



Five Colleges Learning In Retirement

Peer-led Lifelong Learning in the Pioneer Valley

Amherst College - Smith College - Hampshire College - UMASS Amherst - Mount Holyoke College

June 2022 Newsletter

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Look Park Get-Together, Well Attended!

It was great to see so many of our members at Look Park on June 1st for our first in-person social event in over two years!!

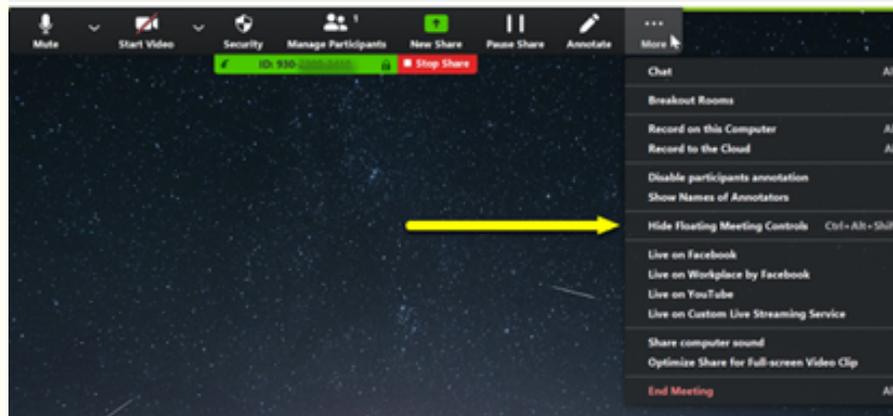
A great big THANK YOU to Catharine Porter and Nancy Clune for organizing the event and coordinating the caterers and volunteers for setup and cleanup at the venue. People had a fabulous time and it was wonderful to see everyone!

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you for the first time and I look forward to many more events in the future.

Mindi Winter



Tech Tip Floating Meeting Controls in Zoom



When you go into Share Screen mode on Zoom, you will see a floating toolbar with numerous options (Zoom calls it Floating Meeting Controls). Sometimes this bar shows up on the screens of other participants as a long black rectangle which can get in the way of your presentation.

If you are not going to use the Floating Meeting Controls, you can hide it (which will also hide the black rectangle on the screens of other participants). Go to the "More" drop down on the Floating Meeting Controls. Click on "Hide Floating Meeting Controls". That's it. If you want to get the Floating Meeting Controls back, hit Escape.

Council Corner

Council, which met on May 12, is up to its old tricks: working hard to make LIR a better, more inviting organization.

The initial agenda was to approve unanimously the following members to a three-year term on the Curriculum Committee: Nancy Denig, Kip Fonsh, and Deborah Rubin. The Curriculum Committee just gets better and better.

Tyll reported that the Executive Planning Committee is meeting regularly, discussing important recommendations for the betterment of LIR. More on this as particulars come to light.

Our treasurer, Monroe Rabin, reported that a message was sent to Yvette at FCI to transfer funds from the investment account into the reserve account, to help us balance our budget.

Michael Miller of the Encore Committee reported that we have five Encores committed for Fall of 2022. Elisa Campbell will follow up with this semester's moderators to solicit additional recommendations.

According to Mindi, as of May 12, we already have 78 people signed up for the June 1 Look Park get-together. By the time you read this, it will have been a very exciting in-person event. Maybe 100 people or more attending.

Our Tech Committee is going through some changes. Larry Ambs and Gordon Wyse are stepping down as chairs. Tyll suggested we need a point person to direct tech inquiries to the individuals who can best respond in a timely fashion. Michael Miller suggested that each seminar should identify one or more participants who can help with technical glitches during classes. More on this subject as we move forward.

Jim Lee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Race reported that, sadly, we do not live in a very diverse area, and consequently the committee has had little success in broadening the racial makeup of LIR. If anyone has ideas on this subject, please contact Jim.

Mindi's report included several interesting observations. We have had numerous lapsed members rejoin LIR as COVID restrictions have eased. It should be noted, however, that, due to rising COVID cases in our area, the colleges are re-instituting mask mandates, and may be more reluctant to let LIR use their facilities this coming Fall. She also reminded the council that no seminars are held on Yom Kippur, which falls on Wednesday, Oct. 5., this year. If impacted, moderators can decide how best to handle the missing class.

Speaking of COVID, the June Council meeting will be a hybrid meeting, held at the Five Colleges Library Annex in Hadley. This is a chance to experiment with how to handle a class that is composed of both in-person attendees and Zoom attendees. We hope this will be a viable format for LIR.

LIR is in need of more volunteers to perform important tasks within various committees. Please consider making a greater commitment to our fine organization.

And finally, our website has had a few incremental improvements, but has a long way to go. Please, if you have ideas relative to color, pictures, fonts, navigation, where things are located, etc., please contact Tyll.

Stay tuned.
Bob Cohen

New Members Elected to Council

Four members were elected to the Council this spring: Jeanne Ballantine, Nancy DiMattio, Mary Jaffee and Dick Stonberg. They are filling the seats of three whose terms expired — Elise Campbell, Kip Fonsh and Jim Lee — and the two-year remaining term of Michael Miller, who will join the Executive Committee as vice president.

Kudos and thanks to Elise, Kip and Jim for their service, and a warm welcome to the new members.



Nancy DiMattio

A close friend's enthusiasm prompted Nancy to join LIR in 2018. "I looked it up online and found a class with an opening. I didn't know I'd have to do a presentation!" she said. Her first moderator, however, made it easy. The class was the Renaissance in Italy, and Rich Hamilton the moderator. "He was supportive and welcoming," she said.

Like many members, Nancy has taken a variety of courses: Mars, Wallace Stegner, Nature Writers, Lewis and Clark Expedition, and others.

A nurse with degrees in adult mental health and public health/health services administration, she began her career on a psychiatric unit in San Mateo, CA. She returned to Boston to attend graduate school. She then worked at Boston City Hospital. Moving to Amherst 30 years ago, she served as clinical director at two health centers in Holyoke and Springfield.

Nancy is a long-time member of the Amherst League of Women Voters and has served on its board.

She was urged to run for the council by Katy van Geel. Nancy was persuaded by Katy's point, made in an email to seminar participants, that on the council "you'll find out everything you need to know" about LIR.

Mary Jaffee

When Mary and her husband, Ben, decided to leave Boston on their retirement in 2019, they wanted a rural area combined with the culture and stimulation of a college town. When they chose Amherst, LIR was part of the attraction. So was their son and his family; they, however, relocated to Portland, Maine, last year, "but we remained," Mary said.

The Jaffees arrived the summer before the pandemic. Mary signed up for the red group of Writing to Remember the following spring, when classes were switched to Zoom. Even with remote seminars, LIR was a helpful way for them to get to know people.

As a newcomer, Mary hasn't served on an LIR committee. Instead, she jumped right into running for the council.

In New York, where she grew up, and Boston, Mary worked as a psychologist for 18 years, conducting tests and evaluations for hospitals and clinics. She then decided to take a break from that and began volunteering for a music organization, since music had always been one of her passions. That led to an entry-level position with a chamber music group, and eventually to a second career.

New Member Intro (cont)



Jeanne Ballantine

When Jeanne and Hardy Ballantine moved to Amherst six years ago, they learned about LIR right away. Their neighbor is long-time member Gordon Wyse.

Jeanne signed up that year and has taken a variety of seminars ever since, ranging from Writing to Remember and museums of the world to mid-term elections and conspiracy theories.

A 40-year resident of Ohio, where she taught at Wright University (sociology, global studies and — when it was still a new academic field — women's studies). During that time, she wrote five sociology textbooks, two are in their ninth edition. She also served in the university administration. The favorite part of her job, she said, was traveling for academic programs, including taking US students for a few months or a semester and Semesters at Sea — a highlight for the whole family.

Like many LIR members, Jeanne and her husband relocated here to be close to their three children. It's a good fit, with "a lot going on," Jeanne said.

She has volunteered for several organizations and causes in the Valley. While she hasn't served officially on an LIR committee, she's helped with committee activities.

Dick Stonberg



Stoney's first seminar as a new LIR member in 2013 was on the Great Recession. "It was a real wow," and when he saw the movie "The Big Short," he was pleased that understood all of the financial details.

His seminar choices have ranged across topics, with a lot of history, as well as politics, literature and arts. Several years ago, he co-moderated with David Entin a class on wealth inequality.

He served on the Great Decisions Committee for four years.

An early career path, after graduating from Springfield College with a masters in counseling, focused on rehabilitative counseling at a community mental health center. But a year-long travel through Latin America, with his girlfriend, his dog and a van, changed all that.

Stoney decided to switch careers to business, starting as a sales manager in wooden products (such as kitchen ware). Stony then segued into natural foods. "I loved the ma and pa natural foods industry," he said. He eventually formed his own company, Pomegranate Marketing, that operated throughout the six New England States. Stony lives in Leeds.

Letter from the President



Dear 5CLIR Members,

As mentioned in my last letter, our bylaws have served us well in helping us realize our mission, but they have not been sufficient. Also essential has been the continued presence of a certain culture which I'll call reciprocal gifting.

Our investment fund is a concrete result of this culture. Generous monetary gifts from our members made possible our Investment Fund, which in several ways has helped us achieve our mission. Monetary gifts have also created the assistance fund that can be tapped to assist members cover the cost of membership dues.

Along with these monetary gifts, our members also have given countless gifts of time, energy, and talent over the years. Without these gifts of energy and time, the 5CLIR we care about would not exist.

The reality is, however, that we are struggling a bit at the moment in securing a sufficient number of gifts of time, energy, and talent. The number of people who were willing to have their names put forward to run for Council seats this spring was small. Several of our committees are without chairs and without members. I fervently hope that many members will step forward to help create an "investment fund" of time and energy contributions.

Doing so is not just something that benefits the organization, it is its own reward. In my experience, volunteering simply has been fun. It is a social activity; it has been a way to learn so much about LIR; it has helped keep me mentally engaged in a different way from presenting, and I feel good about giving back to LIR, an organization whose mission I believe in.

As icing on a cake, research suggests that volunteering helps combat depression, favorably affects one's sense of well-being, and perhaps even helps control blood pressure.

Reciprocal gifting, which might also be called reciprocal altruism, has been a significant part of 5CLIR's culture. Anything we can do to foster, nurture, and sustain this culture benefits all of us. Please, please, volunteer, especially if you have not done so yet. Even if it's in a small way, join a committee. In this way you can help sustain the bond of reciprocity.

A new year begins on July 1 for LIR. A newly constituted team of gift-giving volunteers – officers, committee chairs, moderators, and others – will start anew to enable the fulfillment of the 5CLIR mission. They need you.

Be well,
Tyll



Member Spotlight - Tom Jones

Imagine huge mounds of trash pushed around by giant front loaders. The trash arrives in an unending stream, constantly moving.

It is piled onto giant conveyor belts. The endless flow passes over magnets to suck out metal cans, huge fans to blow out newspaper, more blowers to send plastics on their way to recyclers who don't want most of it anyway.

The going rate trash disposal is about \$40 a ton. Roughly 90 percent of what arrives goes to landfills, where it is logged in, buried and forgotten.

Tom Jones, who lives with his artist wife Suzette in Easthampton, worked 20 years as a trash recycling consultant at RW Beck, an engineering firm that later disappeared, as Tom relates, "in the nether regions of corporate takeover."

Trash is big business. As costs increase, smaller companies are swallowed by bigger companies to keep the endless stream moving. Tom wrote contracts to buy trash, its last stop before the landfill.

"There's no reason to think this project would fail, an investment bank would say," Tom said. "That's not what the developer would like to hear. There's a lot of tinkering with contract language, a lot of conference calls. The banks would need to understand all the risks involved."

Neither are all plants the same.

Trash-to-energy plants send the stream to incinerators to produce electricity. "A trash to energy plant has to run 24 hours a day," Tom said. "Starting it up and stopping it is very expensive. The developer would say this project is a slam dunk. But rarely is that the case."

Most trash inevitably ends up at landfills, truck after truck arriving to disgorge their contents in the growing heap to be compacted by heavy machinery. One of Tom's jobs was to explore whether there was enough trash available to process.

"There's always a risk," said Tom, who moderated a seminar on trash for LIR. "Even if the City of Chicago says it will send all its trash to you, costs go up and down and will always vary. The same with recyclers."

"I became very familiar with weasel language when writing contracts," he said. "The bank would say we see no reason why this plant will fail. That's not quite what the developer would like to hear."

All the time spent in the trash business might give the impression it dominated his interests. But Tom went to University College in Bangor, Wales to study James Joyce. From there, it was back to the United States, where he became the head of the Putney School in Vermont, and then to Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut – both top-rated private schools.

In 1980, Tom, Suzette, and their five kids built a cabin on an island in Maine where they spend their summers. He recently self-published a book called "The Mosquito – An Insect Catechism."

David Whitney



WITH GREATFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS OF THIS PAST YEAR

Curriculum Committee

Kathy Campbell, Co-Chair
Susan Beer, Co-Chair
Jim Averill
Elly Rumelt
Gene Fisher
Janet Nichols
Lise Armstrong
Hardy Ballantine
Tom Jones
Nancy Coiner
Jake Greenberg
Darcy Johnson
Stephen Levin
Bobbie Reitt

Council Members (at large)

Elisa Campbell
James Lee
Kip Fonsh
Kay Klausewitz
Pam Daniels
Bob Cohen
Michael Miller
Catharine Porter

Executive Committee

Tyll van Geel
Francie Borden
Darcy Johnson
Monroe Rabin
Gene Fisher

Great Decisions

Bruce Brewer, Chair
David Entin
Linda Lau
Arthur McQuire
Ilene Rosenfeld
Joan Rosner

Social Events

Nancy Clune
Catharine Porter

Outreach

Margaret Russell
Kay Klausewitz
Terry Rosenthal
Bob Cohen

Encore

John Armstrong
Elisa Campbell
Michael Miller

Appointed "Officials"

Larry Ambs
Ann Lombard
Sara Wright

Nominating Committee

Kay Klausewitz
Jim Harvey
Betsy Siersma
Katy van Geel
Gordon Wyse

Interest Groups

Jane Murrich, Chair
Group Facilitators:
Naomi Yanis
Pam Daniels
Tyll van Geel
Jim Harvey
Kay Klausewitz
Lise Armstrong
Nancy Clune
Jay Russell
Judith Pool

Tech Committee

Larry Ambs, Co-Chair
Gordon Wyse, Co-Chair
Kathy Campbell
Dean Poli
Bobbie Reitt
Jim Scott

Finance Committee

Bob Cohen
Melinda Ewen
Jay Russell

Nominating Committee

Tellers:

Elizabeth Davis
Tom Jones
David Whitney

WITH GREATFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS OF THIS PAST YEAR

Seminar Moderators: Fall 2021

Dottie Rosenthal
Martha Hanner
Jim Harvey
Kip Fonsh
Christie Heckman
Michael Miller
Paul Cooper
Jim Scott
Jane McMurrich
Stephanie Levin
Ellen Kosmer
Betsy Siersma
Linda Honan
Rachel Borson
Elly Rumelt
Jay Russell
Margaret Russell
Chuck Aulino
Gerald Goodman
Elizabeth Armstrong
Gene Fisher
Jesse Tropp
Suzette Jones
Nancy Coiner
Kendra Dahlquist
Patricia Tillona
Nancy Clune
Bob Cohen
Henny Lewin
Carol Jolly
Francie Borden
Finnegan Alford-Cooper
Catharine Porter
Trish Callard

Seminar Moderators: Spring 2022

Kip Fonsh
Turi MacCombie
Gene Fisher
Carol Jolly
Linda Honan
Nina Scott
Katy van Geel
Jim Scott
Francie Borden
Nancy Denig
Larry Ambs
Christine Heckman
Janet Nichols
Jim Harvey
Kathy Campbell
Finnegan Alford-Cooper
Lise Armstrong
Gordon Wyse
Betty Romer
Catharine Porter
Trish Callard

Intercession Facilitators:

Francie Borden
Laura Frossard
Jay Russell
Ben Jaffee
Elizabeth Davis
Tyll van Geel
Paul Cooper
Sherry Wilson
Margaret Russell
Bob Cohen
Nancy Denig