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**Five College Learning in Retirement  
Minutes of the Council Meeting**

**December 11, 2008**

**Next meeting on February 12, 2009**

The Council of Five College Learning in Retirement met on Thursday afternoon, December 11, 2008, at the Five College offices on Spring Street in Amherst.

Present: Leo Sartori, Sara Wright, Lise Armstrong, Jeff Caplan, Peter Ferber, Mary Franks, Gail Gaustad, Wil Hastings, Sheila Klem, Charlie Klem, Joan Laird, Philippe Meyer, Callie Orszak, Jim Scott, Bev Von Kries, Bill Williams, Kathy Hazen

President Leo Sartori called the meeting to order at 2:30. The November minutes were accepted as distributed by e-mail on 12/5/08.

**President's Report:** Leo said that the Aging Conference was successful by general consent; Leo attended two workshops that were useful and well-run. There is still money left over from last year's surplus. 24 people received Continuing Education Credits. The general consensus is to wait a while before planning the next conference, until somebody comes up with a new inspiration and offers to head it. Callie observed that once she gets contact names from the person in charge- (who knows the contacts, theme and speakers-) Callie and an associate can do all the rest, administration-wise.

The Preview: Leo had to miss it, but heard good reports about it and he praised the committees who worked hard to make it a success. He's excited about the variety of seminars on offer. Leo also reminds the group about two events coming up in January. The Memorial program will take place on Thursday, January 8, at 10 a.m. There are nine people to be memorialized, so far.

On Tuesday, January 6, there will be a meeting in the Smith Field House, to discuss creating a mechanism to respond to LIR member emergencies (hosted by the Ad Hoc committee, chair Peter Ferber) at 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon, and titled "The Human Side of an Educational Organization".

Leo also reported that the Development Committee, chair Kathy Coulombe, has gone into hibernation because there appears to be no reason for a fund drive at present. However, if any committee needs their help, they will be available.

Also, Leo has visited Serene Rubin at home, where she is working hard at physical therapy. Serene is determined to be back at seminars in the fall. She welcomes visitors at home.

**Vice-President's Report:** Sara Wright reports that the Preview was an impressive display and very successful, thanks to everybody. Approximately 125 members attended. (See the written report under Preview Committee.) The Memorial is coming up in

January, and Sara asks that people come prepared to speak about the people who are memorialized.

Sara brought a goodly supply of LIR bookmarks and brochures and asked members to take them and pass them around.

As to plans for the April 19 Preview (of coming events for fall, 2009) Sara announced that because of the difficulties and mounting expenses of using the Northampton Council on Aging she has booked Smith for that date. She will notify the Preview Committee. Leo noted here that the Executive Committee (which met just before the Council meeting this afternoon) decided to hold a brief Annual Meeting prior to the Preview on April 19, 2009. Charlie Klem noted that because the October Preview was held on Thanksgiving weekend, parking in Amherst was a non-issue- there was plenty of space in front of the Amherst Alumni House. Sara noted that the event conflicted with the Opera, etc., but there will be conflicts no matter when the event is scheduled.

**Curriculum committee** -- A written report from co-chair Joan Laird:

*The Curriculum Committee met on December 4. In addition to reviewing 4 proposals for fall term, 2009, we discussed a motion to make a slight modification in current seminar lottery procedures. The Committee voted to try out the modification in the lottery later this month and to report back—the goals being fairness and feasibility. The Committee discussed the Preview, agreeing that the site and arrangements for moderators had worked well and attendance was good. The Committee also reviewed the assembled comments from participants in the Moderator’s Reception, which will be used in planning the next gathering and in re-thinking the evaluation process and other aspects of curriculum planning. There seems to be significant sentiment to suggest that the current evaluation form is not particularly useful to moderators.*

Joan added the following comments: the committee is working on fall seminar proposals, and planning “How to conduct a Seminar” for the next Moderators’ Reception, as well as redesigning the seminar evaluation form. A discussion of lottery procedural changes followed. Seminars will remain open for new participants now longer than formerly.

**Finance:** Treasurer Charlie Klem announced, as reported in November, we remain slightly behind on membership revenues. A detailed quarterly financial report will be distributed at the next council meeting.

The Finance Committee will meet for the first time next week to plan the Fiscal 2010 budget cycle. A schedule will be developed to present the budget at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for April 19th.

**Public Relations:** Chairman Jeff Caplan noted that his committee is helping with Great Decisions. He remarked that he had felt the energy in the room at the Preview and would

like to capture it as part of a video about LIR. The committee is planning the DVD project and wants an idea of the realistic amount of money that might be required.

**Summer/Winter Programs:** Co-chair Anne Lombard said that the winter programs are all set. The Committee will meet in February to plan the summer programs, and wants new ideas.

**Meetings/Membership Committee:** Co-chair Sheila Klem wants the names of the new members for the January committee meeting, so they can be called & invited to coffee at her house on February 3, along with 'old' new members. The committee is also meeting on February 4 at the Field House with the seventeen hostesses for the April 25 brunches (the weekend after the Preview.) The committee is also assessing membership statistics.

Co-chair Kathy Hazen added the following report: *Sheila is looking forward, and I would like to hark back to the Preview for a moment, to give a little credit where it is due, for the record:*

*Sheila transformed the two kitchen booths in the Alumni house into attractive autumnal serving spaces with her own decorations. We both went to Atkins to fetch eight gallons of cider and twelve dozen donut holes. (Note: Atkins made headlines in the Gazette a few days earlier for providing some of the "best donuts in the U.S.").*

*Dotty Gorra brought basketfuls of delicious grapes, washed and snipped into little bunches and Bev von Kries brought three varieties of cheeses, served with crackers. Sheila kept a huge pot of mulled cider brewing, and the rest of the committee (several were out of town, even out of the country) helped hostess and serve.*

*Paul Berman and Charlie Klem nobly helped clean up after an almost-disastrous spill. The total cost of these refreshments was less than \$200, honoring the Preview committee's recommendation to be frugal. Many compliments were received nonetheless, and the leftovers (not much) carried off for other committee meetings.*

**Tech Committee:** Chairman Philippe Meyer's written report :

*Janet Price has now joined the Tech. Committee. She is coming with a vast experience in Information Technology and will help us introduce the membership to the wonders of what is called Web 2.0. Find more about her at [www.amherst.edu/~jkprice](http://www.amherst.edu/~jkprice)*

*--Chuck Gillies and Hy Edelstein will continue updating the membership questionnaire after checking with the committee chairs what additional questions are needed. After they consolidate their input and decide on a manageable list of questions we will be back to the council to get a formal authorization to consult the membership.*

*--John Armstrong and other members are consolidating a list of Audio Visual and Internet facilities at our usual venues. The info will be made available on our website.*

*--There has been a long and intense discussion on the role our website can and should play both for the membership and for Public Relations. It is a vast and important subject which should be handled as a long term continuing project by the Tech. committee. We'll keep the council abreast of the progress.*

Philippe also announced that the January computer workshops are all scheduled. Jeff has the questionnaire for the survey; requests for members' biographical information will be included. Jeff quoted Arnold Friedmann's remark that it's too bad we only find out about each other at the Memorial Service.

**Special Programs:** From Chair Gail Gaustad:

*The Special Programs Committee will not be meeting in December or January. When we meet again in February we will consider the future of the Travel Interest and the Arts Interest programs. The excellent facilitators for these programs will be retiring in May.*

Gail added that we need to find somebody new to lead the Art and Travel programs in the fall.

**Office Manager:** From Callie Orszak:

*I have 132 registrations for seminars as of 9:00 a.m. on December 9th. This information will be out of date by the time of the Council meeting...*

*Relations with the campus safety office at Amherst College are not great at the moment, and I am walking on eggs until I have to request special parking for our Memorial Service at the Alumni House on January 8th.*

*We will have a combined December and January newsletter, which I hope to get out in the next week.*

Callie added that several more members have joined. Callie raised the question of sending fruit baskets to contacts such as the Amherst Parking Office. Lise noted that Karen Tatro used to do something like this. Extensive discussion ensued. (The Treasurer held a brief meeting following the council's meeting to determine a budget for this.)

Callie noted that she is combining the December and January newsletter, as she will be going to Florida from the last week in December until Tuesday, January 20. Sara Wright and Laura Cranshaw will cover the office in her absence. Callie noted that Honore David sent a thank you note to LIR for her Gala gift. Callie and Hy are working on a special calendar with many bookings; Callie said that the committee chairs should let Callie book meetings for them. She noted that the Florence Savings Bank (conference room) will be closed until April. The seminar confirmations will be out before Christmas. The lottery will be held next Tuesday. The office will have lists of the seminars and the participants.

Jeff thanked the Curriculum Committee for an outstanding number of seminar selections and Wil made a formal motion to appreciate the Curriculum Committee, to general applause.

**Great Decisions:** Chair Roger Coulombe's written report:

*At our last meeting in November, the Great Decisions Committee verified arrangements for four of our five speakers for the Spring program. The one topic for which we do not as yet have a speaker is **THE RISE OF GLOBAL POWERS**, but one of the committee members has a lead on a speaker and will report at our next meeting which is scheduled for Friday, December 12.*

*The problems that have arisen at the Senior Center prevented us from meeting there in November - we were required to leave the building a few minutes after we had begun that meeting - and our upcoming meeting has been switched to the Lilly Library in Florence. According to Pattie Shaughnessy, director at the Senior Center, we should miss perhaps one more meeting before the repairs are completed, but in the long run there should be no impact on the Program beginning in March. In the upcoming meeting, we will be discussing the status of the search for the final speaker, and will discuss the various expectations of each member in the coming weeks, including their roles at each presentation. We will also begin in a more formal way to look at the structure of promotions and advertisements for the Program. Finally, next week I will be writing a brief report to the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities regarding the progress of our work thus far. We appear to be in good shape, and especially when we lock in our final speaker.*

As Roger Coulombe wasn't able to attend the meeting, Jeff Caplan reported for him that all is on track for the programs. The Senior Center (COA) will be offering lunches but these will not be included in the price for the Great Decisions series.

**Development Committee:** see the President's Report on page one.

**Preview Committee:** The report from Sara Wright, Vice President and Chair of the Preview Committee, follows:

*At the Preview the moderators' displays were exceptionally creative and interesting. There were portraits, an old bicycle, photographs, pictures, CDs, videos, texts, reference books and even healthy snacks of nuts and dried fruit. Special Programs, Winter Programs and Great Decisions had large displays and committee members were there to explain each event.*

*The success of the Preview is thanks to the moderators for creating the seminars, the Curriculum Committee for encouraging members to moderate, the Membership/Meetings Committee for bringing all the refreshments and setting up and working behind the counter the entire afternoon, the Public Relations Committee for encouraging potential members to attend and all those who helped Callie to hand out the packets. Last but not least we need to thank Amherst College for allowing us to have our Preview in such a lovely building, those who set up the tables and chairs and especially Paula Mieczkowski who patiently waited in the empty building while we figured out how to arrange the tables and chairs in order that the traffic would flow smoothly. As a result there was no congestion in the main hall and the two front rooms were available for members to sit and read the catalogues or just spend some time talking to friends.*

*Callie prepared 269 packets for members; she returned with 119; about 25 to 30 packets were taken by members to other members who did not come, so about 120 to 125 members attended the Preview. Callie had to mail 117 packets for about \$198. We had six non-members come to the preview, and three members who have not retained their membership, and one has joined already.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The Council approved Leo's appointment of Bobbie Reitt, as the fifth member of the Nominating Committee. There will be a slate drawn up by the February meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. A proposal was made for an all-member LIR book-reading program: In the post-mortem for the Aging Conference this was suggested. All members would be invited to read a particular book and then meet to talk about it. Wil Hastings noted that LIR is wonderful as an intellectual community, but perhaps deficient as a community of the heart and spirit, and possibly needs more right brain involvement. Lise Armstrong noted that there are different ways to do a membership-wide book-reading, and it's a terrific idea. Jim Scott would encourage us to get six to ten people together and get going.

Joan Laird noted that she had attended an outstanding conference on the works of Gregory Bateson (anthropologist, social scientist); the students had studied his writings all year. She felt the success of the conference was largely due to a great setting, good music, and exceptional food.

Wil remarked that the right book and the right structure would be necessary. Lise would prefer a new regular annual event, like "A Community Reads." Wil will consult with Gail Gaustad of Special Programs and go from there.

2. Lise Armstrong introduced the idea of creating a handout for our members delineating LIR members' privileges and responsibilities, specifically related to our use of the campuses and their facilities, especially parking, with very clear procedures. We need to be more proactive in getting this information out to the membership.

3. Extensive discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of the various settings for the Council meetings. The idea of cutting back on the size of the meeting by excluding the committee chairs was not met with enthusiasm. The importance of LIR's relationship with the Five Colleges was underscored. **Leo asked that people e-mail him with their thoughts and opinions about this matter.**

There being no further business, President Leo Sartori adjourned the meeting at 4:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Hazen  
Recording Secretary