Dear LIR Members,

This is an interesting August as we, Janus-like, look back at these past tumultuous months and look forward with hope, anticipation, and no small amount of thankfulness. The pandemic came upon us, closing down so many parts of our lives EXCEPT LIR which, because of the deft work by the amazing LIR officer teams of the past two years, the committees, and our stellar moderators, much of what we care about in LIR was still in place to sustain us through both the political Sturm und Drang of the fall and the anxiety-producing reports of federal, state, and local COVID dashboards. The continued importance of LIR in our lives throughout the tumult is underscored by the fact that in the immediate onset of covid and zooming, membership dipped, but because of LIR’s relevance to people’s lives in these unsettling times, membership has reasserted itself and risen once again.

Turning our second face now toward the coming year, we look forward greatly to resuming the Gaustads’ traditional, not to be missed, September picnic on September 21 (at 20 Ward Avenue, Northampton). Following closely, seminars, workshops, Council meetings, and other committee meetings will continue to rely on Zoom, in part out of an abundance of caution, but significantly also because we do not yet know when our traditional venues will be available for us again. [Our five colleges are themselves moving cautiously as they, step-by-step, return to a pre-pandemic mode of operating.]

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July is Membership Month
Renew yours now!
https://5clir.org/member-application/

**CALENDAR***

- Thurs, August 5
- Thurs, August 12
  - Executive Committee Council Meeting
- Thurs, Sept 2
- Thurs, Sept 9
- Mon, Sept 13
- Mon, Sept 20
- Tues, Sept 21
- Wed, Sept 22
- Mon, Sept 27
- Thurs, Sept 30
  - Annual Potluck Picnic
  - Picnic Rain date
  - Fall Seminars begin
  - Spring Pre-proposal Deadline

* Until further notice, all meetings will be conducted via Zoom

**Full calendar P. 7**

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**2021 Potluck Picnic Set for September 21**

After a hiatus in 2020, the annual 5CLIR potluck picnic is back!

**Mark your calendar for Tuesday, September 21, at noon** (with a rain date of 9/22), when Gail and John Gaustad will once again open their backyard in Northampton to 5CLIR members.

The annual picnic is an opportunity to reunite with old friends and meet new ones for an informal meal in a lovely setting. Partners are welcome to attend.

Bring a salad or main dish if your last name begins with A-M; bring a dessert or fruit if your last name begins with N-Z. Everything else will be provided for you.

Because the Membership Committee anticipates a good turnout, we are asking everyone to RSVP so we will have enough seating and supplies. Please email nancyhclune@gmail.com by August 15 with your name and the number of people who plan to attend.

Please leave the parking spaces nearest to the house for those with mobility limitations
Four New Members on LIR Council

The membership elected in June four new council members whose involvement in LIR spans two to 14 years, and whose careers range from biologist to public accountant to a professor of fashion marketing. Michael Miller, Catharine Porter, and Katy van Geel were elected to three-year terms. Pam Daniels will fill the unexpired seat that opened up when council member Francie Borden became vice president.

Margaret Russell

PAM DANIELS
An LIR member since 2014, Pam is returning to the council after serving one year a few years ago; she stepped down to devote more time to the Curriculum Committee, which she describes as “the core work of LIR.” She also served on the Nominating Committee this past year. Books and movies feature in many of the seminars she has moderated or co-moderated: Hitchcock films, Georgette Heyer, favorite children’s stories and how they affected us. She now co-moderates with Tyll van Geel a second monthly viewing and discussion of classic movies — second because the first one was very popular and over-subscribed.

While Pam started her career as a librarian, she moved into research and planning under Gov. Nelson Rockefeller in New York in the 1960s, working on, among other projects, the state’s first domestic violence services agency.

MICHAEL MILLER
Like many members, Michael joined LIR soon after moving to Northampton in 2019. In fact, he learned about the organization before his arrival. He has jumped in with both feet. He signed up for two seminars in the first year. In the second semester, he took one seminar and co-moderated another, on Science in Film. Last summer, when LIR wanted to keep members involved despite the pandemic, Michael led a program on White Fragility. This fall, he is co-moderating with Paul Cooper a seminar on Death in Hollywood, which will explore “films that reflect our beliefs and behaviors about death and dying.” He was on the Encore Committee last year; now he is a member of the Technology Committee.

A biologist, Michael taught at several universities and medical schools.

CATHARINE PORTER
Catharine has a family connection in LIR: her daughter is married to the son of long-time LIR members Jim and Nina Scott. That may be what prompted her to attend one of the fall picnics before joining. “It’s a lively, lovely event,” she said, which is why she decided to become a member seven years ago. Catharine soon became part of the Member Events Committee, which this year was folded into the Membership Committee. One of the first groups she “jumped into” was Writing to Remember; she continues as a moderator today. An LIR poetry seminar she took several years ago morphed into an independent monthly poetry group because participants wanted to continue.

Before becoming the ombudsman at U-Mass, after she held for 15 years, she was on the faculty of U-Mass. Consumer Studies Program, teaching fashion marketing.

KATY VAN GEEL
Katy is another member who joined LIR as soon as she and her husband, Tyll — this year’s president — moved here from Rochester, New York, in 2007. She has served on the Curriculum Committee, on for the former Member Events Committee, and this year was a member of the Nominating Committee. She is also part of the ad hoc committee that is exploring how to make the LIR website more user friendly.

She has co-moderated five seminars on food and cooking with Nina Scott, more, she said, because the two enjoy working together than simply a love of food. She also moderated a seminar on personal financial planning and, with her husband, a class on the decisions involved in deciding to age in place or move to a retirement community.

Katy had two careers before retiring: as a librarian and as a public accountant and financial planner.
Member Spotlight: Darcy Johnson

Darcy and Jerry

*Note: Darcy has just been elected to serve as Secretary of the Council for the coming year.*

**How long have you been a member of Learning in Retirement, and how did you learn of the organization?**
I joined LIR in the Spring of 2020 after a good friend told me about the organization. Of course, this was the last semester before we entered LIR by Zoom.

**What brought you to our “Happy Valley”?**
My spouse, Colleen, and I decided to retire to this area in 2018. At the time we lived on Plum Island in Newbury, MA. Unfortunately, the island has had significant challenges in recent times and the environmental prognosis was poor for us to stay there safely into our later years. We have always enjoyed the “Happy Valley” area and have friends who have lived here for many years.

**How is retirement working for you? (Surprises? Regrets?)**
Retirement has brought many surprises. The greatest being how we ever managed to do everything in our life while working full-time! It has been exciting to have time to pursue interests and new experiences.

**What have you been reading lately?**
My recent reads have included “The Lincoln Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill America’s 16th President and Why It Failed” by Brad Meltzer and Josh Mensch; “While Justice Sleeps” by Stacey Abrams; “The Ministry of the Future” by Kim Stanley Robinson and I am currently reading “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens. Next up for me is “His Very Best, Jimmy Carter, A Life” by Jonathan Alter.

**What kinds of seminars have you most enjoyed? (And why?)**
I have enjoyed each of the seminars I have attended. Women Heroes of World War II was my first LIR seminar and I enjoyed learning of the women who contributed to the war effort and whose stories should be told more often. The Future of Democracy was also a favorite. I enjoy political discussion and this seminar felt very timely. The Family History group has been very helpful to me in pursuing my genealogical research. Recently, I participated in Writing to Remember – Blue. It was such a privilege and honor to hear participants tell their stories. I also deeply appreciated the opportunity to share some pieces of my own story. Carol Jolly and Henia Lewin create such a safe container for this exploration. I am excited to continue with this group this fall.

**What is on your bucket list?**
Travel! We have traveled quite a bit but like everyone we were sidelined with the pandemic. I hope to reinstate our trip to Australia, New Zealand and French Polynesia that was cancelled. Also, my bucket list includes a trip down the Nile...someday.

**Whom would you like to imagine around your dinner table?**
This is such an interesting question. My dinner guests would include Elizabeth Warren, Mary Magdalene, Angela Davis, Eleanor Roosevelt, Megan Rapinoe and Sonia Sotomayor to name a few. Lin-Manuel Miranda and Anthony Ramos would be great too!

**What else would you like us to know about you?**
I look forward to meeting more participants in LIR. I am wildly introverted though so know that I enjoy hearing each of you sharing most of all.
Curriculum Committee Update

Building on the success of the numerous moderators’ meetings held this past year, the Curriculum Committee has already scheduled two for September, one on — at — pm and the second on — at - pm. The Zoom sessions are opened to current and past moderators as well as anyone thinking about leading or co-leading a seminar. The informal meetings offer practical advice on developing a proposal, facilitating discussion, tech suggestions — all designed to get new and potential moderators more familiar with the process and hear from experienced moderators.

Have an idea for a seminar or workshop but need some help developing it into a full proposal? Use the pre-proposal form at 5clir.org/forms to request help from the Curriculum Committee before September 30.

Although final proposals for the second semester aren’t due until October 17, they can be submitted at any time, said Kathy Campbell, who is co-chair of the Curriculum Committee with Susan Beer. Despite occasional appeals for more proposals, the committee always manages to get a wide variety. Kathy calls this the “semi-annual miracle.”

Contact the Curriculum Committee co-chairs any time at: 5clir.org/committees-2021-2022.

Cont’d from P.1

In future years it is highly likely we will continue in many ways to take advantage of Zoom’s technology. Some moderators may prefer to use Zoom, various committees may stick with Zoom because it’s a convenient way to meet. Likewise, undoubtedly other moderators will want to meet in person, and other activities, such as Great Decisions, may happily return to in-person gatherings. How we incorporate Zoom into our activities and use it to enhance the attraction of LIR is very much part of our agenda for the coming year.

Other “administrative” activities we began this past year will continue into the new year. They include continuing to revise the technology for keeping our books and reporting our finances, updating the Operations Manual, revising the Newsletter’s template, and redoing our website’s menus and templates. The new look of the Newsletter and website might also stimulate a discussion about how we want to identify ourselves publicly. (A bit off-topic, but nevertheless: I found a Wikipedia page on lifelong-learning institutes that had no mention of LIR! This will be addressed.)

Of immediate importance is fully implementing the revised committee structure, which means making sure the coordinating liaison arrangements are in place, and most important, making sure each committee has its needed complement of chairs and members. As of now there are several committees that need volunteers. PLEASE CHECK the website’s listing of committees with positions to be filled, and consider joining the effort to sustain LIR. The pandemic has underscored our need for it. LIR has helped us survive, and that wouldn’t have happened if we hadn’t had volunteers. To sustain these benefits, we all need to pitch in. If you need further persuasion, I conclude with this quotation from an article by Professor David Horton Smith of Boston College [copy available from me upon request]:

> Recent research ... shows clearly that member volunteering in associations leads usually to many positive outcomes for participants. Such positive impacts include better mental and physical health, greater happiness and satisfaction, better social relationships and more social capital, political empowerment and influence in many cases, greater information and certain skills, and sometimes economic and occupational advancement.

Thanks,

Tyll van Geel

PS. Nancy, it has been a wonderful year, and we have one more together, yeah! Monroe and Gene, many thanks for taking on a set of difficult tasks. Francie and Darcy — welcome; so happy you agreed to do this. And, Bev, it was wonderful working with you.
Reading Roundtable: Not Just Another Book Club

Incurable readers are always on the lookout for new books, even though the piles on our bedside tables are in danger of toppling. Some of us enjoy reading about U.S. history, environmental issues, or Hollywood memoirs; others delight in British detective series, Booker prize winners, or graphic novels. Whatever our particular interests, we love hearing about one another’s various reading tastes, sources for discovering new authors, trends in publishing, and anything else that strikes a bibliophile’s fancy.

In January of 2021, member Nancy Clune offered to start a late-afternoon forum on Zoom for members who want to share their reading interests with one another rather than discuss the same book. A public librarian by training, she invited members to take turns discussing their self-assigned reading on various themes, and the Roundtable was born. A volunteer scribe keeps track of titles and authors mentioned in each session.

The new session of the Reading Roundtable will begin on Wednesday, September 1, at 4 pm on Zoom.

Interested members are invited to email Nancy: nancyhclune@gmail.com to be included on the distribution list.

Behind the Scenes: Rebuilding the LIR Website

The LIR website is chock full of useful information, but actually getting at that information can be difficult, even for experienced members. So LIR has decided to rebuild its website to make it more user-friendly and attractive.

Our Website Development Committee consists of Kathy Campbell, Tyll van Geel, Katy van Geel, and myself. Kathy is by far the most experienced in website development, so she is guiding the process. We have been at it for several months by e-mail and had our first zoom meeting June 24.

There are hundreds of lifelong learning programs, with websites, across the country, and we are examining them to see what works and what doesn’t work. Here’s an example of a well-designed site for a lifelong learning program: https://oll.berkeley.edu/

The deep content of our website will remain, so you will always be able to find what you need, but it will be completely reorganized. We want members, as well as visitors thinking of joining, to find the site attractive, engaging, and informative. We also want the site to be easily administered by the site maintenance crew.

All visitors should be able to easily find what they want using an easy-to-follow menu and sub-menus. We want browsing at our website to be a pleasure, not a chore. Think of your favorite websites in terms of user-friendliness. That’s what we are striving for.

We plan to have an active blog section, news announcements on a regular basis, messages from officers and committee chairs, an occasional essay, and other features we haven’t yet thought of. And of course many photos.

Kathy has set up a Beta site for us to experiment with. Until we are actually ready to migrate to a remodeled site, there will be no changes to the current site. This whole process is likely to take about a year. We hope the results will be exciting to all, and worth the wait.

Bob Cohen
### 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>September 2</td>
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<td>September 9</td>
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<td>Moderators Meeting 2:00 PM</td>
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<td>Start date for fall seminars/workshops</td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>Spring final proposals</td>
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<td>Winter/Spring registration</td>
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<td>Spring lottery deadline</td>
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### 2022

No January committee meetings, newsletter

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<td>March 27</td>
<td>Fall final proposal deadline</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
<td>Council Meeting, 2:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>End date for spring seminars/workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Annual Meeting &amp; Summer/Fall Preview</td>
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<td>May 2-5</td>
<td>Make-up/snow days</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Council Meeting, 2:00 PM</td>
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<td>May 23</td>
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<td>June 2</td>
<td>Executive Committee, 1:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Council Meeting, 2:00 PM</td>
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No July committee meetings, newsletter