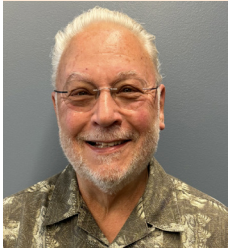




★ ★ FEBRUARY 2026 ★ ★

## FROM THE EDITOR



Hope you and your sweeties had a fun Valentines Day. While we Chicagolandlers flirted with Spring this month, Ol' Man Winter grasped us yet again in his icy claw. But MEL was undeterred as this issue amply shows. We recount our visit to Save The Starving Children, and showcase Board Member, Sheldon Kail. My request for more photos was quite productive (thank you!) so we have lots and lots of pictures to share this month, plus Birthdays and Upcoming Events.

Enjoy!  
Gerry

## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT - By Gerry Linda



This month we profile **Sheldon Kail**, who joined MEL in 2022, and in a short while, joined our Board of Directors and distinguished himself as our Webmaster and chief technologist. He was born in 1954, in Albany Park as the youngest of four. His two brothers and a sister were born in Germany in the aftermath of WWII to parents, who separately survived concentration camps. In fact,

Sheldon's father lost his first wife and four children in the Holocaust. When Sheldon was in the 3rd grade, the family moved to Rogers Park, where he attended Clinton Grammar School. And when he was in the 8th grade, the family moved within Rogers Park, and he attended Sullivan High School. At Sullivan he was on the basketball team all four years and made All Conference in his senior year.

While he was in high school (age 13) he got a work permit and toiled at McDonald's—after school, on weekends, in the summer—all four years. He attended University of Illinois and, not surprisingly, majored in Food Science. He graduated in 1976 and immediately pursued an MBA, also at U of I. He met Abby Baker on a blind date in his second year of grad school. She was finishing her master's in education at Northwestern. That blind date was arranged by his mom and Abby's aunt. Talk about a whirlwind: they met in early January; he proposed in April; they were married in August and Ali, their first child, was born the following August. They have two adult children—Ali (46), who has two kids—17 and 14, and Shayn (37), who has three kids—6, 3, and almost 2. They all live within five minutes of each other.

Sheldon worked for three sophisticated food industry giants—Sara Lee (9 years), Quaker Oats (15 years) and MillerCoors (15 years). His career spanned a wide variety of marketing and sales roles. At Sara Lee he worked on their coffee brands—Superior Coffee and Hills Brothers. At Quaker he worked on many large brands including Gatorade, Cap'n Crunch, Quaker Oats, and Aunt Jemima. And at MillerCoors he worked as a beer category consultant supporting large national customers including Walmart, Kroger and Walgreens. In his last five years at MillerCoors, he started their E-commerce business so his becoming our Webmaster was almost inevitable. He retired in December of 2019 at age 65 and joined MEL in 2022 with Bob Stein as his sponsor.

He has some advice for new Melmen. "Since I retired, I have developed the attitude that now I can devote more time to helping others and I have carried that into MEL. Also, my wife has been a 'Wish-Granter' for about 15 years and I have joined her in Make A Wish Foundation activities for the past six years. Part of our job is talking to the kids and their families, helping them discover their wish and helping their wish come true. The more you give, the more you receive. This is absolutely true."

Apart from family, giving back, and MEL, Sheldon is passionate about tennis. He plays three times/week in three different leagues.



*Bruce Edelson presenting Blair Deutsch with a gift from MEL for her outstanding work on the History of MEL documentary .*

## MEL FIGHTS HUNGER - *By Les Sgnilek*



On February 12, 2026, 30 volunteers—including Melmen and several spouses—went to the Libertyville location of Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). FMSC was founded in 1987 in Minnesota to help children around the world who were starving. Although it is a Christian organization, they feed people regardless of their religious beliefs. From that one location, FMSC has grown to eight permanent packing sites across four states. They work with a large network of in country food distribution partners at schools, orphanages, clinics and feeding programs around the world.



The first task they undertook was to produce an effective food formula that would be nutritious and not spoil while being shipped long distances. They worked with Cargill, General Mills and Pillsbury to achieve this goal. They eventually developed “MannaPack?” meals, specifically designed to assist in reversing and preventing malnutrition.

In 1994 FMSC started using a dual-pronged program, where donors provide the money to operate the organization and buy and ship the food, and volunteers are employed to create, pack, and box the packaged meal kits. Each meal kit provides six meals.

MEL along with about 20 other people first went through an orientation, put on hair nets and face nets for those with beards and then were assigned to either putting together MannaPacks?, working in the warehouse or labeling the packs. Collectively, we packed 72 boxes, which made 15,552 meals. These meals were shipped to Haiti. Based on need, every day a different country is picked for the food’s destination. At the end of our shift, we also made a cash donation to FMSC. I can report from the comments I received that everyone enjoyed being there.

The doors opened at 8:40 AM and we completed our shift around 10:45. Twenty-six of us then went to lunch/brunch at Wildberry’s because it would not be a MEL event without food. The pancakes were highly recommended by Al Newman. I ordered them and he was right.

Based on this strong initial response and the degree of satisfaction shown, I’m pretty sure we’ll be back.



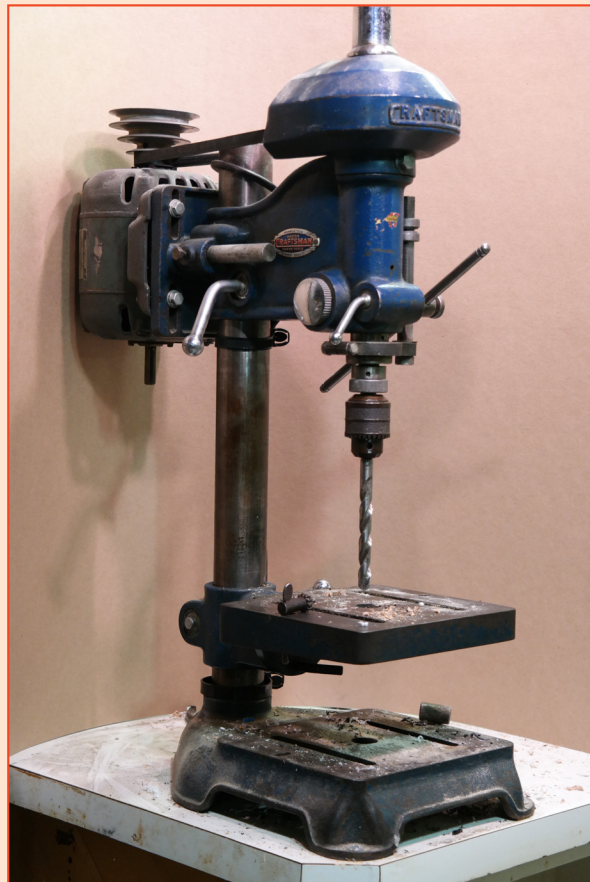
*MEL Book Group met 1/23, 2026 to discuss *The Lies They Told*, by Ellen Marie Wiseman, a very tough historical fiction about immigrating to the US in 1928.*

MEL PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



**BEST IMAGE**  
**EMOTION**

“Emotion” was taken by **Bob Abrams** at the Milwaukee Art Museum; he called it still life emotion.



**BEST COMPOSITION - DRILL PRESS**

“Drill Press” was taken by **Bob Savin**, who described it as still life junk.



*MEL does Tai Chi at Northbrook Court*



A MEL Memory from June 6, 2017 courtesy Harvey Orlov. MEL on the USS COBIA, Manitowoc, WI Maritime Museum. It was a great day and made all the MEL attendees very proud.



MEL Slo Bike Group End of 2025 Season



MEL Eats Lunch 1/15/2026



MEL's First Father-Son Members!

**UPCOMING SPECIAL AND SEMI-REGULAR EVENTS**

- March 13** Ethnic Lunch - Armo Grill (Bruce)
- March 26** McCormick Museum at Cantigny (Les Sgnilek)
- March 27** Let's Talk Sports - Preseason Baseball Edition - New Location at Spears (Bruce)
- March 30** Texas Hold 'Em Spring Tournament at D'Agostino's (Bruce)
- April 10** Bocce at Pinstripes (Les Sgnilek)
- April 20** Mini-Golf 1st of the Season at The Highland Park Golf Learning Center (Bruce)
- April 30** Long Grove Confectionery Chocolate Tour w/lunch at Lou Malnati's (Larry Krupp)
- June 19** Cubs/Blue Jays at Wrigley Field (Bruce and Bob Shuman)
- July 22** Annual Dinner at Chevy Chase (Bruce-Ron Meibach-Harris Cohen)
- Sept. 8** Cubs/Brewers at American Family Field (Bruce and Bob Shuman)



Meltones Rehearsal



Meltones Still Rehearsing



**FEBRUARY**

**MARCH**

1	Walt Brown	85	5	Ken Davidman	74
2	Bruce Harris	83	12	Yale Gordon	77
2	Joel Stein	76	13	Bill Gurolnick	95
2	Harold Versten	87	13	Jerry Schecter	80
4	Barry Edelstein	74	18	Bob Stein	76
5	Mickey Balm	79	20	Irwin Fischman	95
9	Arthur Noparstak	76	23	Dan Forman	74
10	Howard Katz	91	26	Lou Epstein	88
17	Robert Greenberg	75	28	Morry Glicksman	75
17	Marshall Romanz	89	28	Don Horwitz	79
20	Bob Schlossberg	86			
20	Marshall White	74			