Regular Presentation Fees Apply. *(Rescheduled from June 24th)

You can lose weight with many different diets, but which ones truly lead to lasting results? Mary Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN will explore popular weight loss diets, discussing pros and cons of each, how to spot a fad diet, and which foods promote healthy weight loss and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Join us and bring all of your questions!

Presenter: **Mary M. Flynn, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.N.**, in an Associate Professor of Medicine (Clinical) at Brown University and a Research Dietitian at the Miriam Hospital, where she has worked since 1984. Her main interest is how food can be used as medicine, with a focus on extra virgin olive oil. She is the co-author of *Low-Fat Lies, High-Fat Frauds and the Healthiest Diet in the World* (Lifeline Press, 1999) as well as *The Pink Ribbon Diet: A Revolutionary New Weight Loss Plan to Lower Your Breast Cancer Risk* (Da Capo Press, 2010).

ZOOM Presentation - Login credentials to be announced

Sponsor: Anne Fletcher

* All prior member registrations will automatically be transferred to this date. New registrants are welcome.

#4: Wednesday, February 18th, 2 - 4 p.m. — Canada, Our Good Neighbor to the North

Our president contemplates Canada becoming our 51st state. Others ponder Minnesota becoming Canada's 11th province. Minnesota and Canada have so much in common. We share a 550-mile border. Canada is Minnesota's largest trading partner. Half a million Canadians visit Minnesota every year. Most of us have visited Canada. Learn about the people, culture, and history of our good neighbor to the north, Canada.

Presenter: **Consul Aaron Annable** from the Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis is originally from Montreal, Quebec. He previously served at the Canadian Embassy in Washington DC and the consulates in Chicago and Boston. In 2014 he was the Acting Consul General of Canada to New England. He has extensive experience in U.S. relations and on energy issues. He has a political science degree from McGill University.

Location: Pioneer Bank, Adams St., Mankato (Victory Dr. & Adams)

Sponsor: Larry Nicol

#5: Thursday, February 26th, 2 - 4 p.m. — From Hurtful to Healthy: Strategies to Disrupt Hurtful Messages and Build Stronger Relationships

Healthy communication is essential for mental, emotional, and relational well-being, yet even close relationships can be marked by hurtful words and verbal aggression. In this engaging session, we'll explore how hurtful communication patterns emerge in friendships, sibling relationships, and romantic partnerships, and why they matter for long-term health. Drawing on research about prevalence, forms, and motivations behind these behaviors, we'll also consider how these dynamics affect older adults and their social networks. The final portion of the talk will focus on practical strategies to disrupt harmful exchanges and foster constructive conversations, even when discussing tough topics like political differences. Participants will leave with actionable tools to strengthen their relationships and promote healthier dialogue. Join us for a lively discussion that blends research insights with real-world applications.

Presenter: **Kristen Cvancara, Ph.D.**, is a professor of Communication and Media at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She studies how words and actions affect relationships and helps individuals communicate more effectively. Kristen shares her insights through teaching, consulting, and speaking — including her TEDxMSU talk on the power of communication patterns. Beyond the classroom, she has worked with leaders for over 20 years to enable greater success through stronger relationships. Her research appears in leading journals and books on relationships and communication.

TEDX Talk link: <https://youtu.be/4QQUYzFG3OM?si=b6IEYYezq7ZkwAKg>

Location: Pioneer Bank, Adams St., Mankato (Victory Dr. & Adams)

Sponsor: Steve Gilbert

#6: Tuesday March 10th, 2 - 4 p.m. — Dementia is More Than Memory Loss: A Compassionate Approach to Dementia Care

Many people assume that dementia and Alzheimer's disease are the same thing. This program will help attendees become aware of the differences, gain knowledge about dementia and how it affects the brain, and teach basic skills to enhance communication with people living with dementia. This talk will describe a compassionate and person-centered approach to dementia which treats each person as an individual, respecting their feelings, history, and preferences. It focuses on understanding behavior as communication — connecting with empathy, and supporting independence to help people feel safe, valued, and respected.

Presenter: **Jane Unzetig, RN, BSN** is a seasoned Registered Nurse who has both personal and professional experience with dementia. She writes, "my mother lived with brain change long before our family recognized the symptoms. We did the best we could with our limited knowledge. Could we have handled things better? For Sure! I have dedicated my life to helping others learn about dementia so they don't make the same mistakes we made." Jane is a Certified Independent Approach to Care Coach, specializing in guiding caregivers, families, and care teams in person-centered dementia care. PAC Certified Independent Coaches teach practical strategies to improve communication, reduce stress, and support dignity and independence for people living

#6: (continued)

with cognitive changes. Jane is passionate about changing the culture of dementia care in America to a more informed and compassionate approach.

Location: The Pillars of Mankato, 3125 Prairie Rose Dr., Mankato

Sponsor: Anne Fletcher

#7: Tuesday March 17th, 2 - 4 p.m. — Mass Shooting in the US: Is it an epidemic?

The mass shooting at Columbine High School brought mass shootings to the attention of the media, and now it seems as though mass shootings are occurring all the time. We will examine mass shootings to explore the ideas behind who, what, where, when and why they occur, along with discussing the apparent increase in shootings.

Presenter: Pat Nelson joined the Minneapolis Police Department in September 1997 and served as a patrol officer in the 4th precinct, along with a SWAT Crisis Negotiator and an academy instructor until she was promoted to sergeant in 2011. After being promoted to Sergeant, she served as a patrol sergeant in the 1st precinct, and as an investigator in Property Crimes, Robbery, Sex Crimes, and Crimes Against Children until she was medically retired in 2013 due to injuries after being hit by a drunk driver while on duty. Pat joined the Minnesota State University, Mankato Law Enforcement program in 2012 and is currently a tenured, full professor serving as the Department Chair for the Department of Criminal Justice and the Program Director for the Policing Studies Program, which is the largest 4-year Professional Peace Officer Education Program in the State of Minnesota. She teaches in areas such as Communication, Terrorism, Gangs, Mass Shootings, Political Violence, Criminal Law and Procedure, Women and Crime, Victimology, and Leadership. She has also served on the MN POST Board Advisory Rule Making Committee.

Location: Pathstone Latitude & Landing, 115 Rogers St., Mankato

Sponsor: Steve Gilbert

#8: Thursday March 26th, 2 - 4 p.m. — Dr. Sam Sheppard Trial*

On July 4, 1954, Esther Houk called the Bay Village Ohio police to report the murder of Marilyn Sheppard. When police arrived, they found a badly beaten Marilyn Sheppard and her husband Dr. Samuel Sheppard, who had been struck in the head. Dr. Sheppard gave his account of what had happened, but police seemed suspicious of Dr. Sheppard from the start. An investigation by the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department and the Cuyahoga County's Coroner Samuel Gerber would begin an over twelve-year criminal justice drama that would end up in the United States Supreme Court over the outrageous pretrial publicity. Learn what happened in Dr. Sam Sheppard's cases and what ultimately was uncovered many years later.

Presenter: James Fleming practiced law in Minnesota for 35 years before his recent retirement, 22 of those years as a public defender. He served as the chief public defender for the 15 counties of the Fifth Judicial District in southwest Minnesota, based in Mankato, and later for the Second Judicial District (Ramsey County).

Location: Pioneer Bank, Adams St., Mankato (Victory Dr. & Adams)

Sponsor: Larry Nicol

The Tudors and Why They Still Matter continues for four more sessions on Tuesday afternoons in January.



*Note: This is a Bring a Friend (55+) Special Event. Please let the office know that you are bringing a guest.