

February 9, 1995 Membership Meeting, Learning in Retirement

1. President Reid welcomed the members to the meeting and expressed pleasure at the good turn out.
2. Eleanor called for a moment of silence to honor the memory of Phyllis Weidig and Pat Ennis.
3. Announcements

David Navon, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, announced that Doris Guillemette who has an extensive background in teaching French and other languages, would be interested in conducting a course of study using Berlitz books and tapes with participants meeting once a week for conversation. A show of hands indicated 6 people interested in studying French.

Ted Belsky, Chair of the Special Events Committee announced three special events to be held this spring:

- (1) Trip to Ellis Island - growing out of the Immigrants Seminar will take place on March 30th. Cost will be \$25.00 for the bus plus \$5.00 for the ferry.
- (2) Great Decisions - Coordinated by Laura Schilling will take place at the Willets-Hallowel AND the Inn at Northampton on the following dates:  
March 10 - China Taiwan and Hong Kong. Moderator, Richard Belsky  
March 17 - Russia and Its Neighbors. Moderator, Mark Hagopian  
March 24 - Immigration. Moderators, Ann & Bob Grose  
March 31 - Nuclear Proliferation. Moderator, Prof. Vincent Ferraro of Mt. Holyoke College  
Tapes have been purchased from the Foreign Policy Association and will be used along with commentary by the moderators and discussion by participants. Cost will be \$15 for all four sessions plus \$8.50 per lunch. Text will cost \$11.00.
- (3) Members' Art Show will take place at the Lathrop Community from April 6th to the 26th with the Opening Reception on Saturday, April 8th. The Show is being coordinated by Jean Unger and Paul Rothery and is open to the general public.

Mary Egginton, Publicity Chair - stated that her charge was to improve and enhance LIR'S image in the valley and reasoned that summer was the ideal time to do so. Accordingly she has planned a program entitled, A Summer of Earthly Delights which will be centered around the environment and will consist of garden visits and symposia plus the regular summer fare of art, music and plays. There will be a grand opening on Saturday, June 3rd from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Red Barn. Anne Keppler is acting as co-chair of this special summer program committee.

President Reid acknowledged the smooth functioning of our newest committee, the

Meetings Committee, chaired by Ella Melville. Under her leadership the Committee was responsible for organizing this meeting. Eleanor also called attention to the tear-off at the bottom of the agenda sheet and urged members to indicate which committee they wished to serve and return the tear-off to Karen. She also called attention to the list of Dates to Remember printed on the same sheet.

4. Long Range Planning Committee - Eleanor stated that one year ago this small committee was formed to take a look at long range planning. Issues which at that time were thought to be controversial dissolved during the ensuing discussion. It was the feeling that this process proved to be so useful that the decision was made to keep the long range planning committee alive. Questions to be addressed in our small groups today are: How large should we be? Should we reach out and do more community activity? How can we better recruit moderators? Is there a proper mix of social and learning events? Eleanor then announced that the meeting would break up into four discussion groups: Membership, Special Events, Curriculum and Creative Alternatives. Each group will appoint a recorder who at the close of the time allotted for general discussion will make a report (not longer than 15 minutes) on the essence of the discussion held within his/her group.

#### REPORTS FROM

Membership - Priscilla Dolloff posed the following questions: Is it important that we grow or should we stay at about 150 members? Can we offer enough seminars if we grow larger? Some LIR's don't use peer learning but use the standard college lecture approach. Do we want that? She urged members to help distribute the new LIR brochure by dropping them off in their dentists/doctors offices. Should we charge a basic \$35.00 fee per semester and then an additional seminar fee? What is the ideal size of LIR? What about classroom availability? The group felt that the high quality of the Winter Session offerings was an effective device for recruiting new members.

Creative Alternatives - The group expressed concern about LIR's contribution (or lack of it) to the community. Cited as an example was that a few years ago LIR members volunteered as telephone answerers for Channel 57's fund drive but has not repeated this effort. Why? Should members volunteer at the UMass Career Center?

Curriculum Committee - Bill Gibson reported that the following questions arose: Should the seminar venture into "non-academic" areas, and if so how far? The specific suggestions made were all fairly academic: pottery, photography, and other languages (Spanish and ASL were mentioned); half of the group indicated an interest in language study. General agreement that we could stray too far (e.g., how to play bridge). Point was made that 5-College presidents expect us to be at least tangential partners in their enterprise of serious education.

Question arose as to how "expert" our moderators should be. We have had apparently successful seminars in which the moderators were not expert at all. On the other hand, there was testimony that an experienced and knowledgeable moderator is a

clear asset, and some seminars (e.g., watercolor) obviously require an expert. This remains an ongoing and delicate matter for the Curriculum Committee to determine case by case.

There was mention of possible lecture course to be "taught" by outside professionals, perhaps with remuneration. This proposal did not appear to appeal to everyone. It was also mentioned that there are now available educational videotapes featuring superstar lecturers. But as at least one participant concluded - we remain fundamentally committed to our present offerings of peer-led seminars.

Is an increase in our membership a development to be desired? Constraints of time and space were mentioned, but more important, as Curriculum Chair Navon pointed out, is the problem of providing sufficient high-quality seminars for a larger clientele. As President Reid put it to the whole meeting, if we do increase our membership, we'd better be darn sure that our recruits include potential moderators with bright ideas.

Finally, a seminar in electronics was suggested, so we can talk to our grandchildren.

Special Events - Maurice Posada, a new LIR member, bravely jumped into the task of reporting from this group. It was stated that Special events can come about in two ways: outgrowth from a seminar (Metropolitan Museum trip from the Impressionist seminar) or from a committee - as the Summer trip to Edith Wharton's home a few summers ago. Suggestions for future trips included:

- (a) Saturday rehearsal at Tanglewood
- (b) Little Theater at Chester
- (c) Shaker Village at Hancock
- (d) Not a trip - but a special event could include a Forum on Racism

7. Priscilla Dolloff introduced the new members who were present.

The meeting adjourned to the social hour.

Jackie Wisneski  
Secretary, pro tem