



# LIRA NEWSLETTER

LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION  
Office of Community Service – UMass Lowell  
Member of Elderhostel Institute Network  
Tel.: (978) 934-3135 Web: [uml.edu/community/LIRA](http://uml.edu/community/LIRA)

March 2010

Vol. 17 No. 1



## Potluck Luncheon/Town Meeting

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

10 AM until Noon

MIL Conference Center, Suffolk Street, Lowell  
(Wannalancit Building)

Meet the two Scholarship recipients.

Participate in the Consumable Auction.

Hear about our Spring Schedule.

Vote on the revised By-laws.

Enjoy the good food and meeting with friends.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by wearing a little green.

See inside for details.

## 2009 Scholarship Awards

From our scholarship applicants, we ask for Junior or Senior, full time UMass Lowell students with a grade point average of 3.0 or better. They must take part in extra-curricular activities, have defined life goals and participate in community service.

We had seventeen very good applicants. Our winners both received an equal number of votes. First, we awarded a \$1500 Scholarship Award to Sopheavy Seng, who also received our 2008 Scholarship Award.

Sopheavy is aiming for a Bachelor of Science in community health with a minor in psychology. Her life goal is to become an oncologist. English is her second language, Khmer is the first. In her first year at UMass Lowell, she was inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta, Psi Chi, the National Honor society, in psychology and the Freshman Honor Society. As a senior, she is a member of the Honors program, an honoree on the National Dean's List for three semesters, a student officer in Alpha Lambda Delta and a member of the Mock Trial team. She worked at Market Basket from 2002 to mid 2008, volunteered with the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, assisting non-English speaking people seeking medical care and volunteered at a nursing home. Her letter of recommendation from her professor said that she had been involved in translating and helping her own family adjust and had serious illnesses of her own that involved having to go to

Boston for treatment and consultation. I think that you will agree with us that this scholarship is well deserved.

The second \$1500 scholarship went to Danane Chhor. It's hard to know where to begin with Danane, so I will give you some highlights. She is a senior, majoring in biology. She has been in the honors program since the fall of 2006, is listed in the Who's Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges and is a recipient of the Emerging Leader of the year award for 2008-2009. She is bilingual in English and Khmer. Her internship skills included research in Neurobiology, training as a certified nursing assistant, and observing at the Metta clinic and at Dracut Pediatrics. Her goal is to be a nurse practitioner. Since 2002, she has been affiliated with Lowell General Hospital first as a volunteer, contributing over 500 hours of volunteer service at the information desk, the cancer center and the medical surgical unit, then as an employee. This past August, she went as a member of the UMass Lowell chapter of Global Medical Brigades to volunteer a weeks' worth of service in Honduras. What a wonderful resume for someone so young.

These girls speak well for themselves and for UMass Lowell.

*Mary Jane Meyers, Chairperson  
Betty Bayard  
Kay Carroll  
Al McKersie  
Dotty Morris*

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## Green Energy

On January 6, Hale Powell spoke to us about green energy and conservation. Hale has expertise in both engineering and public policy. His company, H Powell Energy Associates, has worked with National Grid for 10 years, with various states in the South and New England, and with the Energy Committee in his home town of Westford. Electricity has been so relatively cheap in our country for years that much re-education is needed. Hale showed a chart with various energy sources and their relative costs/kwh: "clean" coal — 12 cents, nuclear — 11 cents, solar/thermal — 10 cents, wind — 5 cents, and energy efficiency — 3 cents. So why is energy efficiency so hard to unlock? It involves everything and everybody. Retrofitting existing buildings with efficient windows, LED lights, and thermostats set to go down at night seems a no-brainer, but it takes convincing the buildings' owners since it's the renters who pay the electric bill. Currently, there are two proposed school projects in Westford using photovoltaic panels. Construction will be approximately 1/2 million, but will be funded partly by stimulus money and tax credits. Hale concluded by telling us about something to look forward to in the future -- solar shingles for roofs.

*Barbara Page*

## Treasured Lands: The fifty-eight U.S. National Parks in Focus

Coming on Sunday, March 14 at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington is a talk by Quang-Tuan Luong on "Treasured Lands." He traded a career in artificial intelligence to become a photographer of our national parks. Get an inside view of the Ken Burns film, "America's Best Idea," which features his work. The time is 2:00 PM and the talk is free. Book signing follows.

On Sunday, March 21 at 2:00 PM there is a Gallery Talk, "Treasured Lands." It also is free.

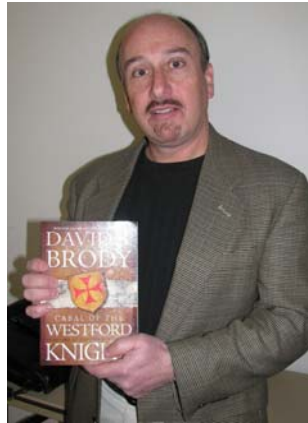
## National Heritage Museum Coming Event

"Movie Theaters and American Culture" Sunday, March 28 at 2:00 PM

Ross Melnick, film historian at UCLA presents "Exhibiting Change: Movie Theaters and American Culture from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Images and video capture the past 100+ years of moviegoing. Historic theaters in the digital era are also explored. Free. Book signing follows.

## David Brody *Cabal of the Westford Knight*

What do you get when you combine an image of the Westford Knight sword, a sword carved in stone, a stone carving in Westford that shows a knorr, a 14<sup>th</sup> century ship, mortar from the stones used to build the Newport Tower, and inscriptions on a rock in Maine in a Runic language developed by the Norse people? The result is novelist David Brody's historical fiction novel, *The Cabal of the Westford Knight, Templars at the Newport Tower*.



On Wednesday, February 3, David Brody, a Boston Globe bestselling fiction writer, presented the back stories for his book *Cabal of the Westford Knight* which was inspired by the legend of the Westford Knight. According to the legend, Scottish explorers secretly visited Westford in 1398 and carved an effigy in stone to commemorate the death of a fallen comrade. Brody showed pictures of the carving that remains visible in Westford today. He also showed pictures of artifacts and presented his "case" that Prince Henry Sinclair left Scotland and traveled to America in the late 1300's, well before Christopher Columbus. Brody explained that Prince Henry and his group of Templar Knights and early Free Masons traveled south from Canada, then inland on the Merrimack River to Westford where the novel's adventure begins.

After answering questions, Brody signed copies of his book. The group enjoyed Brody's entertaining and informative presentation.

*Esther Wikander, Joanne Hyatt*

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## Crime Novels — An Academic Perspective

One of our favorite speakers from UMass Lowell, Dr. Melissa Pennell, will be at the Chelmsford Public Library on March 25, 2010 at 7 PM to discuss crime novels and how they reflect social ills. It is part of Chelmsford's One Book community reading campaign. This year's author is Dennis Lehane and the featured book is *Shutter Island*, although they will be discussing his other novels during the course of the series. Those of you that have heard her speak, know that she is a great fan of mysteries and detective novels and loves to talk about them. Look for further details on the library website: [www.chelmsfordlibrary.org](http://www.chelmsfordlibrary.org).

## CTI Donations

Your generous donations of hats and mittens were truly appreciated by Community Teamwork, Inc. Before the holidays, you donated 75 books, 22 sets of hats and mittens, 39 hats, 23 gloves/mittens and 3 scarves! There were many donations brought in on the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the winter intersession, also. Joan Aseltine from CTI and a colleague, came to the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to thank us personally for our generosity. She mentioned that they also have a winter coat collection at the Rogers School in Lowell and that they were thrilled to be able to add hats and mittens to go along with the coats. Thanks again to all!

Here is a note from Joan Aseltine:

*Dear Toby,*

*THANK YOU! We greatly appreciate LIRA's continued support and generous donations of children's books, hats, mittens, and scarves to benefit so many needy children. This year we are helping with the Coats for Kids Drive sponsored by Anton's Cleaners, and are distributing your donations through that program as well as to many of CTI's programs including our shelters, WIC, and Head Start.*

*Our best wishes for a happy, healthy New Year to everyone, and our thanks again for all your heartfelt gifts.*

*Sincerely,*

*Joan Aseltine, CTI Senior Corps Program Specialist*



LIRA members having lunch at Viet-Thai with the Cambodian educators who are visiting Lowell High School to learn how the students here are being taught about the Khmer Rouge and the genocide of 2 million people from 1975 to 1979. After John Croes gave his interesting talk about his visit to Cambodia, the visiting educators explained that up until five years ago, nothing was taught about the painful period of their history. They are here to learn and rewrite the history books so that all Cambodians will know about their history. Lowell has the second largest Cambodian-American community in the United States.

# LIRA Scholarship Fund Auction

## At March Madness Meeting

### On March 17<sup>th</sup>

The Consumable Auction that was scheduled for the Holiday Party will be held at the LIRA Town Meeting on March 17. The \$1500 Scholarship Awards have already been mailed to the two students in December, but we hope to be able to meet them at the Town Meeting. The Consumable Auction is a major fundraiser for the UMass Lowell Scholarships we give.

What is a Consumable Auction, you ask? It is an auction where all items donated would be consumed i.e., something you eat, drink, do, or use up. The Scholarship Committee sells tickets (\$1.00 ea or 6/\$5.00) and you decide what item(s) you want, and put your ticket(s) in the appropriate container(s). All donations must be brought directly to the Town Meeting on that day. We will not be collecting items beforehand.

#### ITEMS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO DONATE:

- \* Homemade cookies or bread
- \* Candy
- \* Baskets filled with boxes of teas with or without a mug, a pound of coffee with or without a mug, a spa basket, movie snacks with or without movie tickets, etc.
- \* Bottle of wine
- \* Passes to a movie
- \* Gift certificates of any kind, i.e., Dunkin Donuts, Market Basket, Panera Bread, etc.
- \* Suduko or Crossword Puzzle Books

#### SERVICES YOU COULD DONATE:

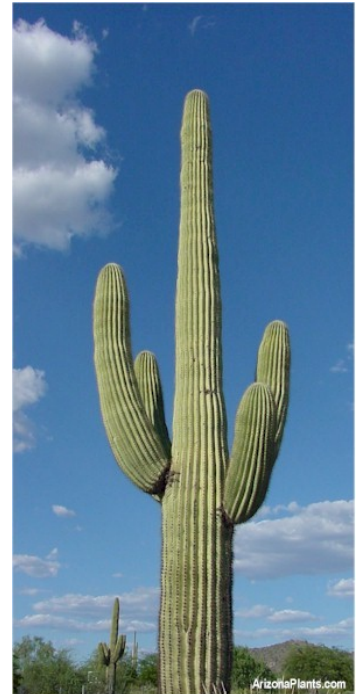
- \* If you like to bake you could give a certificate stating that you would make a homemade dessert or a plate of cookies; to be delivered to the winner at a future date.
- \* If you like animals you might offer to feed, walk, or watch someone's pet.
- \* If you like to drive you might offer to take someone to and from a doctor's or hospital visit, within the Lowell area.
- \* Lessons of any kind, i.e. knitting, crocheting.

The Auction Committee  
*Carol Cannistraro and Pat Dion*

## Tucson, Arizona

In the midst of one of our coldest months we were treated to a visit to Tucson, Arizona!

Jean Schott took us on a tour of Tucson located in the Sonoran Desert that reaches from Mexico north to the Tucson area and west to Baja, California. In the sixteenth century Father Kino, a missionary, was sent by the Spanish government to establish missionary settlements among the native tribes in order to convert them to Catholicism and to trade. Father Kino founded St. Xavier and other mission sites in the area. We saw photographs of the exterior and interior views of this church whose restoration was begun in the 1980's and completed in 1997. If you ever go to Tucson make sure you visit this mission church.



Jean also told us about the unique saguaro cacti that can live for 200 years. They can reach to about 50 ft. in the air and they can weigh as much as 900 lbs. These plants have had nourishing properties for the native Indians living in the area and they provide nesting places for birds. Jean mentioned other plant species of the area.

Then we were informed about the architect Joesler, a Swiss, and the builder, Murphy, an Irish American who collaborated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to plan and build public buildings and private homesteads in the Spanish American style. In California this style became known as the Santa Barbara style that was modeled more on the California mission style. This style of Joesler and Murphy is quickly recognized as "Spanish American" of the southwest.

*Jeanne Gunion*

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## Volunteer Fair in Chelmsford

LIRA will be participating in Chelmsford's annual Volunteer Fair on Saturday, March 13, 2010 from 10AM to Noon. The fair is being held at the Chelmsford Senior Center and is sponsored by the Chelmsford Library and the Senior Center. Marjorie Short arranged for LIRA to have a table there so we can 'Spread the Word'. The library's website, [www.chelmsfordlibrary.org](http://www.chelmsfordlibrary.org), has further information.

## National Parks Tour

On Jan 10, Jerry Gilmore presented a photo show of his and his wife's Grand Circle tour of the U.S. National Parks. It was over 2500 miles of a bus trip through South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, Arizona and Colorado. He took over 1000 pictures and showed many pictures of the National Parks that included Crazy Horse Monument, Mount Rushmore (the faces of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, T. Roosevelt and Lincoln carved into a mountain) Yellowstone and Old Faithful, Grand Teton mountain range, a Float trip on the Snake River, the ancient Pueblo ruins in Mesa Verde, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, and the very colorful rock formations of Bryce National Park, plus many other amazing sights. It was a magnificent trip and the photos were much appreciated. A few unusual ones are pictured below.

*Jerry Gilmore*



Jerry holding up a boulder on the way to Lake Powell



Goose Neck State Reserve



Rock Formation

## A Friend of LIRA in Baghdad

Recently Mehmed Ali, a Lowell National Park employee and an informed presenter about the city's history, sent a welcomed letter parts of which members may be interested in reading.

“I am now working my second year here in Baghdad for the U.S. Embassy where my new position is Special Advisor for Outreach. It is proving to be engaging work trying to connect Iraqi government and non-profit institutions to counterparts in the U.S. and across the world. Some projects that I am focusing on include providing training for local firefighters, assisting the growth of a light industrial park, and providing a literacy training program for Iraqi educators. I have also been coordinating assistance in several of the Iraqi Ministries which have been dealt deadly blows by extremists. We've toured several of the sites hit by bombings this year and it makes you ponder how humans can wreak such devastation on unknown others. My work

and hopes are betting on a success here but I'm sadly certain there will be more unfortunate trouble in between.

Iraq has been relatively cold as of late, even reaching the mid-40s at night. Now, I know you at home who might be facing massive snow storms and sub-zero temperatures aren't impressed but Baghdad doesn't see this kind of weather much and it's refreshing for an old New Englander like me.

This year marks my 20th anniversary working for the federal government — I can't believe that two decades have gone by already! I'm not sure what my next career move will be but I intend to keep discovering those roads that lead to adventure.”

We shall look forward to his safe return and a gladly received visit with LIRA.

*Connie Lanseigne-Case*

## LIRA's March Madness



Although the term "March Madness" usually refers to the excitement surrounding the final weeks of college basketball tournaments in the United States during the month of March, we have decided to use it to describe our rescheduled Holiday Party. Unfortunately, the weather on December 9<sup>th</sup> didn't cooperate and we

had to postpone the party to another time. It seemed appropriate to schedule it for our next general meeting which is the Town Meeting being held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Join us for the meeting, auction and potluck luncheon.

### Scholarship Recipients

The two scholarship recipients, Sopheavy Seng and Danane Chhor, will be joining us to thank us and tell a little bit about themselves.

### Consumable Auction

Please see the article in this newsletter that describes the auction and gives suggestions of something you could bring. Remember that the auction is a major fundraiser for the two UMass Lowell Scholarships that we give each year.

### Spring Schedule

Facilitators and Coordinators will describe the courses that will be offered in the Spring and you will sign up for the courses of your choice.

### Revised By-laws

We will vote on the revised by-laws. **Please bring your copy** that was either emailed or sent to you.

### Potluck Luncheon

Each person is requested to bring their choice of a main dish, salad or dessert, enough for 4-6 people. Please provide a serving utensil if your dish requires one.

**NOTE:** There will be members at the door on Suffolk Street to take your dishes from you so that you will not have to carry them from the parking lot.

It's St. Patrick's Day, so wear something green!

## Nominating Committee for 2010

Members of this year's Nominating Committee are Ron Cannistraro as Chairman, Simone Allard and Jean Rubinstein. The positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are open for reelection. If you wish to nominate a candidate for any of these positions, please let the nominating committee know as soon as possible.

*Toby Hodes*

## Email Notification

Many people signed up to have class cancellations emailed to them. Those people should make sure that they check their email in the morning if there is any doubt about a class being held. If there are others that would like to be on this email list, please notify Barbara Willman at 978-251-8770 or [bkwillman@earthlink.net](mailto:bkwillman@earthlink.net). Those not on the list will be notified by telephone. The following is the policy for class cancellations.

*Barbara Willman*

## Class Cancellations

### Importance of Signing up for Courses

At times, unforeseen circumstances will necessitate the cancellation of a class or program. You will be notified of the cancellation if you have signed up for the course. Courses are open to all LIRA members and it is advisable that you sign up for a course even if you are unable to attend all of the classes. However, if you want to attend one of the sessions and you have not signed up for the course, it is best to call the Class Coordinator or Toby Hodes to ascertain that the class or program is still scheduled for that day.

### Emergencies

#### (Cancellation of Classes/University Closing)

In the event that it becomes necessary to cancel a LIRA program for any reason, i.e. snowstorm, hazardous road conditions, or if the UMass Lowell campus is closed due to a storm emergency or other unexpected events, Toby Hodes will call Barbara Willman who is the telephone tree coordinator, to let her know of the cancellation. Barbara will then call her contact persons to inform them of the cancellation. These contact persons will then call the members on their respective list to inform them of the cancellation.

# National Geographic Maps the Human Family Tree

I became interested in human migration in the spring of 2006 when I watched the two-hour documentary, "The Journey of Man" with Spencer Wells, PhD the Project Director. Along with this program was an announcement of the Genographic Project, a research partnership of the National Geographic Society with IBM. I found the idea of public participation too good to miss. Short story: I sent for the test kit, submitted my cheek brush sample, and got back the result showing the route taken by my ancestors.

How can this be done? Every once in awhile a mutation, a random (and usually harmless) change occurs in the sequence of your DNA. Think of it as a spelling mistake; one of the "letters" in your sequence may change from a C to a T or from an A to a G. Scientists can now determine both the age and geographic spread of each branch of the giant family tree to reconstruct the prehistoric movements of our ancestors. By looking at the mutations that you carry, they can trace your lineage, ancestor by ancestor, to reveal the path they traveled as they moved out of Africa.

Three others in my family participated in 2006: my daughter-in-law, my grandson, and her father. Having been born in Cyprus, she was not surprised to see the route of her ancestors to be different from mine.

"The Science of Self" is a video course consisting of 24 lectures at 10:00 AM on Tuesdays beginning March 23. In March and April, lectures 1-12 will be presented by Alan Kent. The lecturer, Professor Leo Silver, PhD goes into detail with many examples of the progress of science from Aristotle to the present and explains advances in the field of genetics with many references to Mendel, of course. All this serves as background to the topic of human migration which begins with lecture 13 and which launches Part 2 of the series in the fall (lectures 13-24).

I am telling about this course, because I have had several inquiries about public participation in the Genographic Project. The timing couldn't be better if anyone is interested. You could get the test kit, follow instructions, and receive results in about four weeks. The cost is \$99.95 plus S&H. Part of the fee goes toward further field research and the Genographic Legacy fund. The project keeps your cheek cells only for the Genographic Project; they will not be used for any other purpose. The tests do not tell anything about your health. This is an anthropological study only.

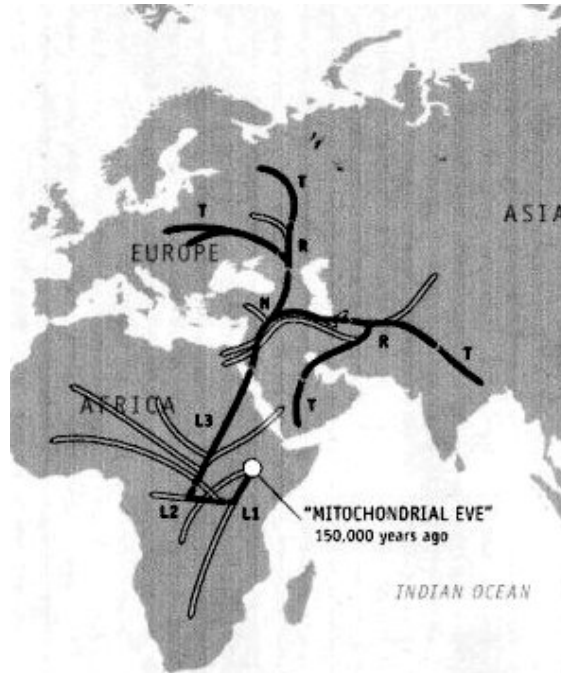
A DVD comes with the test kit and contains an "Introduction" followed by "The DNA Collection Method," followed in turn by the complete TV program, "The Journey of Man." It is interesting to see Spencer

Wells going among indigenous communities such as the Aborigines, collecting samples for the research.

In addition to that DVD I have a DVD of just the TV program, and I have the documents that National Geographic sent to me related to the project. I will be glad to share the DVDs or any of the maps, brochures, and printouts that I have, and I'll answer any questions. Here is the internet link for further information.

**[www.nationalgeographic/genographic](http://www.nationalgeographic/genographic)**.

P.S. The obvious possibility of genetic genealogy is actually being implemented in several places. One of them, Family Tree DNA, is free when you have your Genographic Project test results transferred to them. Once you have your kit number and password with Family Tree DNA, you can request a search and find matches that are the same or very close to yours. There is also an "Ancestral Origins" database that includes the country of origin. Go here for details if interested: [www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com).



Migration routes of Dorothy Bromage

*Dorothy Bromage*

## Moses Greeley Parker Lectures

The following is a calendar of events for the Parker lecture series held on the day, time and place noted. The lectures are free and open to the public.

**MARCH 12, 2010 St. Anne's Episcopal Church  
7 PM FRIDAY**

### Concert "EXSULTEMUS"

Hailed for its beautiful sound, Exsultemus, is modeled after small estate and chapel choirs. Published more than any other piece of music in the eighteenth century, Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, was written just months before his untimely death and vividly depicts Mary's anguish at the crucifixion. Acclaimed ensemble Exsultemus performs this monumental work for soprano, alto, strings and keyboard with music by Sances, Carissimi and Corelli.

**APRIL 10, 2010 POLLARD LIBRARY  
11:00 AM SATURDAY**

### "Birds of Prey" by Thomas Ricardi

Wildlife rehabilitator and biologist, Tom Ricardi, returns to Lowell to give us another up-close look at hawks, falcons, owls and bald eagles. Today, Ricardi is caring for more than a dozen varieties of raptors at his Massachusetts Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Center in Conway, Massachusetts.

**APRIL 22, 2010 POLLARD LIBRARY  
7:00PM THURSDAY**

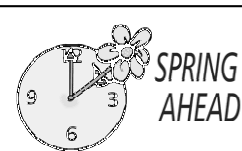
### "Are You Ready for Retirement?" by Mike Bonacorsi

A discussion on preparing a vision and understanding your position as you approach retirement. Helping you realize that retirement planning is more than the value of your 401K is the goal of this lecture.

**APRIL 25, NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER  
2:00PM SUNDAY**

### "Inspiring Creative Landscapes – The Concord River Greenway Park" by Jane Calvin

The Concord River Greenway Park is more than just a recreational trail or a park; its public art, multi-lingual signage, and (used as an) outdoor classroom create a strong link to the Lowell's cultural and historic landscape. The trail, now in construction, has been created through a partnership between the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust and the City of Lowell.



Just a reminder that Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 14. Set your clocks ahead one hour.

## Time for a Change



If you want to remain current with LIRA members, take pen or pencil in hand and make the following changes in your

### New Members:

Margaret Brown  
4 Baldwin Road  
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978-256-3757  
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Dawn Gillogly  
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Dee Miller  
deemiller1111@yahoo.com

Marjorie Short  
giltrip202@verizon.net



The next newsletter will be out on May 1, 2010; the deadline for news items is April 15, 2010. 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. Articles may be given to me at any time before the deadline.

Jeri Durant

### Newsletter Committee

Geraldine Durant, Editor jeri@netway.com  
Suzanne Knapp, Layout knapp.sc@gmail.com  
Shirley Mitchell and shirleytm2@aol.com  
Sally Cady, Distribution  
Kay Carroll, Member News Fckc12345@msn.com