

Winter sights and sounds hike January 17

Winona Outdoor Collaborative invites you to join them at Holzinger Trails to explore all the sights and sounds that winter has to offer. On Saturday, January 17, from 9:30-11:30 a.m., hikers will roam the trails along the bluff while immersing themselves in nature and taking the time to look at and listen to their surroundings. The trails start at Holzinger Lodge, 925 West Lake Boulevard. Dress warmly, as you will be stopping at various points to observe and listen to the sounds of

the woods. Hot cocoa will also be provided at the start to keep warm throughout. This event is free. Registration is required. Visit winonaoutdoorcollaborative.com/events. Wilderness Weekends, led by Emily Gorman, is an environmental education program offering an immersive experience to explore the ecosystems and ecological treasures of Winona County. Join them to discover, appreciate, and protect the region's natural wonders.

Norwegian Dancers back in Winona Jan. 18

The Stoughton Norwegian Dancers will make a return visit to Winona, sponsored by the Winona Sons of Norway Lodge. At 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 18, this vibrant group of dancers from Stoughton Wisconsin High School will fill the Winona Senior High School gym with music and energy. Returning by popular demand, it is suggested you get to the school early as last visit it was a packed gymnasi-

um. Local personality Mia Martin was a member of the original dancers from Stoughton decades ago, and the history of this group remains a treasured memory for her. Come and see! This is folk dancing with history, heritage, and music to charm us all. On Sunday, January 18, at 3 p.m., the Sons of Norway members in Winona hope to see you. This event is free to the public, with a freewill offering to cover expenses.

mud puddles

Pocket justice

"I like your cloak," said the woman at the check-out stand. "Thank you," replied my wife, smiling. "Is it warm? It looks warm." "Very warm. And . . ." (No, don't say it! I thought) "... it has pockets." "Pockets?" "Yes, pockets! And on both sides." "Lucky!"

At that point, I looked at my watch because I know the pocket conversation takes 5 minutes and 37 seconds to complete. And it often concludes with a general agreement that the lack of pockets on women's clothing is a justice issue.

I believe it is an attempt to claim moral high ground when the words "it's a justice issue" are applied to any controversy involving people and how they are treated. To disagree with those words makes you feel like you're not a very moral person. It is often followed by the final blow, "By the way, who did you vote for in the last election?"

But if we rescue those words from the trenches, they help re-frame our issues in terms of the deepest values of right and wrong, of what is fair, and what creates harm for people. I have come to the belief that the deprivation of pockets on women's clothing does indeed deserve the moniker, "a justice issue." So, claim it! Take to the streets! Write your congresswoman, not your congressman — he'd first need to see that a stand on this issue would put votes in his pocket.

Now I don't think women are saying, "I'd like two 12-inch pockets filled with bottles of Aspirin, a box of tissues, a variety of feminine products, a portable cell phone charger, and a book to read to avoid conversations in waiting rooms." No, they just want pockets, empty ones, containing only the possibility of holding stuff. The possibility is the thing, not the stuff. And the stuff is probably only receipts, a pen, car keys, some mints, a cell phone, and a small can of bear spray — I'm from Alaska; it's a thing. The big, clunky stuff can be toted in a purse or fanny pack, not pockets. Purses for such things are here to stay. (Besides, emptying stuff from pockets at the airport verses keeping them in a fanny pack or purse does not create good feelings from the people in line behind you.)

This is clearly gender inequity. It's not a racial, a socio-economic, or a class struggle. It comes down to one woman, one man, and

the number of pockets hanging on either side of their closet.

Men know that most pieces of clothing we wear have pockets. We take them for granted. Cargo pants might have 53 pockets. I know, that's odd. On some men's pants, even the pockets have pockets.

For years, women have expressed the hope, the desire, the endless cry, "Why can't they make dresses with pockets? Is it that hard?" And when a woman shows up with a dress or a skirt or even pants with deep, usable pockets, she becomes the center of conversation and the Yoda of guidance. "Where did you buy that? Such deep pockets!"

Feeling like an investigative reporter, I inquired about this at a local women's dress shop. The sales person said that they did sell dresses with pockets, but there's not a big inventory. She said they're not easily available. (Hmmm, more weight to the case of the pocket mumbles.)

All this leads to a proposition that would easily make some entrepreneur billions of dollars. A new business launch called "Deep Pockets". Maybe add the slogan: "We sell pockets and for a little extra we'll include pants or a dress."

The solution seems too simple to get muddled. Women's clothes' designers and emporiums must produce and sell pockets, lots of them and deep ones, not just the shallow ones for show that leads to the inevitable David Copperfield moment of timid courage, "Please, sir, may I have some more?" And I think everyone would agree they should be attached to dresses, skirts, and pants as the appropriate application for pockets in general.

The cry of an orphan child with an empty bowl, hungry and asking for more food seems to be an apt image for anyone asking for a fair deal in life, what we call social justice. Here all that is being asked for are more pockets and larger ones at that. The orphan's request is not for excess, but for enough to get through his day.

For now, until the day when pocket justice rolls down like water, I can personally spare an occasional 5 minutes and 37 seconds for the cause. As I write this, I can feel condescension drip from every pore in my body. For I am a man with privilege ... and a plethora of pockets. Therefore, of course I have a moment to spare on this issue.

Drip, drip, drip!



by Dr. Robert Hicks, columnist

Now there's a
**BRIGHT
IDEA!**

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