

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE VASSAR

Newsletter

Issue 7 January 2022

VASSAR COLLEGE LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

Newsletter Issue 7, January 2022

A Lifelong Learning Odyssey: Finding My Way through the Ever-Expanding Mazy Mesh of the Computer World

by Jo Hausam, VCLLI Newsletter Editor

All of us in the Vassar Lifelong Learning community were adults before personal computers and smartphones entered our lives. We entered the computer world as it was evolving.

Unlike my children and grandchildren, who effortlessly inhaled the computer atmosphere in which they were born, I gasped for breath, struggling to learn on-the-fly. Although I lived in IBM country and was married to a computer programmer, I limped along in this process, often with fear. (What if I cause everything to disappear?! How do I find that file?!)



I had to re-define familiar words, like *bit*, *boot*, *bug*, *cloud*, *cookie*, *hardware*, *mouse*, *menu*, *memory*, *spam*, *virus*, *window*, and *zoom*. I had to learn new vocabulary, like *software*, *website*, *thumb drive*, *blogs*, and *pod*s. Acronyms, like *URL*, *JPG*, and *CAPTCHA*, popped up quicker than my mind could absorb.

Along with this came *EMAIL*, *WORD* (which I liked!), many icons, and *search engines*, ultimately the most-favored—a noun that morphed into a verb--[Google](#). In addition, I was challenged by the physical maneuvering—*scroll*, *double click*, *right click*, *drag*.

Will I ever learn the emojis? 😞

This past semester LLI offered *iFogey: A Workshop on iPhone Creativity*. In the course introduction, the presenters, **Kit Laybourne** and **Deborah Bond-Upson**, wrote: “Here we are, deep in the internet era, yet how hard it is to clearly see the size of the 6-inch super-computer in our pockets.”

In spite of being a *non-techie*, I’ll be using some *user-friendly* computer jargon and images as metaphorical threads to weave together the articles in this issue.

First, the newsletter will look ahead at *Updates*. Then it will revisit the past, functioning as a *Cloud*, storing the names, images, and memories from Fall 2021. But most of all it will *Zoom* in and honor VCLLI’s volunteers and students.

The Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute is a perfect example of a web—a network of learning--where, with pleasure, our computer-minds download updates that enrich our lives.



On-Campus Classes!

Next semester, Spring 2022, we are going back to the Vassar campus to have in-person classes on Fridays in Kenyon Hall and Blodgett Hall,

unless COVID forces us to go online again.



BACK TO CAMPUS

Kenyon Hall (above) opened in 1934 as Vassar's gymnasium. It underwent a renovation in the early 2000's, resulting in the addition of more classrooms and the Frances Daly Fergusson Dance Theater in the space originally occupied by the swimming pool. Most of the athletic activities moved to a new Athletics and Fitness Center and Walker Field House.

Blodgett Hall (right) opened in 1929. Renovation and expansion in 1998 improved the academic space. LLI students are familiar with its many doors, narrow hallways, and the maze of stairs, originally designed to control foot traffic!



COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Spring 2022

A reminder from Mihai Grunfeld, Chair, VCLLI

In order to be on the campus and to provide protection to classmates and presenters we need to abide by the Vassar College protocol, available at <https://www.vassar.edu/together>

Please be aware that, to participate in our classes:

→ You agree to be vaccinated, **receive a booster**, and provide proof of your vaccination to Denise LaFogue, our Administrative Assistant. If you haven't already done so, please email as soon as you can a copy of your vaccination card to her at dlafogue@vassar.edu. We will only allow exceptions for medical reasons. If you do not provide the proof, you may not register and participate in classes.

→ You agree to follow Vassar College policies on campus, which require everybody to wear a mask when indoor. If the presenter is more than 6 feet away from the students, he/she can take their mask off while teaching.

→ If you have any symptoms, you agree not to come to class, to take a COVID-19 test, and notify Denise LaFogue and your presenter that you will not be attending.

NEW SOFTWARE

As you might already know, VCLLI has installed a new software program to better facilitate the management of our organization. It is called

PROCLASS

Members of the Executive Committee examined several different options and chose ProClass because it matched our needs more closely than others. It is also in use by the Bard LLI and Bard has given us helpful advice in setting it up.

It features class management, attendance tracking, event management, registration and batch payment processing. It allows students to update personal contact information through the student portal, to make online payments for the subscribed courses, to purchase and renew memberships, and to view historical registrations for their account.

Paul Stoddard set up the system and tested each function. He's spent countless hours tweaking all of the various items until they work correctly. He had the assistance of **Joanne Valeo** during the review process and **Gina Klein** during the set up.

Step 1: We've already had a training class about **creating a ProClass user-id**. More than 150 members have already done it. **If you have not set up a user-id**, just follow these directions:

- The link below will open a page that allows you to search, login or create a user id.
- Look in the upper right hand corner for "New User? Start Here".
- Click on Start Here and you will be asked to create a user-id and password and provide contact information.
- Use the same email address that you have used in the past for the LLI.
- After you click on Submit, ProClass will create your user-id.

<https://reg136.imperisoft.com/VCLLI/Search/Registration.aspx>

You can also watch a recording of a training session, https://youtu.be/eu-q_As8uxI

Step 2. On **January 28th at 9:30 A.M.**, there will a training session to learn **how to register** for **Spring 2022 classes**. Registration is scheduled for February.

In March, there will also be training for class managers that will show them how to view class rosters and email students right from ProClass. It should make the class manager job easier than ever! According to Paul, ProClass is quite easy to use and is similar to other websites where you can put things in a shopping cart and check out.

If you need help, you may email or call one of the following members:

Shelley Loveland email - mizloveland@aol.com, 845-462-0023

Linda Bouchey email - linda.bouchey72@gmail.com, 845-590-8854

Bill Davies email - scullerbill@gmail.com, 914-456-7531

Sudhir Desai, email : sudhirdesai@optonline.net or sdesai-guest@vassar.edu

(H) 845-297-7589;(C) 914-318-9515

VIRTUAL ART SHOW

VCLLI is providing students a chance to share their creative efforts in a new virtual **ArtShow**.

You are invited to display photos of **artwork done in classes taken in 2021**, both Spring and Fall semesters.

Along with the photos, please include as much as possible of the following:

- your name and a brief description of yourself
- the title (if any) of the piece,
- the medium used,
- the class in which the work was produced or to which it was related.
- your art/process, inspiration, etc.



Please send submissions to terry4artshow@gmail.com.

NEW ON-CAMPUS OFFICE

Denise LaForgue has worked as an Administrative Assistant for LLI since the fall of 2019. She can be found at our new office in Blodgett 110 on days LLI is in session.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE

As VCLLI strives to be a more inclusive community, it hopes to start a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative (DEI).

Bard LLI has invited regional LLIs to take part in a 90-minute Zoom workshop in February to discuss efforts to improve diversity and equity within our programs.

The effort to recruit Black/Indigenous/People of Color members must be accompanied by the hard work it takes to change the culture of our organization. We should ... begin by trying to ... create a more welcoming environment through reforms to our courses, presenters and producers, mission statement, committees, activities, and overall institutional culture. (Regional LLIs Subcommittee of Bard LLI's Justice Group.)

Click on this link for information describing the Bard DEI initiative, <https://pages.vassar.edu/lifelonglearning/files/2021/12/Letter-to-Regional-LLIs.-MASTER.v.2.pdf>, or go to Volunteer Opportunities on our website.

We need volunteers to work on this important initiative and to represent us at the workshop.

If you are interested in being part of this, please email Mihai Grunfeld (grunfeld@vassar.edu).

UPCOMING CLASSES

Some of our favorite presenters return!

David Bloom has once again put together a **SCIENCE SAMPLER**.

John McGiff revisits **THE IDEAL IMAGE**.

Mickey Steiman will present **CLOSING ARGUMENTS: A LAWYER'S REMINISCENCE**.

Sybil Del Gaudio will offer **IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY: MELODRAMA AND MORE**.

Also, Robert Stevens returns with the **AESTHETIC HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY**.

And **PICKLEBALL** bounces back to the courts again.

On the other hand, new courses will tempt us.

In the arts we'll have **THOMAS COLE AND HIS VIEWS; ART IN PHOTOGRAPHY: LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS**; and **PIONEERS OF 20TH CENTURY ABSTRACTION**.

For literature fans there will be **SHORT STORIES: INTRODUCTION TO A GENRE**.

Writers can sign up for **MEMOIR WRITING**.

Music lovers can learn about the **HISTORY OF EUROPEAN CLASSICAL MUSIC** or, closer to home, **SONGS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY**.

History aficionados might like **FUN FACTOIRS: TINY TIDBITS OF HISTORY**.

Also, on tap, **ENJOYING BEER!**

or would you prefer **WINES OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE?**

Or you could venture into **SACRED SPACES** or **THE LOTUS GARDEN**.

For the first time, we are offering **BEGINNING BRIDGE** and

a class in Spanish, **EL MURALISMO MEXICANO**, taught by Mihai Grunfeld.

Practical thinkers might like **READY, SET, GO: NAVIGATING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**.

How will you spend your Fridays?

For the complete list of courses and important dates, see our website.

<https://pages.vassar.edu/lifelonglearning/>

Registration will be February 7th-20th. Classes begin on March 11th.

Waving Goodbye to ZOOM

Social distancing during the pandemic forced VCLLI to readjust to a virtual mode of teaching. We all Zoomed!

In December of 2019, Zoom had 10 million daily participants. By October 2020, the video conferencing platform had 300 million users. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/raufarif/2021/02/26/in-the-post-covid-19-world-zoom-is-here-to-stay/?sh=2b59795355b5>



We were a part of that surge.

Thanks to Zoom we could attend online classes. Although imperfect, it helped keep our brain neurons buzzing. We all learned how to video conference, how to unmute and chat and see close-ups of each other!



But, by now, some of us are experiencing *Zoom fatigue*—tiredness associated with its overuse and our efforts to communicate in a way that feels unnatural.

On the other hand, some will miss Zoom. **Diane DiNapoli** wrote:

When the pandemic started I wasn't sure how the zoom classes would be. I have been pleasantly pleased at how great they have been. So much so that I am not looking forward to being back on campus. Zoom classes allow me to take more classes than if I were on campus. The convenience, particularly during inclement weather, is worth it alone. I have not found any down side to the zoom classes.

So, thank you Zoom. At least for now, **unless COVID changes plans**, it's time to say Goodbye.

Special thanks to those who put it all together and kept it going.

Paul Stoddard and **Joanne Valeo** offered a Zoom orientation session last September, with instructions and tips for teachers and class managers.

Denise La Forge provided Zoom support.

And Vassar student, **Isaiah Humphries** was on hand to deal with technical problems.

(See feature articles on Paul Stoddard and Isaiah Humphries on the following pages.)

Bravo to all who met the Zoom challenge!



Membership & Registration Coordinator, Presenter, and Technical Advisor

Paul Stoddard

Paul Stoddard came to VLLI in 2018 with an extensive background in music and technology. He graduated from the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music where he studied clarinet, worked at the Aspen Festival for one summer, then went on to work for AT&T, mostly in New Jersey, for thirty eight years, retiring as Principal Computer System Architect.

Paul now shares his expertise with LLI, handling registration and membership and assisting with IT support. His "big job" lately has been installing and implementing LLI's new software, ProClass.



In addition, he's taught classes: *Favorite Chamber Music*, *Technology and Ethics*, and *How to Use Zoom*.

His interests in music and technology came together this past year, when he planned and organized the virtual Hudson Valley Philharmonic String Competition, held last March. He's also a board member of the Howland Chamber Music Circle.

His volunteer efforts extend to the Dutchess County Literacy Connection, where he is a reading tutor. He assisted with a pilot program of virtual tutoring during 2020. And once upon a time he was a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters in New Jersey.

Paul and his wife Judith, Director of Institutional Research and Planning at Marist College, have been long-time supporters of Ashesi University in Berekuso, Ghana, West Africa. The university was founded by Patrick Awuah, a Ghanaian who attended Swarthmore and UC Berkeley, worked for Microsoft, and eventually returned to Ghana to build a college. It has become one of the most respected universities on the continent.



In 2019, Paul and Judith volunteered to help the university. They were invited for the Spring semester. For four months, while Judith assisted the Provost, Paul developed and co-taught a new course in Technology and Ethics, which became the basis for the Vassar LLI course of the same name.

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The Stoddards lived in a house on campus and jumped into university life, taking evening meals with students in the dining hall. During spring break, they went to Kenya for a safari.

In between all his volunteering, Paul loves cycling, kayaking, practicing Tai Chi, and singing with Capella Festiva choir. He recently joined the Mid-Hudson Rowing Association.

VCLLI is fortunate to have Paul sharing his talents with us.

[Thanks to *Marist News* for photos, <https://www.marist.edu/-/marist-news-advancing-the-social-good-in-ghana>]



in on

Vassar Student Technical Assistant

Isaiah Humphries

In his own words...

I am a student at Vassar (Sophomore, Class of 2024), and am currently employed by LLI as a Student Assistant, as part of my federal work-study. I have been helping out for the past couple semesters, and my primary focus is on providing technical support for both LLI students and presenters.

The acclimation to Zoom has been a bit of a challenge for many, so individuals like me have been brought aboard to ensure students are able to attend courses on-time and have the opportunity to engage with the lectures, as well as provide support to presenters, whenever particular issues arise.

So far, I have only been associated with LLI during periods of time when Zoom meetings occur. However, if all goes well, I am hoping to be an in-person technical assistant for the Spring 2022 semester, so I can more thoroughly engage with the community (which has been nothing but welcoming and kind, from my experience thus far).

On the personal side, I am currently Undeclared in my Major, but I am leaning towards an undergraduate in English. While I do have a considerable degree of experience with computer literacy, the humanities are my deepest passion, and so I hope to pursue that general area of study moving forward. Creative writing is one major hobby of mine, although I also enjoy the visual arts, gardening, volunteering (I have a long history of animal-care related aid), learning about and engaging with computer programs, and more.



Software is a set of instructions and documentation that tells a computer what to do. **Software engineering** is the application of a systematic and disciplined approach to the development, operation, and maintenance of software.

If the Vassar LLI Institute is viewed in technological terms, isn't software engineering—planning, developing, designing, testing, deploying, and maintaining of software (the LLI program)—what the LLI executive council and committee chairs do?

They are our hard-working, volunteer, software engineers! **Please consider helping them!**

THANKS TO THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive Committee

Mihai Grunfeld, Chair

Sybil DelGaudio, Curriculum Committee Chair

Sudhir Desai, Paul Stoddard, Membership & Registration Coordinators

Larry Miller, Treasurer

Joanne Valeo, Secretary

General Council

Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership & Registration coordinators

Chairs of each committee

Three at-large members, Joan Blumberg, Carole Wolfe, Terry Quinn

Administration Committee Members

Denise LaForgue, Administrative Assistant

Joanne Valeo, Email member support

Howard Spilke, Phone support

Betty Olson, Bylaws

Class Managers Committee

Maribeth King, Chair

Curriculum Committee & Classroom Support Committee

Sybil DelGaudio, chair; coordinates courses; members suggest classes, recruit and consult with presenters,

Member Services Committee

Terry Catapane, maintains hospitality room and assists with social functions

Campus Support

Michael Yarmoski, chairs; room reservations, parking, shuttling, and signage

Public Information Committee

Glen Conciatori, chair; outreach and marketing (posters, brochure, etc.)

Special Events Committee

Diana Salsberg, chair; plans and manages special events (trips, tours, luncheons)

Webmasters

Mihai Grunfeld, Sarah Kennedy, Jo Hausam, responsible for LLI Webpage, Facebook, Newsletter

NEW GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sarah Kosloff will be our Vice-Chair of the General Council for one year and take over as Chair afterwards. She retired from Vassar College where she taught film studies and is now a novelist.

Teresa Quinn will be a Member-at-Large on the General Council, offering her services in various capacities. She was the Director of Campus Activities at Vassar.

Gina Klein is the Data Management Coordinator, with a background in accounting. She says she loves to play with Excel.

NEW COMMITTEES

Elections Committee

The Elections Committee is charged with advertising via emails, in our newsletter, and on our website the council positions that are being rotated every three years. It requests nominations and conducts the elections. It is now Co-chaired by **Ed Kinkade** (ekinkade@yahoo.com) and **Paul Horstmann** (pwhorstmann@gmail.com) and has several members on it. It is looking for additional volunteers, so please email Ed or Paul to join.

ArtShow Committee

The ArtShow Committee's goal is to organize an art show in our Hospitality Room at the end of each semester, exhibiting the art produced in our classes. It is also charged with creating a webpage where our members can show their art. **Rob Cohen** volunteered to lead this committee, which also has several other members on it. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please email Rob Cohen at (rob.cohen@gmail.com) and Mihai Grunfeld (grunfeld@vassar.edu).

Member Engagement Committee

We are now trying to create a Member Engagement Committee charged with welcoming new members, acquainting them with the culture of our LLI, and encouraging potential volunteers among them for our committees. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please email **Mihai Grunfeld** (grunfeld@vassar.edu).

This is a call asking you to volunteer and get involved on one of the VCLLI committees.
All our work is done by volunteers and we can only function if you are involved.

We need you!



in on Chair of VCLLI Mihai Grünfeld

Five years ago, in 2017, three years before Mihai Grünfeld retired from 33 years as an Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies at Vassar College, he had an idea: to create a learning institute at Vassar for those 55 years and older. Members would take courses taught by Vassar faculty and local experts on a range of subjects. He recognized there was “a hunger in the community for keeping engaged and learning” and it would serve a social function as well. Collaborating with colleagues and friends, he organized and facilitated the Vassar College Lifelong Learning Institute.



Here is brief bio of our founder, Mihai Grünfeld.

In 2008, Mihai published a memoir, LEAVING: MEMORIES OF ROMANIA. He wrote:

Memories do not come easily to me, and their meaning is far from clear. For a while I actually thought that I had no memories, and that childhood...was lost. However, as I start to write...more and more of the past rushed in, calling out to be seen, recognized, recorded, so it will not be forgotten.

I highly recommend that you read LEAVING. It recounts Mihai’s childhood and adolescence as the son of impoverished Holocaust survivors. His parents are unable to talk about their past, but it has a profound effect on Mihai and his elder brother, Ferkó. Because of the restrictive political system in Romania, Mihai and his brother secretly leave the country, travel to Czechoslovakia, then escape to Austria. While on the train to Vienna, he thinks:

What exactly are we going to do in Vienna? It is winter, the middle of January; we have very little money...and do not know anybody. I have no answers, so I try to look out at the new landscape..... My tooth does not hurt anymore, and I feel hungry. We have some stale bread and two apples with us. I give an apple to Ferkó and bite into the other. The combination of bread and bitter apples tastes good. I think of Vienna, of being in the street, walking without any destination, and it excites me.

After leaving Austria, he went to Israel, Italy, and Sweden, then to Canada, where he enrolled at the University of Toronto. Along the way he learned five languages! He says, “Languages have always come easily to me.” Finally, he arrived in the USA, receiving a master’s from the University of Michigan and a PhD in Modern and Colonial Latin American and Hispanic Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley. He joined Vassar’s faculty in 1987.

Sometime during this journey, he married Anne. They have a son, Dani, and a daughter, Maya.

During his tenure at Vassar, he chaired the department of Hispanic Studies, directed the study-abroad program in Madrid, Spain, created a summer program in Oaxaca, Mexico, and was an assistant director of the Spanish School at Middlebury College. He also supported Vassar

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students in their work as tutors and translators within Poughkeepsie's immigrant community.

His own research focused on the intersection of literature and the visual arts. He incorporated this into his courses, such as Mexican Art, Literature and Popular Culture.



Away from campus, his teaching continued. He is helping Vietnamese immigrants learn English at Blue Cliff Monastery in Pine Bush, NY, and taught creative writing at the Dutchess County Jail. Currently, he studies Hebrew with a few friends. This coming semester, he will be presenting a class in Spanish, *El Muralismo Mexicano*. He just can't stop teaching!

His second career is writing. He published *Antología de la poesía latinoamericana de vanguardia* (1995), an anthology of Latin American Avant-Garde poetry, as well as articles on modernismo and the Avant-Garde, as well as creative short stories.

Together with Sarah Levine Simon, he adapted his novel, *The Dressmaker's Son*, to a play, *The Dressmaker's Secret*, which had a month-long run Off-Broadway. He translated and edited a memoir entitled *Inherited Words* by a Romanian Holocaust survivor, Roth Zoltán, which was accepted for publication by Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem. He's now working on a follow-up to his memoir.

He also writes poetry. Here are the first two verses from his poem *Letter to My Father*:

I turned the corner on Wilbur Street,
driving home from work,
admiring the perfect line of pink and purple crabapple trees,
exploding colorful branches,
in the setting sun,
when suddenly
my heart stopped.

I had to fill my chest with the cool spring air
and get my heart to start beating again,
and recognize,
that the short man in front of me
with a dirty brown overcoat and a worn-out Fedora,
his palms clasped tightly behind his back,
was not you
Father.

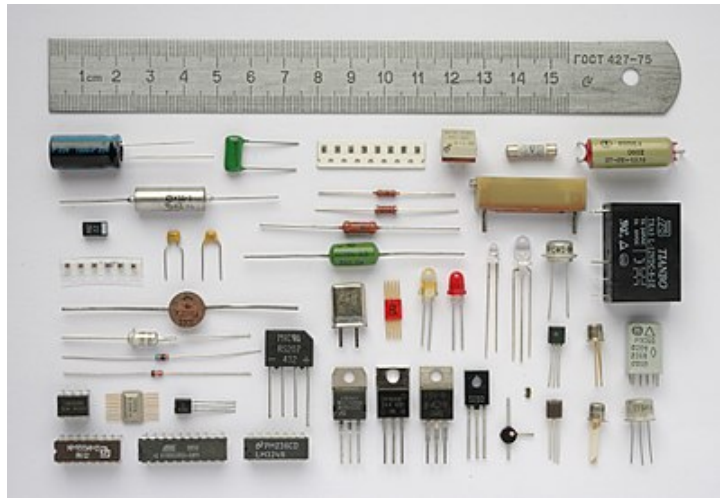
This will be Mihai's last year as Chair of VCLLI. In the next newsletter, those who know and work with him will share their impressions of our wise, sensitive, and hard-working LLI leader.

I gleaned some of this information from public online sources, including *Vassar Word Press*, <https://pages.vassar.edu/grunfeld/>
And *Vassar Today*, https://aauwpoughkeepsie.org/uploads/PDFs/2018/Mihai_Grunfeld_Reviews_and_Bio.pdf.

An electronic component is any basic discrete device or physical entity in an **electronic system** used to affect **electrons** or their associated **fields**.

Electronic components have a number of **electrical terminals** or **leads**. These leads connect to other electrical components, often over wire, to create an **electronic circuit**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_component



Let's transcribe that definition into LLI lingo. A **PRESENTER** is any basic physical entity (**a person**) in a system (**Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute**) used to effect electrons (**LLI students**) and create a circuit (**learning**)!

As illustrated, there are multiple types of components. LLI PRESENTERS are as different as diodes, capacitors, relays, or switches.

One thing they have in common: they facilitate the circuit of learning.

THANKS TO THE PRESENTERS

David Bloom	Linda Bouchey	Peter Bunten	Mita Choudhury
Miriam Cohen	Rob Cohen	Vincenza Dante	Rebecca Edwards
Gail Goodman	Muriel Horowitz	Bill Jeffway	Martha Kaplan
Anita Kiewra	Kit Laybourne	John McGiff	Gary Miller
Chuck Mishaan	Denise Morett	Sarah Mount	Michelle Olson
Sandra Opdycke	Nathan Rosenblum	Fred Schaeffer	Arnold Serotsky
Rita Shaheen	Ethel Sheffer	Mickey Steiman	Robert Stevens
Catherine Tan	Sven Thiessen	Reagan Upshaw	Tom Walker
Vicky Weinblatt	Linda Weintraub		



in on presenter **Michelle Olson**



Dr. Michelle Olson has a strong passion for and commitment to positive and healthy aging. She is a social gerontologist, a licensed, board-certified creative arts therapist, dementia care consultant, and a certified forest therapy guide.

She is an adjunct professor at Montana State University in the Health and Human Development Department. She also works for Clear Guidance, LLC, assisting families facing the challenges and opportunities related to aging and dementia.

Inspired by her father, Dr. Lee Olson, a plant biochemist, who encouraged her to appreciate and respect all of nature, she recently founded the charitable organization *Evergreen Minds, Inc.* to help reframe outdated senior living environments and make sure people who are living with dementia have access to the natural world.

We strongly believe that people are meant to regularly experience fresh air and nature and this innate connection should not end because we grow older or develop cognitive changes. We also believe fresh air, nature, self-expression, and laughter are vital for our mental, physical and emotional well-being.

<https://evergreenminds.org>

Evergreen Minds also offers support and training to care-givers and other relevant organizations, hoping to reduce the misconceptions surrounding dementia. If you wish to volunteer, please write to Michelle at molson@evergreenminds.org

This past semester, partnering with Vassar College LLI, Michelle conducted the course **Reconnecting with Nature for Health & Well-Being**. A limited group of participants met outdoors at the Priscilla Bullitt Field Station on the Vassar Preserve to experience “Forest Bathing”.



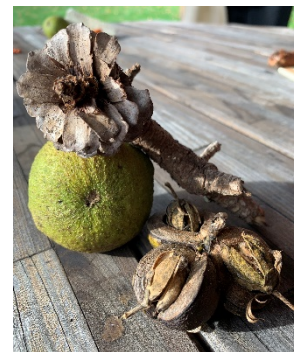
Shinrin-yoku or ‘Forest Bathing’ is the research-based experience of immersing in the more than human world. It is simply being in nature, connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The practice helps promote and deepen a reciprocal relationship with nature.

In addition, forest bathing could be considered a form of medicine. Medical researchers in Japan have studied forest bathing and have demonstrated several benefits to our health. It can decrease inflammation, aid the immune system, improve cardiovascular health, reduce stress, and improve sleep.

<https://time.com/5259602/japanese-forest-bathing>

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The captivating photos by **Maribeth King** give us a glimpse of what the class saw and felt as they mindfully tuned in to the smells, textures, and sights of the natural world. Then they gathered and used the gifts of nature to artfully express themselves.





in on presenter **John McGiff**



John McGiff is a painter and teacher. He recently moved to Dutchess County and VCLLI has been fortunate to have him as a presenter. This past semester he taught the course *The Ideal Images: Influences and Counterpoint*.

I was privileged to be a student in that class, impressed by John's breadth of knowledge, teaching expertise, and warm personality.

'Gilles at 50' | a self-portrait, © 2015 John C. McGiff | johncmgiff@gmail.com

John received his B.F.A. from SUNY Purchase, winning the Dean's Commendation for Painting and Drawing. As part of his study for the M.F.A. at the University of Pennsylvania, which he received in 1989, John spent seven months in Padua, painting from the Italian landscape and visiting the many art meccas between Venice and Rome.



He has received two fellowships in painting from the Delaware Division of the Arts in painting as well as a residency fellowship from the Maryland Institute College of Art, in Brittany, France.

Brittany Coast, 16" x 40". 2008

John started his career studying and painting vanishing landscapes. He painted farms scenes in rural Delaware, where he taught at a boarding school 24 years ago. He was fascinated by all he saw--the patina of age, the light and colors of weather-beaten houses and barns, the wildlife. Since his move to the Hudson Valley, John has painted its inspiring landscapes., and does this work *en plein air*, (executed on site). He loves painting outside and meeting people.



Wethersfield, 16"x32", oil on canvas, 7/2014



Pond at Innisfree, 12"x16", gouache, 2021

In an interview about John, (*Delaware Today*, Sept. 1, 2011), the author wrote: "Art [for John] is less about technical proficiency or talent than about experience."

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Beyond landscapes, his view extends to Ragamala houses, dodecahedrons (a geometric shape with 12 flat faces), pilgrims and refugees, shelters and homes, and, what he calls, "existential vaudeville."



Rag House, Rising Water, oil and acrylic on canvas, 20"x36", 2019,



Dodecahedron II, oil on canvas, 30"x40", 2017



Refugees, oil w/knife on canvas, 48" x 60", 2011

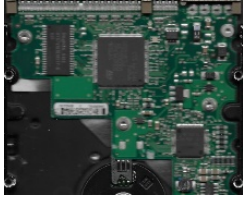


Shelter IV, 16"x16", 2016



Existential Vaudeville II, 60" x 72", 2006

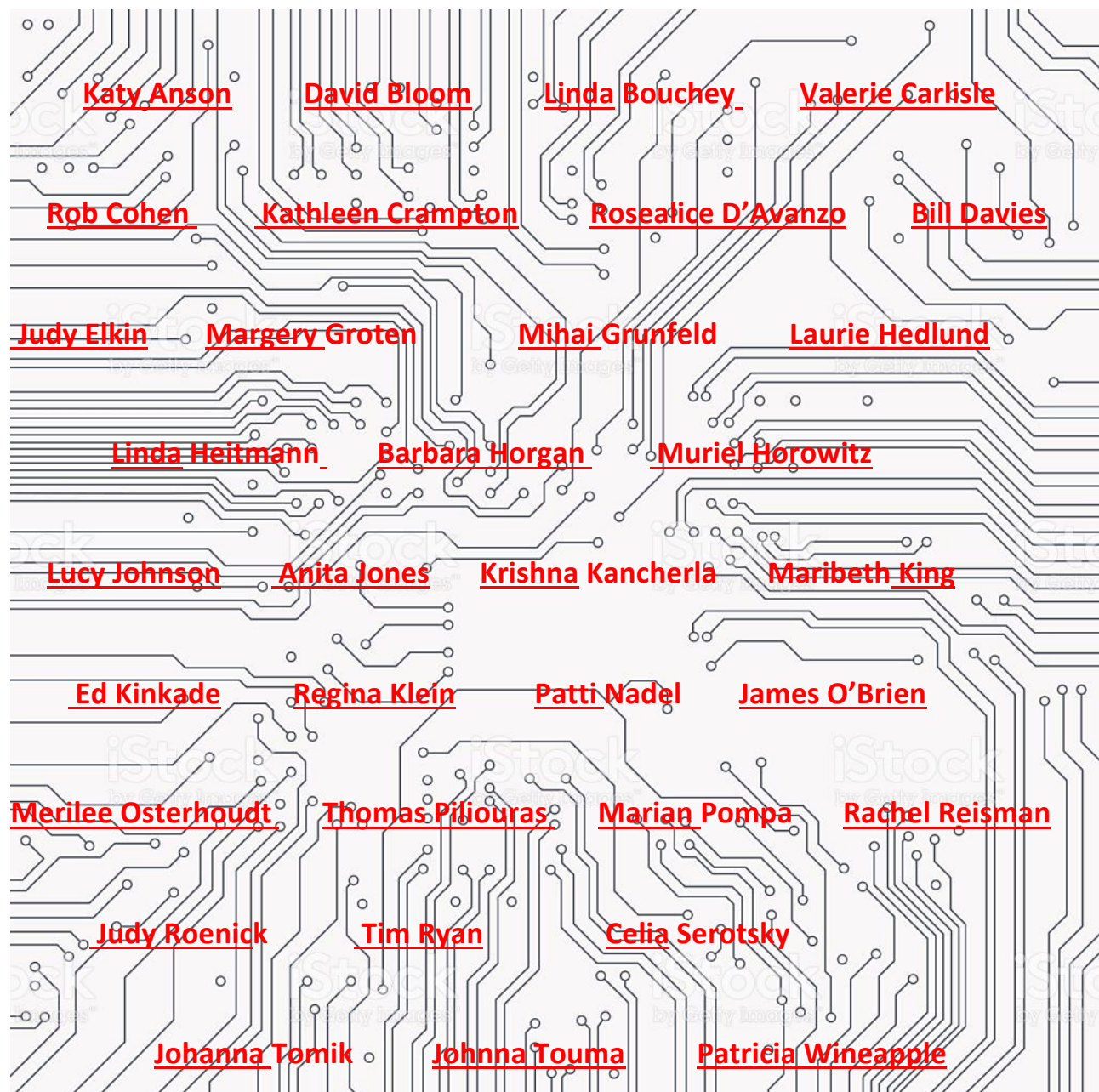
Other examples of his work can be found at <https://www.jcmcgiff.com>.



A printed circuit board (PCB) is a laminated sandwich structure of conductive and insulating layers. One of its functions is to provide reliable connections between the component's terminals in a controlled manner.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Printed_circuit_board

With a stretch of the imagination, that description sounds like LLI **Class Managers**—providing connections *in a controlled manner* between presenters (*electronic components*) and students (*LLI terminals*).

THANKS TO THE CLASS MANAGERS





From **Shelley Tatelbaum** **Learning to Look in a New Way**

When I completed Psychology and Film with **Dr. Denise Morett**, I was so very sad that it was only four weeks. It is one of the most enjoyable courses I have taken at LLI.

We watched a film a week and then discussed it in class. The four films that she offered were: *On Golden Pond*, *Good Will Hunting*, *Postcards from the Edge* and *A Brilliant Mind*. I had seen all of them before; however, after taking this class, I watch films differently than I did before.

In the past I just watched films for enjoyment and entertainment. I have now learned to look for symbols, listen to what song choice is in the film and how it relates to the film, and be more aware of more than the acting and the story.

I saw *On Golden Pond* for the first time when I was in my 30s. Seeing it now that I am in my 70s has had a different impact on me. This time, I focused more on the aging process rather than the story. I love it when I am changing my perspective and my interpretation--they have expanded after taking this course. In some instances, I have watched the movie again after the class and have seen it with different eyes. Also I appreciated the other group members and valued their input as well. However, I will say that Denise is an amazing teacher and is very engaging, knowledgeable, personable and accessible.

I loved it and I am hoping that it will be offered again as an eight week course instead of four.

From **Stephen Wilantewicz** **A Fine Array of Subjects**

The presenters of all my courses this semester—**Tom Walker** (*Cataclysm: America, Germany and the USSR, 1932-42*), **John McGiff** (*The Ideal Image: Influence and Counterpoints*), and **Chuck Mishaan** (*The Roaring 20's: then and Now*)--were engaging and held my interest. Taking these courses has encouraged me to delve further into the subjects.

I look forward to seeing what the next semester brings. What a fine array of subjects to choose from and what an interesting array of classmates and lecturers who made it quite enjoyable. Thank you all!

From **Anita Bell**

Great Speaker

I loved the class *Strong Women, Strong Stories, Strong Storytellers*. **Gary Miller** was a great speaker.

I also enjoyed the class about the Scenic Hudson parks in the Hudson Valley. I can't wait to go and check them out when I recover from my second knee replacement!

From **Shelly Loveland**

Inspiring Images

Did you know that the copper making up the Statue of Liberty is just 3/32" thick—the same width as two pennies stuck together? That the famed Venus of Willendorf can fit in the palm of your hand? Or that Japanese woodblock prints were so prolific that they were used as packing materials for goods shipped for trade—and subsequently influenced the work of many European artists?

These were just a few of the many rich details from *The Ideal Image* that surprised me. In this course, we viewed, compared, and discussed images of sculpture, painting, photography, and architecture from ancient times to today. Thanks to our instructor, **John McGiff**, we learned the ways historical times shape an era's art, talked about the belief that that which is beautiful brings one closer to God, and saw how images can be used for everything from celebrating the feminine to promoting nation-building to sparking social reform.

We also learned from each other, as we shared our individual observations and interpretations during general class sessions and Zoom breakout rooms. And for the last class, we were invited to share images of some of our own creative pursuits. It was truly inspiring--the perfect ending to an ideal learning experience.

From **Jo Hausam**

Celebrating Creativity

I'd like to add a P.S. to Shelly Loveland's piece, (*above*), by naming some LLI members who presented their art in the last class *The Ideal Image*:

Ellen Waggoner--travel photos from the Southwest; **Pat Buckstrup**--oil paintings of beach scenes; **Shelly Loveland**--quilts; **Stephen Wilantewicz** – still life watercolors; **Chip Simon** – culinary arts photos; **Rachel Winer**--photos of deer caught in the early morning mist; and **Judy Elkin**--portraits. I shared word-pictures, poems. I was delighted to glimpse the varied talents of classmates. The grand finale was John's art. As John said, it was a chance to "celebrate all the ways we express our creativity." [See John's bio on page 17.]

From **Betsy Kinkade** **Wonderful Class, Wonderful Teacher**

Bill Jeffway taught a wonderful class on unknown African Americans who were a part of Dutchess County history.

He was prepared, informative, knowledgeable, personable, interactive, and very, very interesting! I'd gladly take any class he taught.

From **Mihai Grunfeld** **Incredible Presentation**

There is no presenter like **Chuck Mishaan**. I took his *The Roaring '20s* class last semester—my first class with him—and I loved everything he offered. His classes are thoroughly researched and well organized, and the ideas follow each other beautifully. He brings video and sound clips to illustrate his ideas and to speak about the epoch.

I loved hearing about the 1920s in history, philosophy, arts, film, music, etc. And I so much appreciated him connecting many of these ideas with the current situation, addressing our fear of a new dictator entering into our system over a long period of time. Each time the class ended, I felt that I could still go on, and that Chuck probably used only part of the material he prepared for his presentation. And I also wished that there was a way of involving the class a little more. Wonderful class Chuck!

From **Millicent Cox** **Thank You!!!**

American Art Through an Appraiser's Eye was most enjoyable due to the fact that so many of the artists' works are nearby--some in Dutchess County! I am delighted that many are on the walls of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center on the Vassar campus. I am planning to visit Cragmoor in Ulster County, where Charles Courtney Curran once owned property! The presenter, **Reagan Upshaw**, helped us to understand what determines the dollar value of art. Thank you for the informative, lively presentation!!

The course *Cataclysm: America, Germany, and the USSR, 1932-42* was scholarly and well organized! **Tom Walker's** classes are just tops. I have taken all of his lectures offered at LLI and will continue. He has such a clear understanding of very complex issues.

In *Timeless Goddess: Re-Igniting the Divine Feminine*, **Vincenza Dante** presented a global view of female leadership from very early on to now! The course is rich in world history. I learned about the life force of the crone, the older female's powers!! A must know! I was introduced to the author Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826-1898), who wrote *Woman, Church, and State* published in 1893.

Thank you LLI. You are the best!!

From **Diane DiNapoli** **Eclectic Presenters, Diverse Topics**

I have thoroughly enjoyed the classes on Zoom. The teachers have been fabulous. Lifelong Learning is most fortunate to have such an eclectic assortment of presenters, teaching on such diverse topics. Thank you for your time.

From **Mimica Tsezana Hyman** **Absolutely Amazing**

Last semester I was very lucky to take the class *American Art through an Appraiser's Eyes*.

The class was absolutely amazing. **Reagan Upshaw** was very knowledgeable, professional, and his classes were well done.

I always looked forward to his lectures. I hope he will continue teaching at LLI.

From **Anita Jones** **Always a Joy**

Every course I have been able to enroll in has been a joy—sometime a challenge, sometimes thought-provoking, sometimes surprisingly informative—but always a joy! They have all made me more informed about something!!!

Thank you Vassar College for providing this service to the community.

From **Gail Goodman** **Scenic Walks & Camaraderie**



Gentle Walks in the Hudson Valley involved invigorating walks--guided by **David Bloom and Mark Boujikian**--throughout the Mid-Hudson region, followed by educational talks:

--Denning's Point to Long Dock Park, with a talk by Scenic Hudson member, **Joseph Kiernan**.

--Minnewaska State Park Preserve, with a presentation by Environmental Educator **Laura Connor**.

(continued on next page)

--Ashokan Reservoir, with a talk by **Adam Bosch**, Director of Public Affairs, NYC Department of Environmental Protection.

--Norrie Point to the Mills Estate, with a talk by **Chris Bowser**, Education Coordinator at Norrie Point Environmental Center.



The scenic walks and the camaraderie were the highlights of this class. It was perfect for experiencing hands-on learning about the nature and history of the area.

Dennings Point, Beacon



Minnewaska
State Park Preserve

Photos by
Michael Lebovitch



(continued)



Ashokan Reservoir
Photos by Molly Jones

Networking

--the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information

There are

fabric webs

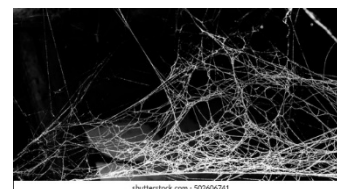


spider webs



the World Wide Web

cobwebs



and human webs.

Feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged, and the mind-developed by the reciprocal influence of human beings on one another.

---Alexis de Tocqueville



All of us in VCLLI form a unique web.
We are a profusion of web-strings, stretching, reaching out to each other, interweaving our talents and knowledge--to beautify and enrich our lives and the lives of others.
Our sharing creates a network of communication and inspiration.

Thanks to ALL who contributed to the newsletter.

Special thanks to **Joanne Valeo**, a super-reliable source of information; to **Sandy Corwin and Shelly Loveland** for their precise proofreading; to **Marty Zlotkin** for the cover and his technical advice; to **Sudhir Desai**, who faithfully sends out my requests; and to **Mihai Grunfeld**, for his steadfast encouragement.

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