

★ ★ MAY 2026 ★ ★

## FROM THE EDITOR



This month's main story covers our visit to Long Grove Confectionary. In addition, there's a brief story about this season's first Adventure Walk and there's a bio of yours truly—the last member of the current Board to be so profiled. Starting next month, we'll profile other very active Melmen, starting with those of longest tenure and marching forward. Yes, we've got Photos of the Month and of MEL in action, plus Birthdays and Upcoming Events.

Enjoy! Gerry



## MEL INDULGES ITS SWEET TOOTH - *By Larry Krupp*



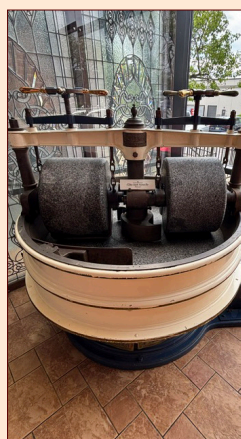
"There always seems to be someone looking over your shoulder - just waiting for an opportunity to lecture on **The Darker Side of Chocolate:**" Sandra Boynton.

And that's what 14 MEL Couples experienced on April 30 at the Long Grove Confectionery Company in Buffalo Grove. Our tour guide, April, welcomed us and began with the history of the company. Next, we watched a video on the who, what, where and how of cacao growing, harvesting and chocolate

production—dark, milk and white. This is possible only in a narrow band of geography just north and south of the equator. Our tastebuds were whetted.



Long Grove does not produce the chocolate liquor from which their candies are made. Indeed, truckloads of this precious liquid are shipped from Blommer every week, whose aromatic production often was part of downtown Chicago's unique atmosphere, and pumped into holding tanks and kept in a liquid form by constant stirring. Long Grove then adds additional flavorings and ingredients and uses forms to shape their many candy offerings, which they sell to both retail and commercial customers.



The tour continued and we saw antique roasting and grinding equipment and chocolate art. Three memorable pieces were a 500-pound Santa Claus (painted using white chocolate), a sculpture of The Statue of Liberty made from a solid block of chocolate and a life-sized Native American statue, who bore a striking resemblance to a certain hockey team mascot! Chocolate melts at about 70 degrees so the rooms where these sculptures were displayed are kept in the 60's. The penultimate step of the tour was a long, enclosed, glass-windowed walkway along the side of their several production rooms, where we saw how the candies were produced, packaged and made ready for shipment.

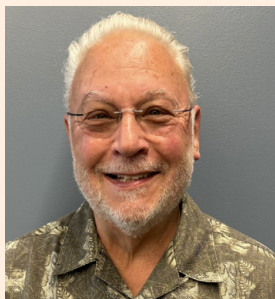
We each received our choice of a free sample (milk, dark or white chocolate) and then got to shop in their outlet store, which features many two-for-one and other bargains compared to their retail outlets (like in Long Grove) in very simple, basic packaging. (This outlet store is open all year round so save travel time and money whenever you have a craving.)

Even after the candy, we still went to Lou Malnati's for a lunch of salad and pizza.

A day that includes chocolate, pizza and getting together with MEL Members and their partners just doesn't get any better.



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT - *By Gerry Linda*



This month we profile Gerry Linda, who joined MEL in 2022 and was elected to the Board that August. He served a three-year term and was re-elected in 2025. He was sponsored by Gary Salit and was already friendly with Ed Margulies and Don Brooks. In fact, he tried to join earlier, but COVID delayed him for two years.

Gerry was a marketing consultant and brought his toolkit with him when he joined. On the Board he, along with an able assist from Sheldon Kail, initiated the marketing research project that helped MEL understand its members' needs. And he was responsible for the creation of the new website. He also revitalized MEL Monthly and repositioned it as a Board-sponsored activity. Additionally, with Ed Margulies, he breathed new life into what is now called MEL's Margulies Movie Group. And for the last two years, he has chaired the committee that selects the winner of the Gurolnick Award. He also plays gin rummy and Rummikub, rides with the slo-bike group, and avidly attends most special events and activities.

Unlike most MEL members, Gerry grew up out of state, in Boston. He was born in 1946, an only child, in Dorchester, then an almost completely Jewish neighborhood. He entered Boston Latin School (founded in 1635, that's right, 1635!) in the 7th grade. It was an all-boys school in those days. When he was 13, the family moved to West Roxbury, the most suburban of the many Boston neighborhoods. He attended Northeastern University with a major in marketing. NU is well known for cooperative education. Students study for half a year and work at a job related to their major for half a year. Thus he graduated in five years (1969) but was able to pay for his own education. He then got an MBA, also from NU and worked as a Teaching Assistant and at an ad agency.

Gerry liked school and attended the University of Michigan for a Ph.D. in Marketing. There he finished his course work, but, alas, not his dissertation. That's why two and a half years later he left his teaching job at the University of Kentucky, where he taught marketing, advertising and consumer behavior. He next moved to Chicago and became a practitioner rather than an academician.

He left Kentucky for Chicago in 1977, where Gerry's career spanned stints at two large ad agencies, co-ownership with two partners of an ad agency, a stint at a top marketing research firm and, finally, ownership of his own marketing consultancy. Along the way he co-wrote two books, multiple refereed journal articles, dozens of pieces for trade magazines, and made over 100 speeches and presentations at conferences.

Most importantly, he met and fell in love with Claudia Wollack Rezny in November of 1977 and they married in September of 1978 and moved to Glenview shortly thereafter. Claude had been married before and had a five-year-old son, Jonathan. He wooed and pursued them both at the same time. And after seven years, Jessica was born. Claudia was a Spanish teacher at Homewood-Flossmoor HS and Highland Park HS and founding faculty and Foreign Language Department Chair at Rochelle Zell Jewish HS. They have six grandchildren—five girls and one boy—aged 21, 20, 16, 9, 6, and 5. Much to his delight, they all live nearby.

Gerry says: "I have moved from newcomer status to more of a veteran member. I have perspective now and know being in MEL is more than a means of having fun. I believe in the power of MEL to improve the lives of its members. I am lifted by the many instances of kindness I have observed. I value our private conversations at each month's meeting. I have expanded my circle of friends.

I am spending my "Golden Years" with MEL and am the better for it."

## MEL ADVENTURE WALK—SEASON TWO BEGINS - *By Yale Gordon*

On Tuesday, May 12th the first Adventure Walk of the season occurred, which, incidentally, was the 56th anniversary of Ernie Banks hitting his 500th home run (I had to get that in there) .

We had a dozen adventure seekers join the walk which was at the Middlefork Savanna Trail in Lake Forest. Following a few minutes of warmup by MEL's Tai Chi resident "master in training," Les Sqnilek, the group set out on the north trail. It was a cool day with brisk wind, but every walker who began completed the 3+ mile trek (no man left behind).

Following the walk, we gathered at the Cherry Pit in Deerfield, known as the "Pit." The most popular entrée among the MEL walkers was oatmeal pancakes. Excellent!! And the most frequent question was, "Where's the next walk?"

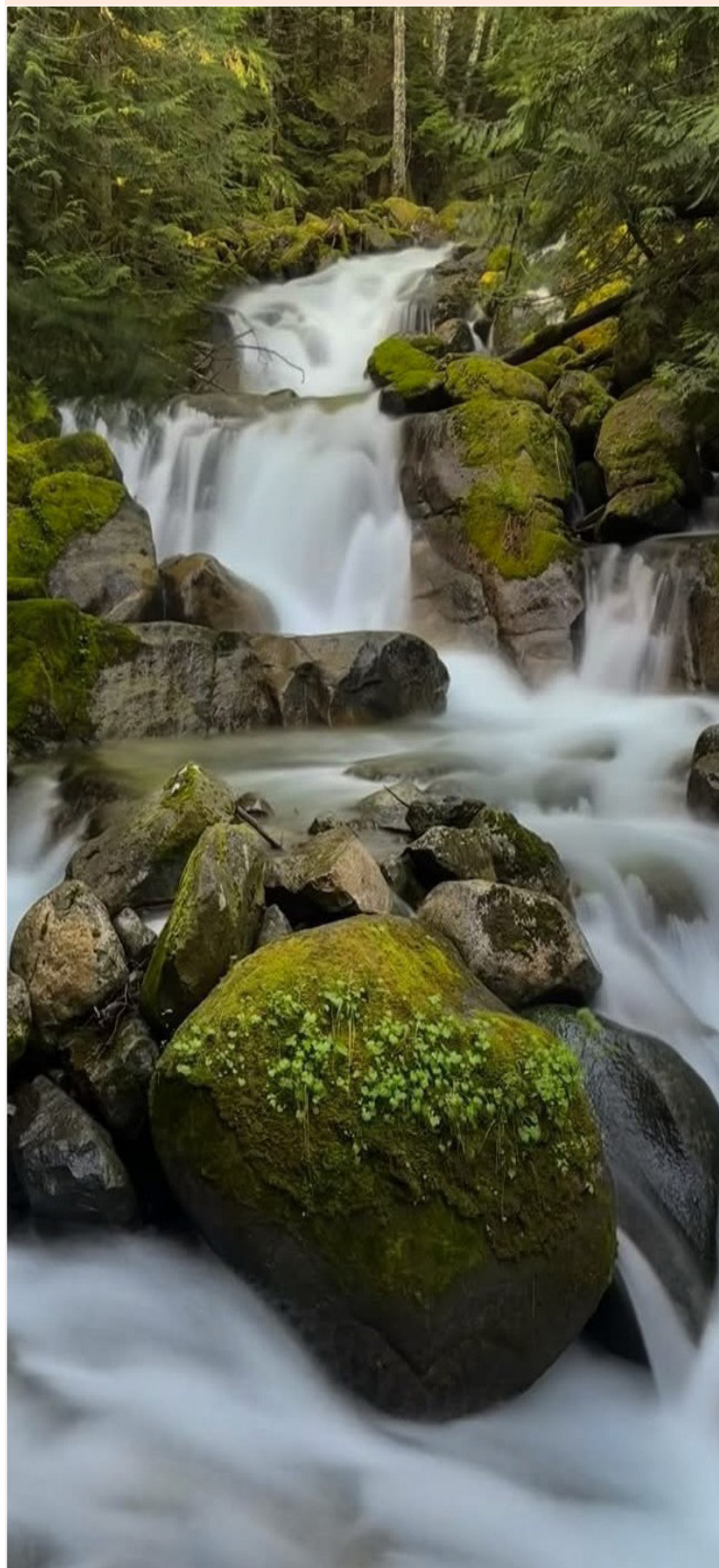
It's a great way to get exercise in a very peaceful setting and to learn more about your fellow MEL members. Join us on future walks...each one is an adventure!





## MEL PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

This month's two winning photos are **Heron** by *Bob Greenberg* and **Rushing River** by *Howard Katz*







May 26–Another Adventure Walk

UPCOMING SPECIAL AND  
SEMI-REGULAR EVENTS

- June 3Amazon Tour in Oak Creek WI. (Bruce)
- June 19Cubs game at Wrigley Field  
(Bruce and Bob Shuman)
- June 25Ethnic Lunch at Galaxy Hot Pot  
in Deerfield (Alan Esterman)
- June 26Mini Golf at The Highland Park Golf  
Learning Center on Rt 41 (Bruce)
- June 29Texas Hold Em Tournament Summer  
Edition at D’Agostino’s (Bruce)
- July 9Bocce at Pinstripes (Les Sgnilek)
- July 10\*\*\*MEL MONTHLY MEETING SPECIAL DATE \*\*\*
- July 22Annual Dinner at Chevy Chase  
(Bruce-Ron Meibach-Harris Cohen)
- July 30Spa Day at Pretty Nails in Deerfield  
(Buddy Kalish)
- Aug. 14Air Classics Museum Event in  
Sugar Grove (Alan Esterman)
- Aug. 28Sports Talk Pre-season football edition  
at Spears (Bruce)
- Sept. 8Cubs-Brewers game in Milwaukee  
(Bruce and Bob Shuman)
- Sept. 17Marriott Theater “Come From Away”  
(Bruce and Walt Brown)



Alan Esterman presents Barry Veit with prize  
for last place in the NCAA March Madness  
bracket contest.



Mel’s Tuesday Riders—  
Peter Clark, Paul Canchester, Bob Stein,  
Bob Kohn, Wayne Rubinstein



| MAY  |                 |    |                        |
|------|-----------------|----|------------------------|
| 3    | Donald Gaule    | 76 | 6 Robert Abrams 88     |
| 8    | Ed Cohen        | 74 | 6 Marshall Goldsen 90  |
| 9    | George Giddens  | 9  | 9 Alan Esterman 77     |
| 13   | Jerry Berk      | 98 | 9 Joe Mintz 74         |
| 15   | Richard Ferdman | 79 | 11 Ron Kaplan 91       |
| 17   | Steven Stern    | 71 | 15 Gary Baim 78        |
| 22   | Aaron Hershinow | 82 | 16 Robert Matanky 91   |
| 23   | Bruce Hershman  | 90 | 18 Jerry Lasin 90      |
| 23   | Louis Rosen     | 89 | 19 Bob Cremer 87       |
| 31   | Mike Karsen     | 80 | 22 Joel Karlinsky 74   |
|      |                 |    |                        |
| JUNE |                 |    |                        |
| 4    | Al Newman       | 81 | 25 Bob Shuman 78       |
| 5    | Herb Kanter     | 87 | 26 Robert Orenstein 70 |
| 5    | Larry Krupp     | 72 | 29 Nick Brown 84       |
|      |                 |    | 29 Arnie Groot 76      |
|      |                 |    | 29 Abby Hans 79        |
|      |                 |    | 29 Ron Meibach 78      |



Chevy Chase Country Club