



FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT

Peer-led Lifelong Learning in the Pioneer Valley

5CLIR is an affiliated program of Five Colleges, Inc.

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Jim Harvey



A Note from the President, Tyll van Geel

Dear LIR Members,

As you know, Tisha Ferguson, after serving as our Office Manager for five years, has tendered her resignation effective Oct. 15. Francie Borden will serve as chair of the search committee, comprised of Nancy Denig, Kathy Campbell, Robert Cohen, and me. Stay tuned as Francie reports on the progress of the search.

This seems like a good moment to share a few observations of the institutional context of the search, observations that might be of special interest to our relatively new members. 5CLIR is what is known as an unincorporated organization, and as such, does not have the legal authority to make contracts such as the one we have with our Office Manager. Five Colleges Incorporated (FCI) does have this authority, and as part of its historical effort in assisting 5CLIR, legally employs our office manager. 5CLIR's membership dues fund the Office Manager's salary and benefits, but FCI legally handles the payroll process, e.g., the banking of the dues, the cutting of checks, the deduction of payroll taxes. The long-standing relationship 5CLIR and FCI have will be reflected in the cooperation we will see throughout the execution of the search.

In other news, at the August Council Meeting we learned about the upcoming season of Encore, the fall picnic, the flourishing interest groups, the newsletter's new format, the steps we have taken to date to revise our website, and the continuing efforts to systematize our bookkeeping and accounting.

Larry Ambs, Five College Liaison, Sara Wright, Historian, Anne Lombard, Ombudsman, and Kay Klausewitz, Nominating Committee Chair, were all reappointed; they all agreed to carry on. Regarding Zooming, the Council agreed there would be no change for the time being. And last but not least, Council also devoted a few moments to updating the Operations Manual, the capstone of hours of work by a committee.

In 1888 James Russell Lowe observed that 'After our Consitution got fairly into working order it really seemed as if we had invented a machine that would go of itself.' That was not the case then, nor is it true for us now. 5CLIR's offering of continuous peer-led learning to the Valley is not a machine that would run of itself.

Take care and be safe,
Tyll van Geel

www.5CLIR.org

Office (currently offsite): 18 Henshaw Ave, C2, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063
Email: 5CLIR@smith.edu



“White Fringe” Benefits

My three adult children and I were on a mission – to find a place to memorialize their recently deceased mother, my wife, at Look Park.

I had a sinking feeling when neither a memorial bench nor location for a “garden” that we were offered screamed “yes” to us. And then - a third option: the planting of a tree. Our guide took us to a site encircled by an outer loop of the children’s train track, and pointed out a pole capped by a lovely bird house with hydrangea surrounding its base. It’s here, adjacent to the pole and hydrangea, that he helped us envision the planting of a White Fringe tree.

Uniform consensus - this was perfect! Two months later we had our fringe tree and a plaque:

IN MEMORY OF
Joanna Bogin
1950-2021

Warm, open-hearted,
courageous and deeply loved.
Her spirit lives on.

-Fred Bogin

CALENDAR

- Thurs, Sept 2 Executive Committee
- Thurs, Sept 9 Council Meeting
- Mon, Sept 13 Moderators Meeting (1)
- Mon, Sept 20 Moderators Meeting (2)
- Tues, Sept 21 Picnic **cancelled**
- Fri, Sept 24 Encore presentation
- Mon, Sept 27 Fall Seminars begin
- Thurs, Sept 30 Spring Pre-proposal Deadline

Until further notice, all meetings will be conducted via Zoom
Full calendar P. 8

It is with regret that the decision has been made to cancel the Annual Potluck Picnic, due to the prevalence of the Delta variant of Covid-19.

(An effort is underway to organize small group Zoom socials this fall – TBA.)

OM = Office Manager



The LIR office, both physical and virtual, has been in the capable hands of Tisha Ferguson for the last five years. She is retiring from that job and ready to explore her future from her home in Connecticut starting October 15.

The search is on for our new OM. If you or someone you know might be interested in this job, please look for the job description that will posted by next week at:

<https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/hr/employment> (under Staff Positions)
and on many job search sites, including Indeed, Masslive, and more.



Feminism: Our Story, Our Selves

Summer Program Participants Reflect on Movement's Impact

This summer I moderated a six-week seminar on the ways feminism and the feminist movement shaped participants' lives. Each week the 12 of us engaged in lively, thoughtful discussions of issues based on original writing, someone else's writing or a short video. Then we compiled a bibliography of all the books, articles and videos we recommended to each other (email me at hangaroo@aol.com if you'd like a copy).

As we worked toward a definition of feminism and why some women do not identify with feminism, we examined a wide range of issues: religion and patriarchy, gender identity, gender roles and gender fluidity, career v. children, how the feminist movement widened our opportunities, and whether feminism addresses racism and racial justice. Some of us focused on the effects of feminism on our children's and grandchildren's lives, as well as how our parents influenced our lives. One member observed that women in her family were expected to contribute to the efforts of working for the common good, at the same time as being wives and mothers, supporting the work of their husbands.

Another member provided a timeline of key events in the feminist revolution of the 1970s alongside her own feminist activism. In our discussions about 'having it all,' we mostly agreed that women do not generally 'have it all' all at once, instead reaching most of their life goals sequentially. This led to a discussion about the ways our lives were affected by the reproductive choices (or lack of choices) available to us, and the evolution of sexual mores.

We also examined why so few women become leaders in business and government, and why many women are "reluctant to accept challenges outside their comfort zone." Several of us explained how outdoor physical activity and sports helped young women achieve self-confidence.

Asked for feedback on the seminar, one participant wrote "it has been uplifting to feel the community of my intelligent, thoughtful and seasoned feminist sisters. It has been empowering to think about the contribution women's efforts have made to our lives." At the same time, she wrote, we must work to address the huge issue of racial injustice.

To sum up our experience, one participant wrote "I am struck by the realization that our generation was uniquely shaped by the feminist movement in the same way our parents were shaped by the Depression and World War II. Whether we identify ourselves as feminist or not, our lives, our stories, all demanded that we examine our roles as women. We made decisions, both painful and exhilarating, that our mothers never dreamed of and that our daughters take for granted. Whatever heartbreak and frustration we have experienced, we recognize the privilege we have shared of being able to examine and redirect our lives. Our hopes and efforts are to further the opportunities of ALL people to have those opportunities."

The major takeaway is one of appreciation for the choices we have today as a result of the feminists who fought the good fight.

Finnegan Alford-Cooper



Member Spotlight: Jim Harvey



How long have you been a member of Learning in Retirement, and how did you learn of the organization?

I heard about LIR through my former "boss" in Pakistan who happened to be Janet Gillies's father. I joined in 2002. (Note: Janet and her husband, Chuck, were long-time members of LIR.)

What brought you to our "Happy Valley"?

I found that grandchildren are a powerful force in getting grandparents to relocate.

How is retirement working for you? (Surprises? Regrets?)

I love retirement, partly thanks to LIR. I have had a chance to explore, for fun not credits, topics that had nothing to do with my careers. I have made friendships with people who are interesting and full of stimulating ideas. No big surprises or regrets.

What have you been reading lately?

"The Egyptians" by Cyril Aldred

"How to Teach Quantum Mechanics to Your Dog," by Chad Orzel

"The Jewish Bible," a study Bible published by the Jewish Publication Society

What kinds of seminars have you most enjoyed? (And why?)

I have particularly enjoyed those seminars which focus on history and other cultures. I believe those two dimensions are enormously helpful in understanding what is going on in the world today.

What is on your bucket list?

I am quite happy with the rich and interesting life. I have already lived my bucket list.

Whom would you like to imagine around your dinner table?

Tough question. There are so many, but here are four:

Imhotep – Egyptian polymath who designed and built the first step pyramid in the 27th century BCE.

Richard Feynman - great physicist, teacher and excellent story teller

Catherine the Great – powerful empress who founded the "Smolny Institute for Russian Maidens" - the first state-financed higher education institution for women in Europe

Susan B. Anthony – battled systemic injustice toward women

What else would you like us to know about you?

My life has been significantly influenced by two events. The first was my birth in Allahabad, India, which has led to a lifelong interest in other countries in general and South Asia in particular.

The second was the five years spent teaching in Pakistan. That gave me an appreciation for the challenges that face poor, "third-world" countries. My outlook has been expanded enormously.



Curriculum Updates

While most LIR members are looking ahead to cooler weather and the start of fall classes, the Curriculum Committee has already set its sights on spring.

Gearing up to recruit moderators and solicit proposals for the spring semester, the committee is inviting moderators — past, present, and potential — to two meetings this month: one on Monday, September 13, and the second on Monday, September 20; both at 2 pm. The focus of the first is “what needs to happen at the first meeting of a seminar?” The focus of the second should be helpful to all moderators: “how can a moderator keep the discussion on track?” The agenda is not limited to those topics, however. In practice, the discussion goes where the participants take it.

Both meetings will be on Zoom. An email blast with the registration links will be sent out to all members around September 8.

The deadline for proposals for seminars and workshops for Spring 2022 is October 18. The committee urges moderators to submit their proposals before October 7, when the committee has its regular monthly meeting, if at all possible. Pre-proposals requesting assistance with completing a full proposal must be received by September 30.

New guidelines are now available to help members focus their proposals. The link for these guidelines is at <https://5clir.org/forms/> under “Proposals for Fall or Spring Seminar or Workshop.”

LIR reimburses seminar Zoom hosts \$60 for four months of a PRO Zoom account. The reimbursement form is available on the same link: <https://5clir.org/forms>. A receipt is required, so moderators need to copy and paste their email receipt into a document that can be uploaded. Or, they can take a screen shot of the receipt.

Extracurricular Programs Planning



We are looking forward to resuming our extracurricular activities as soon as circumstances permit, and your input will be very helpful in selecting outing destinations.

Please take a few moments to complete this brief survey.
(The survey will remain open through October 1st.)

[Take the Survey](#)



Encore Presentations Start This Month



Encore, encore! Back by popular demand. Register [HERE](#)

With the help of the moderators of Spring 2021 courses, the Encore Committee has compiled a schedule of presentations for the Fall. They cover topics from the inner workings of the mind to understanding our solar system, from food to local climate change, and from body snatchers to searches for alien life.

The schedule will run from September 24 to November 19. First up is a talk on Shari Lewis by Nancy Clune, who did her presentation for a course on American Children's Television from 1947-1962.

As by tradition, sessions will take place on Fridays from 10 am to noon. Sessions generally comprise two one-hour presentations and, like last year, will be produced on Zoom. Anyone interested in attending an Encore program should email the office manager. The Zoom invitation will be sent for the morning session(s) in which you are interested.

Michael Miller

Communications Help Wanted!



Are you interested in communication? Do you enjoy LIR? We need your expertise and interest to help get the word out about the events and opportunities LIR offers to folks in the Valley and beyond. Please email me to talk about ways large and small you might contribute to this committee.

Francie Borden, Vice President and Committee Liaison
francieborden@gmail.com



Special Interest Groups: Discussions with a Focus

The names of LIR committees have undergone various changes in recent years.

The Ongoing Programs Committee is now Special Interest Groups. That's a name that should stay. Each group is initiated by a member with a particular interest who wants to share that interest with others in monthly discussions. It can be any discussion group — books, movies, genealogy, even medical ethics — “where someone is interested in the subject. It's what some people hope to find in LIR. They want to learn and talk about a topic but don't want to do a presentation,” said Wendy Parrish, co-chair of Special Interest Groups.

Wendy keeps in touch with the facilitators of the eight groups and, along with co-chair Jane McMurrich, assists members who want to start one.

Sessions are based on a movie, book, news articles or other background material; discussions tend to be relaxed and informal. They can be planned for a year, or continue as long as the facilitators want.

While most of the groups have eight to ten participants, the numbers vary. Classic Movies is one of the most popular, with 14 members. Each month, a participant chooses a film for the next session and leads the discussion. The movies are available at no charge from the Kanopy Film Archive. Viewpoints, where members talk about current issues, has a loyal following of about ten people, but numbers go up and down depending on participants' schedules. In August, 16 people logged in.

Reading the Classics meets for ten sessions, from September through June. “Ideally, we have ten members, each taking a turn as a discussion leader, but we are happy to have a few more,” said Lise Armstrong, who started the group in early 2020. It was interrupted by the pandemic and resumed on Zoom once members were more comfortable with the technology. The only criterion for the group is that books selected for reading must be published more than 50 years ago. This month, the group is reading “A Month in the Country,” by J.L. Carr.

Wendy thinks some of the groups will continue on Zoom even when in-person meetings are allowed. Car transportation limits some LIR members, while Zoom meetings are accessible to everyone.

There were just four special interest groups when Wendy became chair in 2019. “I put out the word informally” to generate more groups. When Covid hit, “members really stepped up with new groups and expanded what kind of groups we have,” she added. The groups and their facilitators are listed on the 5CLIR website. Anyone who has an idea for a new group or would like to start one should contact Wendy at wendymp999@gmail.com or Jane at jane.mcmurrich@gmail.com. The two would welcome new committee members as well.

Margaret Russell





THE FULL (GOOGLE) CALENDAR CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE: WWW.5CLIR.ORG

2021

September 2	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
September 9	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
September 13	Moderators Meeting 2:00 PM
September 20	Moderators Meeting 2:00 PM
September 27	Start date for fall seminars/workshops
September 30	Spring pre-proposal deadline
October 7	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
October 14	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
October 17	Spring final proposals
November 4	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
November 11	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
November 21	Spring Preview
November 22	Winter/Spring registration
December 2	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
	End date for fall seminars/workshops
December 6-9	Make-up/snow days
December 9	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
December 13	Spring lottery deadline

2022

No January committee meetings, newsletter

February 3	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
February 10	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
February 21	Start date for spring seminars/workshops
February 28	Fall pre-proposal deadline
March 3	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
March 10	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
March 27	Fall final proposal deadline
April 7	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
April 14	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
April 28	End date for spring seminars/workshops
May 1	Annual Meeting & Summer/Fall Preview
May 2-5	Make-up/snow days
May 5	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
May 12	Council Meeting 2:00 PM
May 23	Fall lottery deadline
June 2	Executive Committee 1:00 PM
June 9	Council Meeting 2:00 PM

No July committee meetings, newsletter