



LIRA NEWSLETTER

LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
Office of Community and Cultural Affairs – UMass Lowell
Member of Road Scholar Institute Network
Tel.: (978) 934-3135 Web: uml.edu/community/LIRA



May 2020

Vol. 27 No. 2

Join us for our Annual Meeting on

ZOOM!

Wednesday, May 13, 2020
10 a.m. to Noon
In your own home

Election of Officers
Hear about the Summer Schedule.
You must provide your own snacks.

From the President

Wow! What started out to be a fairly typical LIRA Spring Semester changed suddenly during the first week of classes. With the coronavirus gaining a foothold in the US and the world, we were all a little nervous. By Thursday of the first week, all on campus meetings had been cancelled and we were searching for alternative ways to hold our classes. Everybody stepped up, especially our sponsors at UML: Patty Coffey and Chris Wilkinson. They helped us figure out how we could continue to offer LIRA classes for the remainder of the spring semester. The Curriculum and Arts and Music committees scrambled to figure out what classes we could offer online and Chris Wilkinson surveyed what types of online meeting software we could use and sent us a list of his recommendations. In very short order, we selected Zoom and immediately began learning how to use it. By the end of the second week, two training sessions had been held by Chris and me and we were ready to begin classes. I think the response of all of our LIRA members has been outstanding. Attendance at LIRA classes is much higher than usual and we've even had members who are stuck in Florida in our Zoom classes!

For the immediate future, we will continue holding online classes during the Summer 2020 Intersession. Plans for the September Convocation and our Fall Semester are up in the air; we would like to be able to meet on the UML Campus, but that is yet to be determined. We will send out more information as we learn it.

Our new half year membership is working well, we have 10 new members who joined after January 1. For all of you who just joined, welcome to LIRA!

LIRA will hold our Annual Meeting online on Wednesday, May 13 at 10 a.m. According to the LIRA By-Laws we must have 25% of our active members attend the meeting in order to have a quorum for conducting business – primarily the elections of our officers for the coming year. So please be sure to attend our Zoom Annual Meeting online. Besides holding elections, we will also present committee reports and Bob Hanlon will present the Summer Intersession Schedule.

Everyone, please stay healthy and safe. I am sure we are all looking forward to the time when we can get together for real, instead of by online meetings.

Peter Sebelius



Fighting Misinformation

The Gaining Media Literacy course had up to 58 members attending in Zoom meetings. Democracy depends on a well-informed, discerning electorate which requires the ability to discern real vs. misleading information. Those attending learned about Misinformation, Fake News, Deep Fake Videos, Bots, Bias, and much more. In this 4-session class they also learned about tools and techniques to judge the validity of information allowing them to become better consumers of information.

Bob Fesmire

Member News

Sadly, we offer our sympathy to Dorothea Zahos for the loss of her husband, Christos, who passed away on April 2, 2020. Our condolences are extended to her and her family.

Long-time members of LIRA will be sad to learn that former member, Ann Dahlman, passed away on April 8, 2020. Ann was a very active member who served ably on the curriculum committee and formed lasting friendships with many of our members.

Another long-time member of LIRA, Dorothy Bromage, passed away on April 16, 2020. She was an active member for nineteen years and many will remember all the programs that she presented, particularly her music programs. She moved to Poughkeepsie, NY in the summer of 2016 to be closer to her family.

Please contact me about any members who would appreciate receiving cards from LIRA.

simone32allard@gmail.com - 603-943-7527

Thank You

I can't thank you all enough for the outpouring of cards, emails, visits and phone calls during Ted's recent seven week hospitalization and after his passing. After I tried such a long time to convince Ted to join LIRA, he really enjoyed it when he finally did. I think it took my family by surprise when they met so many of you at the visiting hours and realized how thoughtful and caring we are as a group. Thank you for the \$100 donation to the LIRA Scholarship Fund in Ted's memory. Everything you have done is much appreciated by all the family.

Jeri Durant



The Convocation will be held on September 9, 2020. Classes begin on Monday, September 14, 2020.

Membership Renewal 2020 – 2021

LIRA membership dues are \$125 (\$200 for couples) for the year July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, and are due by August 15, 2020. A portion of the dues (\$100 for an individual and \$150 for a couple) is tax deductible. The University will send each member a receipt for tax purposes; the remaining portion of the dues is returned to LIRA for operational expenses.

A convenient payment method is by credit card on the [LIRA website](#). Click “Join LIRA” on the left side menu and then click “Join or renew online.” You will receive an immediate acknowledgement and a receipt after filling out the form.

If you would rather pay by check, use the LIRA renewal form printed in this newsletter. Every member must complete a form; both members of a couple must complete a form. Send the form(s) and check to the Alumni Office, as stated on the renewal form, by August 15, 2020. Dues checks will be accepted at the Convocation in September **by exception only**.

We look forward to seeing you in the next academic year.

Bonnie Heines, Membership Chair

Slate of Officers for 2020- 2021

The Nominating Committee would like to present the 2020-2021 nominations for officers of LIRA to be voted on at the Annual Meeting. All nominees have agreed to serve if elected.

President.....Peter Sebelius
Vice-President.....Nancy Pitkin
Secretary.....Lynn Tyndall
Treasurer.....Steve Buccieri

Nominating Committee
Richard Grove, Chairman
Bob Hanlon
Carol McCarthy

Trips from Spring 2020

Many of you submitted checks in payment for our Spring trips that have been cancelled.

\$10 Indian Hill Music Program - all checks have been destroyed

\$30 BSO Rehearsal - all checks have been destroyed

\$28 Royall House Tour - all checks have been destroyed

\$16 Merrimack Repertory Theater - The production of "At Wit's End" has been re-scheduled for January, 2021. We are asking anyone that has purchased a ticket to please mail it back to **Diane Baker, 55 Virginia Ave, Lowell, MA 01852**. Checks submitted for payment will then be destroyed. If you submitted payment and did not get a ticket, your check will be destroyed. Tickets will be made available for purchase for the January show as we get closer to that time.

Diane Baker

CSI Lowell - Trails of Evidence: How Forensic Science Works



This was the second part of a two-semester series focusing on Forensic Science. In this part we studied the most gruesome aspects of forensic science including the science of death, algor, livor and rigor, better known as the settling of blood, the cooling of the body and the stiffening of the muscles over time after death. We then went on to learn about cause and manner of death, decomposition, and skeleton studies. Finally and mercifully, we moved on to police sketches, interviews, interrogation and analysis of the criminal mind. Over the span of two semesters and 16 classes, LIRA members got an overview of the protocols and science involved with forensic analysis and how different it is from so many CSI television shows.

Peter Sebelius



The next newsletter will be out around September 1, 2020; the deadline for news items is August 15, 2020. Please remember that the coordinators are now responsible for getting someone to write an article about their program, if you want something to appear in the newsletter. Please send your articles to [Becky Bronson](#) at any time before the deadline.

Many thanks to Becky Bronson for agreeing to edit your articles and check for accessibility. Welcome to the Newsletter Committee, Becky!

Jeri Durant

Slavery Didn't End; It Just Evolved

On March 11th, Jesse Heines delivered an informative presentation on the work of Attorney Bryan Stevenson, author of “Just Mercy” and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. In a fact-packed two hours, Jesse outlined Stevenson’s current focus on getting people to face the history of discrimination in our country. Through videos, historical facts, statistics and quotes, he led the group in a comprehensive account and thoughtful discussion of slavery, lynching, Jim Crow segregation and mass incarceration. Participants were able to react in real time to questions posed during the discussion by using an interactive app on their smart phones. Also included in the presentation were riveting photos of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, where Jesse and Bonnie recently visited. As an added bonus, a handout was distributed with references to more information on Bryan Stevenson and the topics discussed in the program. All materials were also posted on [Jesse’s website](#).

Diane Baker



Bryan Stevenson and Jesse Heines

Perspectives on U.S. Responses to Crises: The Coronavirus Response in Historical Context

Robert Farrant, distinguished University Professor of History and frequent contributor to LIRA, presented a Zoom lecture comparing the historical impact of disasters in the U.S. to the current Coronavirus pandemic. Professor Farrant identified the current crisis and our response to it as an inflection point in history. He defined an inflection point as an event or series of events resulting in a significant change in the progress of a company, industry, economy, political system or country which could be considered a turning point after which a dramatic change, either positive or negative, results. Examples of historical inflection points include the Black Death, the U.S. Civil War, the Great Depression, and the Second World War. Professor Farrant highlighted how today’s closures of schools and churches and limitations on gatherings is not much different than the 1918 response to the Spanish Flu, although in 1918 there was no promise of a vaccine and we did not have the level of understanding about the Coronavirus genome that we have today.

Professor Farrant went on to describe both successful and unsuccessful responses to outbreaks and disasters facing U.S. administrations in the past and the political realities that resulted. He predicted the reaction of the current Administration to the current disaster will be judged similarly.



Peter Sebelius

With Age Comes Wisdom – Sometimes

LIRA welcomed back its favorite Pediatrician/Psychiatrist/Neurologist, Dr. Arnie Kerzner from the woods of Maine for another class about our brains and the experience of growing up and then old. While his focus was on aging and perhaps becoming wise, he also delved into our Covid-19 imposed isolation and the impact of that on elements of hopefulness based on new research about immunity, medication, and the coming vaccine.

Arnie began by presenting how Wisdom develops over our entire lifespan using three different developmental schemas as studied by Freud, Erikson and Maslow. He discussed how we learn to interact with other people as infants by the example set by our parents. He then moved on to how the brain changes as we grow and mature and the impact of this on wisdom. Brain changes, including Neurogenesis (new neuron cells) and Neuroplasticity (increase of neuronal connections) were discussed. Additionally, Arnie presented how memory systems can be improved via exposures to various forms of stimulation in the aging community. In his last lecture, Arnie introduced the concept of the "Post- Covid Isolation Syndrome."

Arnie's four-part series was very well attended over the Zoom meeting network.

Peter Sebelius



Screen shot from Arnie's Zoom Class

A Round of Applause



Where would we be and what would we be doing this past semester without the hard work of all those LIRA members that brought us our classes on Zoom? A **Big Thank You** to Peter who hosted almost every meeting and to those that presented courses: Peter Sebelius, Bob Fesmire, Arnie Kerzner, Bob Hanlon, Richard Grove, Bev and Kim Rudeen. There are many others along the way who helped make this past semester a success. Thank you to all who helped, participated and made our isolated lives more bearable.

American Heritage Museum Presentation

On Tuesday, March 24, LIRA members were treated to an excellent presentation on our new favorite platform – ZOOM. Twenty-five LIRA members participated in a program about the American Heritage Museum and the innovations the museum features. The American Heritage Museum is in Hudson/Stow on the grounds of the Collings Foundation. This program was presented in preparation for a field trip to the museum which will hopefully happen this summer.

Dr. Fontaine began by describing some of the innovations that happen in wartime. She described how West Point decided to follow the Napoleonic measurements of using meters, rather than the English system of measuring in the early 18th century.

During World War I, pocket watches were the norm. Since it was rather awkward fumbling for a watch in your pocket, wrist watches were invented. At this time, prosthetics for arms and legs, and cosmetic surgery for disfigured faces became available. Also, an early radar system was developed.

During World War II, the English Spitfire plane was repaired 24 hours a day to fool the enemy into thinking there were more planes than England actually had. In 1942 Duck boats were manufactured. We learned that “DUKW is a manufacturer's code based on D indicating the model year, 1942; U referring to the body style, utility (amphibious); K for all-wheel drive; and W for dual rear axles.”

Duct Tape



Universities also became involved in the war effort. There was a need to find a replacement for rubber, and synthetic rubber was invented for tires. Duct tape was invented to keep water out of ammunition boxes – like water is repelled off a duck.

Literacy improved for men in the service because you had to be able to read orders! Also, during World War II there was a need for translators.

In Lowell, the Atlantic Parachute Company flourished. Companies competed for workers, and workers had a choice of moving to better paying jobs.

Also in Lowell, Congresswoman Edith Norse Rogers signed a bill in 1930 to bring an airport to the city (the old Raytheon Plant in South Lowell).

Thank you to Dr. Fontaine – and we hope we can visit the American Heritage Museum soon.

Nancy Pitkin

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LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
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2020 Summer Intersession

The 2020 Summer Intersession, given between semesters, offers to retirees and those semi-retired, a sample of LIRA's almost year-round program and friendly community. The program is planned and much of it provided by the members themselves. The general public is invited to all Summer Intersession programs.

All programs run from 10 a.m. to Noon on Wednesdays except for the program on July 29 which is from 1 – 3 p.m. There is no program on June 24, instead it will be on Thursday, June 25. The Book Discussions are on Friday from 10 a.m. to Noon. All classes will be running online using Zoom. You will be getting the invites vial email before the beginning of the programs.

Friday, May 15: Book Discussion 10 a.m. to Noon

Say Nothing: a true story of murder and memory in Northern Ireland by Patrick Keefe

Facilitator: Susan Lemire*

June 3: Ranking the First Ladies /The Presidential Book of Lists – Ian Randal Strock

Author and editor Ian Randal Strock will speak about his books “Ranking the First Ladies” and “The Presidential Book of Lists”. You can find Ian at his website ianrandalstrock.com.

Coordinator: Bev Rudeen*

June 10: Cryptocurrency – Chris Wilkinson

Is cryptocurrency the global currency of the future? Has the bitcoin bubble already come crashing down? Join us as we unpack cryptocurrency and what it means to consumers.

UMass Lowell's Chris Wilkinson, an adjunct professor in political science explores cryptocurrencies and how these new financial mechanisms work. The talk covers the rise, fall and rise again of Bitcoin and alternative coins as well as why the underlying distributed architecture of cryptographic digital assets are important for everything from medical records to artificial intelligence.

Coordinator: Nancy Pitkin*

June 17: My Japan – Reflections On Living and Working in Japan for Over 25 Years - Marie Gleason- Tada*

From 1971 to 1996, and continuing to now, Marie has had a unique experience with Japanese life and culture. Please join her as she shares with the LIRA community her personal experiences along with insights into Japan's extraordinary history, culture and traditions.

Coordinator: Peter Sebelius*

Friday June 19: Book Discussion 10 a.m. to Noon

The Nickel Boys, fiction by Colson Whitehead

Facilitator: Wendy Stanley*

Thursday, June 25: Narcissism: The imbalance of loving self and loving others – Dr. Arnie Kerzner

Feeling loved and loving another are two of the most fundamental needs for a healthy development.

When does self-love become a clinical syndrome of narcissism? What are the origins of this condition?

Are there different "degrees of narcissism"? Are there positive and negative aspects? In time, can one change, learn and grow from this condition?

Coordinator: Peter Sebelius*

July 8: Are We Alone? The Search for Life beyond Earth – Kelly Beatty

Our galaxy likely contains more planets than stars, so what are the odds of finding distant Earth-like worlds that teem with life? Is it possible inhabitants of another planet are trying to contact us—and would we be able to recognize extraterrestrial life if it exists? To answer these questions, Kelly Beatty, senior editor of Sky & Telescope magazine, traces a scientific quest that reaches back in time and across the vastness of space.

Coordinator: James Rutter*

July 15: Hollywood Blacklist – Dan Kimmel

In October 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee began a series of hearings on the relation between communism and Hollywood. Within months, ten writers/directors/producers were going to prison for contempt of Congress and the industry announced they would not employ anyone who could not clear themselves of the charge of being a communist sympathizer. For the next fifteen years the blacklist would be a chapter of the nationwide Red Scare, where people named names of others to clear themselves, or else found other ways to try and survive. Daniel M. Kimmel, co-author of the play “The Waldorf Conference,” about the birth of the blacklist, will take us through the history of the era: the good, the bad, and the ironic.

Coordinator: Lisa Hertel*

July 22: “A Virtual Tour through Geologic Time in Zion, Bryce and the Grand Canyon National Parks” Professor Lori Weeden

Some of the most visited places in the United States are the Grand Canyon, Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. These exceptionally beautiful areas represent pages from a book of the geologic past. Join us as we explore expansive deserts, inland seas, and volcanoes. You may need to schedule a trip in person soon!

Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache*

July 29: 1 – 3 p.m.: Election 2020: There is nothing normal this time – Professor Frank Talty

On the day of this presentation, we will be less than 100 days until the November 3 national election. In this mini class, we will look at the Presidential race, latest poll numbers, state by state analysis and Electoral Vote projections. We will also look at the 35 US Senate seats being decided on November 3 and at some important US House seats. While we can't predict the impact of the Coronavirus on the election, the pandemic and its disruption of all aspects of life will certainly be woven into our analysis of this important US election.

Coordinator: Sally Coulter*

* Indicates LIRA member

LIRA's Summer 2020 Intersession

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
May 25	May 26	May 27	May 28	May 29
June 1	June 2	June 3 10 a.m. to Noon Ranking the First Ladies/The Presidential Book of Lists Ian Randal Strock	June 4	June 5
June 8	June 9	June 10 10 a.m. to Noon Cryptocurrency Chris Wilkinson	June 11	June 12
June 15	June 16	June 17 10 a.m. to Noon My Japan—Reflections on Living and Working There for Over 25 Years Marie Gleason-Tada	June 18	June 19 10 a.m. to Noon Book Discussion <i>The Nickel Boys</i> fiction by Colson Whitehead
June 22	June 23	June 24	June 25 10 a.m. to Noon Narcissism: The imbalance of loving self and loving others	June 26

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			Dr. Arnie Kerzner, MD	
July 6	July 7	July 8 10 a.m. to Noon Are We Alone? The Search for Life Beyond Earth Kelly Beatty	July 9	July 10
July 13	July 14	July 15 10 a.m. to Noon Hollywood Blacklist Dan Kimmel	July 16	July 17
July 20	July 21	July 22 10 a.m. to Noon A Virtual Tour through Geologic Time in Zion, Bryce and the Grand Canyon National Parks Prof. Lori Weeden	July 23	July 24
July 27	July 28	July 29 1 – 3 p.m. Election 2020: There is nothing normal this time Prof. Frank Talty	July 30	July 31
		SEPTEMBER		
September 7	September 8	September 9 10 a.m. to Noon Fall Convocation	September 10	September 11
September 14	September 15	September 16	September 17	September 18
Classes begin				

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION/UMASS LOWELL

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If renewing as a couple, each one must fill out a renewal form.

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____ EMAIL _____

In the event of class cancellation I prefer to be notified by EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

Newsletter will be delivered by EMAIL unless you have notified us to send by mail.

Are you a graduate of UMass Lowell? _____ What Year/Degree? _____

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____ EMAIL _____

In the event of class cancellation I prefer to be notified by EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

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Are you a graduate of UMass Lowell? _____ What Year/Degree? _____

LIRA membership dues are \$125. (\$200 for couples) for the year July 1 – June 30, payable by August 15. Half-year LIRA membership dues for new members only are \$75 (\$125 for couples) for Jan. 1 -June 30 payable after Jan. 1.

A portion of your membership fee will be tax-deductible and will benefit our student scholarship fund. For additional information see LIRA's website [here](#). By submitting this application you grant permission for LIRA to use your image for promotional purposes.

Please return Renewals (or apply online by credit card) with a check payable to UMass Lowell, memo line LIRA and mail to:

Office of Alumni Relations, Charles J. Hoff Scholarship Center
UMass Lowell
One Perkins Street
Lowell, MA 01854

April 2020