



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



December 2025

Vol. 32 No 4

LIRA Holiday Party 2025

Wednesday, December 3

10 a.m. – noon
Moloney Ballroom
(University Crossing) OR on Zoom

Hear about Winter Intersession offerings!

Participate in the Holiday Raffle!

Hear from Scholarship recipients!

Enjoy the camaraderie of friends!

Support Community Teamwork with donations of hats, gloves, and children's books!

From the President

We have just wrapped up the LIRA Fall 2025 semester with a wonderful selection of courses, programs, and field trips. The courses engaged participants in new learning and lively discussion. It was great to see so many new LIRA members in attendance.

Many thanks go to everyone who helped organize the fall program. Special thanks to our Curriculum Chairs Jim Rutter and Simon Curry, as well as the Curriculum Committee, for all their hard work to organize a successful fall program. I would also like to thank the many LIRA members who served as class coordinators, Zoom hosts, and program presenters, as well as the volunteers who provided delicious snacks during the breaks. Every contribution helps make our sessions a success. Thank you!

The **2025 LIRA Holiday Party is Wednesday, December 3rd**, from 10 a.m. to noon in the Jacqueline and Edward Moloney Hall, 2nd Floor, University Crossing, and on Zoom. I hope everyone can make it to the meeting, either in person or on Zoom. Please see the agenda and parking information included in the newsletter.

A highlight of the December meeting is the awarding of \$2000 scholarships to five outstanding UML students. Special thanks go to Margie Berenson, [Debby](#) Friedman, and the Scholarship Committee for the demanding work of reviewing many scholarship applications.

To help support the **LIRA Scholarship Fund**, LIRA members are encouraged to bring a consumable item valued at \$25 or less (holiday basket, wine, cheese platter, gift card, etc.) to be raffled off during the meeting. All proceeds from the raffle are donated to the LIRA Scholarship Fund. For more information about the **Holiday Raffle**, see the article by Sheila Pariseau in this Newsletter. If you are unable to attend in person, you can still send a donation directly to the Scholarship Fund.

We also ask members to bring new hats, mittens, gloves, and children's books to the Holiday Party to support the **Community Teamwork Inc (CTI) Donation**. For more information, see the article by Kathy Forstey in this newsletter. Please note that the table centerpieces at the meeting are books that Kathy Forstey has collected all year long and then hauled up to the Holiday Party to donate to CTI. If you see Kathy at the meeting, make sure to thank her for all her hard work on this project.

The Curriculum Committee will introduce the **Winter Intersession** class schedule at the holiday party. During the Winter Intersession, I encourage you to invite friends, family, and anyone you think might be interested in trying out LIRA. All intersession classes are open to guests both in person and on Zoom. The Winter Intersession will be held on Wednesdays from January 7 through March 2. Hybrid sessions will meet in University Suites 106 and on Zoom. In the event of **inclement weather**, and always when UML closes, we will shift to Zoom-only sessions. LIRA will notify members by 6:00 p.m. on the day before if we cancel the in-person class.

I look forward to seeing you at the holiday party on December 3rd. To borrow travel-writer Rick Steves' advice of "Keep on Traveling," I say, "Keep on Learning" with LIRA.

Best regards,
David Troughton

LIRA'S Scholarship Fund Annual Raffle

We will hold our annual raffle at the LIRA Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 3. The raffle will be a "Consumable Raffle" once again. It is a fundraiser for the Scholarship Fund, and this year LIRA will be giving five UML students \$2,000 scholarships each.

What is a Consumable Raffle? It is a raffle where all donated items can be consumed, i.e., you eat it, drink it, do it, or use it up. The Committee sells tickets: \$1 per ticket, \$5 for 6 tickets or \$10 for 18 tickets. You decide what item(s) you want and put your ticket(s) in the appropriate container(s). All donations must be brought directly to Moloney Hall (University Crossing) on the day of the party.

Some things you might donate: Baked Goods; Candy; Wine; Gift Certificates, i.e., restaurant, movie, theater, grocery store, and bookstore. The suggested amount for donation is about \$25.

Suggestions for Baskets you can make:

Book—put a gently used book in a basket with a bookmark, book light, china teacup, box of tea, etc.

Food—Italian or Mexican

Soup Lovers Basket

I think you get the idea. It will all be wonderful and we have a great time deciding just what we want to win. Thank you to everyone who has donated in the past. Let's make a difference in someone's life and have a great raffle again this year.

Sheila Pariseau

Books, Hats and Gloves

Lira has had a longstanding relationship with Community Teamwork of Lowell, which provides vital services to low-income people. Once again, we are asking our members to bring the following items to our holiday party. Hats and mittens for all age groups are greatly needed. Also, please bring books (hardcovers and paperbacks) for children ages 2 to 11. All items will be given to Cynthia Perrone, the volunteer specialist of Community Teamwork, who will distribute them to the families who will benefit. If you need further information, please contact Kathy Forstey at k3and2@netscape.net.

Kathy Forstey

LIRA Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

10:00 AM – Noon

Moloney Hall, 2nd Floor
University Crossing or Zoom

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

2025 LIRA Student Scholarship Presentations

Holiday Raffle

Winter Intersession Course Offerings

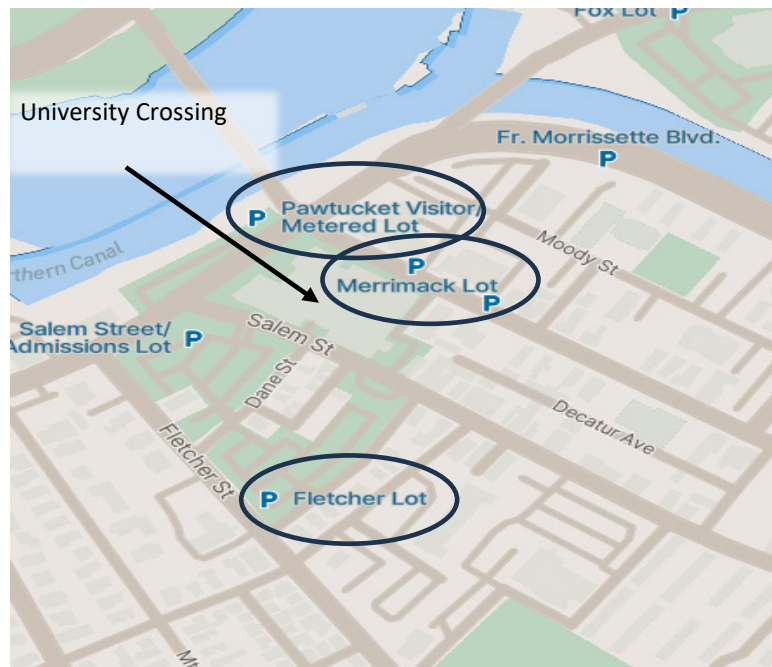
“Books, Hats, and Gloves” Donations

UML LIRA Recognition

Enjoy Camaraderie of Friends

PARKING

Parking with LIRA Hangtags is available at the Fletcher St. and Merrimack St. Lots and on Father Morrisette Blvd.
Metered Parking is available at the Pawtucket Visitor's Lot



LIRA Scholarship Fund

Fall is the time of year when we remind you that the LIRA Scholarship Fund depends on the donations of its members. Right now, the committee is reading the applications of the UMass Lowell students who hope to be one of the five award winners this year. The applicants are all academically exceptional as well as volunteer leaders in the community who give their time and energy to help others. But they in turn need our help. So please continue to support their efforts by making a generous contribution to the LIRA Scholarship Fund.

Thank you!

LIRA Scholarship Fund Committee: Margie Berenson, Debby Friedman, Marge Nardini, Judy Troughton and Esther Wikander.

Please send a check made out to UMass Lowell with LIRA Scholarship Fund in the memo line to:

Debby Friedman
21 Jonathan Lane
Chelmsford, MA 01824
Deborah_friedman@uml.edu

Or: Donate at the UMass Lowell website: www.uml.edu. Click "Make a gift" at the top of the page. Under "Designations" choose "Other" and for "Other Fund Name" fill in: **LIRA Scholarship Fund**.

If you send your donation directly to UMass Lowell, please email me so I can update my records. Thank you so much.

Debby

Inclement Weather

If it becomes necessary to cancel an in-person LIRA program for any reason, i.e. snowstorm, hazardous road conditions, or UMass Lowell campus closure, we attempt to notify all members. Assuming no major power outages, we will not cancel classes, but simply shift to Zoom only.

UMass Lowell closures and delayed openings are announced on local TV news programs and on the internet www.uml.edu/storm. We may also cancel in-person programs when UMass Lowell is open if we think conditions are too hazardous for our members. We make a decision about next day storm cancellations by 6:00 PM, so check your email in the morning to see if classes that day are cancelled or shifted to Zoom only.

Cyrus Dallin Museum Tour

Fifteen LIRA members toured the Cyrus Dallin Museum in Arlington, MA on November 5.

"The museum was a very interesting experience for us. John appreciated the historical significance of the artful contributions Dallin made to our culture. The details of the process involved in his creations were ably presented by our Docent, Geri Trembly. Geri gave an especially amazing depiction of how the 'Paul Revere' statue in Boston's North End was finally approved after many years of work. Dallin focused on the beauty of the Native American culture as well. Even the history of how the museum was developed was quite interesting. Knowing that Dallin's sculptures are scattered about the state and U.S. is intriguing. We recommend a visit to the museum and will definitely return in the future."

(Submitted by LIRA members Carol & John Heidenrich)



Plaster Mold for the "Appeal to the Great Spirit"
/Boston Museum of Fine Arts Entrance, Cyrus
Dallin 1908

Highlighting LIRA member Jesse Heines

"In January 2025, a group of UMass Lowell students led by professor Robert Giles, and with them retired Professor Jesse Heines and African Community Center of Lowell Founder Gordon Donkoh-Halm, went on a trip to the African country of Ghana. While there they visited the Winneba Anglican Primary School, which Heines would be inspired to help by leading an effort to donate thousands of books to the school and fund a renovation of its building..."

Read the full article in the Lowell Sun at:
https://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic_article_popover.aspx?guid=1b6d1369-49eb-4d75-8d2d-a33c2bf7cf73&v=sd&appcode=TLS060&guid=09f8af43-184e-41b5-87f3-d969b0098963&pnum=1#

If you would like to contribute to Jesse's ongoing efforts to ship more books, you can do that at this link:

<https://gofund.me/a7068a6b>

Toxic Use Reduction Institute (TURI) Tour

Following the LIRA presentation by TURI staff members on “Dispelling myths around disinfection, sanitization, and household cleaners,” 10 LIRA members toured the TURI Institute and had a hands-on opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of various commercial and home-made stain removers. Located in the Boot Mill, the TURI Institute is a non-governmental agency affiliated with UMass Lowell. TURI works with commercial and governmental agencies to evaluate chemical toxicity and pollution potential.



LIRA Members don protective clothing and goggles on the TURI tour

LIRA members work with TURI staff member, Alex Symko, in the evaluation of commercial and home-made cleaning solutions.



Tour of Pawtucket Farm

LIRA members enjoyed a tour of the Pawtucket Farm Wildlife Sanctuary (PFWS), formerly known as Rollie's Farm, on September 17. This was formerly a Christmas tree farm and is now a community-based collaboration between Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust, Mass Audubon, and Mill City Grows.



LIRA 2026 Winter Intersession
Course Descriptions
January 7, 2026 – March 2, 2026

**Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Analyze the
2026 Great Decisions Topics**

Wednesday, January 7, 2026 10 a.m. - Noon Hybrid
Presenters: Neal Berenson*, Steve Cerand* and Jon Boroshok

Developed by the Foreign Policy Association, the **2026 Great Decisions Program** offers an opportunity for LIRA members to learn about and discuss the most critical global issues and world affairs facing America. In this LIRA session, Professor Jon Boroshok will teach us how to use AI tools to access and evaluate relevant research to support presentations, discussion and understanding of these topics. The topics for the **2026 Great Decisions Program** include: *America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy, Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy, U.S.- China Relations, Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation, Ukraine and the Future of European Security, Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order, U.S. Engagement in Africa, and The Future of Human Rights and International Law*. Please come to this session to help us raise important questions and to prepare for LIRA's 2026 Great Decisions program.

*Coordinator: David Troughton**

**Reconstructing the Voice of James Stevens,
Revolutionary Soldier**

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 10 a.m. - Noon Hybrid
Presenter: Antoine Trombino-Aponte

This roughly 2-hour program examines the Journal of James Stevens, a Revolutionary War diary written in 1775, notable for its phonetic spelling and unique vernacular, which provide a firsthand look at the dialect of colonial-period English that Pvt. Stevens spoke. The presentation explores the development of colonial English from the 16th century through to the Revolutionary Era, and analyzes a selection of key sources from the time

period, including other war diaries, literary works, historical dictionaries, and more, in order to reconstruct the Colonial English dialect of the Merrimack Valley as spoken by James Stevens circa 1775. The dialect is brought to life via audio recordings of several passages from Stevens' Diary read aloud in his reconstructed dialect, which are included in the presentation and are currently on display alongside the diary at the North Andover Historical Society in an interactive exhibit.

*Coordinator: Peter Sebelius**

Travel Experiences

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 10 a.m. - Noon Hybrid

Presenters: Chris Geggis* and Lisa Hertel*

LIRA members Chris Geggis and Lisa Hertel will share several travel experiences. The talk will include a discussion regarding how photo and media sharing on the internet has evolved over the years, and where things appear to be headed. There will be a deep dive into a recent Viking river cruise from Prague to Budapest. Then, a fall trip around Norway featuring the Northern Lights. Lisa will explain what causes this amazing natural display.



Coordinator: TBD

Victorian Dress

Wednesday, January 28, 2026 10 a.m. - Noon Hybrid

Presenter: Lisa Ashton

With antique photos and detailed photos of antique garments, we'll talk about the Victorian Era, and fashion milestones, how dress related to social status, available fabrics, and how clothes were made. We'll look at how dress changed during the Civil War, and fashion by decade and occasions, such as mourning and pregnancy. We'll also look at accessories, tools, undergarments, quilts, and more, as time permits.

*Coordinator: Lisa Hertel**

Introductory Yoga

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 10:00 a.m. - Noon In Person Only

Presenter: Diana Dellogono

Join the Campus Recreation Staff for a tour of the facility (LIRA members can obtain a Campus Recreation Center Membership) and a short exercise class designed to help improve balance, muscle strength and endurance. The exercises performed are designed so that you can complete them on your own at home. You will have to sign a waiver upon entry.

*Coordinator: Jim Rutter**

Trade, Its Expansion and Restriction

Wednesdays, February 11 and 18, 2026 10:00 a.m. - Noon Hybrid

Presenter: Jim Pope*

Humans have traded throughout history, though only in the past few centuries have theories and systems of trade evolved. We will begin by focusing on past trade and the evolution of the theories governing it. We will follow with the implications of these theories in practice and how the approach to trade has developed over the years, focusing on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and will then concentrate on post-WWII with the establishment of GATT, the IMF and the World Bank, with their benefits and problems. We will finish by studying the period from 1990

to the present, with globalization, the WTO, NAFTA and the subsequent reaction against globalization. This will include Brexit, the varieties of trade restriction techniques used by governments, their rationale and their implications. We will finish by trying to look ahead at the continued evolution of trade theory.

*Coordinator: Jim Rutter**

Introduction to Homer's *Iliad*
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:00 a.m. - Noon Hybrid
Presenter: Alan Friedman*

The *Iliad* is one of the oldest complete surviving literary works in the Western canon. Surprisingly, for such a work, it is still extensively read and studied today, still accorded the status of masterpiece.

According to Bernard Knox in his introduction to the 1990 Robert Fagles translation of the *Iliad*, the accepted version of the Greek text consists of 15,693 lines of dactylic hexameter verse. It gives an account of events that occurred over 3,000 years ago in a time and place with beliefs and customs vastly different from our own. A careful reading of the *Iliad* is extremely rewarding but extremely demanding as well. The time and commitment required for such a course might discourage many students, not to mention the presenter.

In a single two-hour class, we will not be able to come close to a full appreciation of the *Iliad*. I hope, however, that we will provide an interesting introduction to some aspects of the work, dispel a number of common misunderstandings, and perhaps even motivate one or two students to embark on their own study of this fascinating work.

*Coordinator: Simon Curry**

Dance Historian

Monday, March 2, 2026 10:00 a.m. - Noon Hybrid

Presenter: Susan de Guardiola

Beyond the Conga Line: the original Conga fad from the social dance floor to Hollywood!

“Do that conga!” The conga line has been a popular party dance since the 1930s, when it was danced at the engagement ball of the future Queen Elizabeth II. But the original conga fad encompassed much more than the line. Conga could be a simple dance for couples, a highly choreographed theatrical number, or even incorporated into a square dance. It appeared everywhere from Hollywood movies to cartoons, performed by everyone from Desi Arnaz and Judy Garland to Popeye and Bugs Bunny. Social dance historian Susan de Guardiola will discuss the wide variety of conga in a presentation filled with fabulous video clips from the Golden Age of Hollywood. Simple conga dancing will follow for those who wish to participate.

*Coordinator: Lisa Hertel**

Book Discussion

10:00 a.m. - Noon Zoom Only

Friday, December 12, 2025 - James by Percival Everett, 2024, 302 pages.

Discussion leader: Bob Hanlon*

Friday, January 16, 2026 - The Frozen River, by Ariel Lawhorn, 2023, 432 pages. Discussion leader: Steve Buccieri. "A historical fiction novel that follows Martha Ballard, a real-life midwife in 18th century Maine, who is called to examine a man's body found frozen in the Kennebec River. This propels her into a complex murder investigation that exposes the secrets of her close-knit community."

Friday, February 20, 2026 - Lovely One: a memoir, by Ketanji Brown Jackson, 2024, 405 pages. Discussion leader: Marie-Anne Fernando. "With this unflinching account, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson invites readers into her life and world, tracing her family's ascent from segregation to her confirmation on America's highest court within the span of one generation." Recommended in conjunction with the LIRA Diversity Committee.

*Coordinator: Sheila Pariseau**

Film Discussion

10:00 a.m. - Noon Zoom Only

Friday, December 19, 2025: A Day Without a Mexican
Discussion leader Carol Valcik.

Friday, January 23, 2026 - Au Revoir les Enfants 1987.
Discussion leader: Marie-Anne Fernando*

Friday, February 27, 2026 - Jean de Florette 1986.
Discussion leader: Robert Slezak*

*Coordinator: Marie-Anne Fernando**

LIRA 2026 Winter Intersession Calendar

Zoom Only in Red

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
December 1	December 2	December 3 10 am to Noon LIRA Holiday Party	December 4	December 5
December 8	December 9	December 10	December 11	December 12 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>James Percival Everett</i>
December 15	December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19 Film Discussion <i>A Day Without a Mexican</i>
January 5	January 6	January 7 10 am to Noon Using AI to Analyze the 2026 Great Decisions Topics	January 8	January 9
January 12	January 13	January 14 10 am to Noon Reconstructing the Voice of James Stevens, Revolutionary Soldier	January 15	January 16 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>The Frozen River Ariel Lawhorn</i>
January 19	January 20	January 21 10 am to Noon Travel Experiences	January 22	January 23 Film Discussion <i>Au Revoir les Enfants</i>
January 26	January 27	January 28 10 am to Noon Victorian Dress	January 29	January 30

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
February 2	February 3	February 4 10 am to Noon Introductory Yoga <i>In Person Only</i>	February 5	February 6
February 9	February 10	February 11 10 am to Noon Trade, Its Expansion and Restriction	February 12	February 13
February 16	February 17	February 18 10 am to Noon Trade, Its Expansion and Restriction	February 19	February 20 Book Discussion <i>Lovely One: A Memoir</i> Ketanji Brown Jackson
February 23	February 24	February 25 10 am to Noon Introduction to Homer's Iliad	February 26	February 27 Film Discussion <i>Jean de Florette</i>
March 2 10 am to Noon Dance Historian	March 3	March 4	March 5	March 6