

LIFELONG  VASSAR COLLEGE
INSTITUTE LEARNING

Dear All,

May 18th marked the end of the first semester of our new Lifelong Learning Institute at Vassar College. This is something to be proud of and to celebrate! And we did just that at the end-of-semester Cocktail Party with one hundred and ten of us in attendance. It was a great party! Check out the photos on our Facebook page.

Every element of the LLI—from envisioning the project to soliciting and selecting the course offerings up to, and including, organizing the party—has been a collaborative effort. It has been enormously gratifying to me to work together with old friends and new acquaintances from the community, as well as colleagues at Vassar. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Jon Chenette, Dean of the Faculty, who has been an enthusiastic institutional champion of the LLI at Vassar from the beginning. In fact, there are many people to honor and to thank for their contributions. I hope you will take a few minutes to make note of the committee leaders, below, and presenters, page 6, who have been an integral part of this inaugural semester. Next to each name, are others unnamed who have stepped

up to join a committee or volunteer for a specific task. *Many thanks to all of you!*

Our good work will continue during the summer months. We are busy preparing for the fall semester with an expanded membership—from 140 to 200—and anticipate many new course offerings. There continue to be many opportunities to get involved. Please don't hesitate to contact a committee chair if you would like to lend your talent and time. If you are not sure how you can help, please contact me directly.

Finally, a personal shout out to three friends involved from the beginning: David Bloom, Michael Kessler, Frank Pepe. It was our thoughtful conversations about aging and retirement that lit the spark in me to pursue this project. On the journey, I—and we—benefitted from conversations with leaders at Bard LLI, Marist CLS, and other LLIs. Thanks to them—and to each of you who is a participant in Vassar LLI. Without you, there is no LLI.

I look forward to welcoming you back at the opening of our fall semester.

Mihai

Executive Council: Mihai Grunfeld (Chair), Lucy Johnson, Carlie Graves, Joanne Valeo, Larry Miller **LLI Council and Committee Chairs:** Administration - Valerie Carlisle and Howard Spilke, By-Laws - Betty Olson, Campus Needs -Michael Yarmosky, Class Managers - Joanne Valeo, Classroom Support-AV - Sybil DelGaudio, Computing - Carlie Graves, Curriculum - Lucy Johnson, Facebook - Sarah Kennedy, Member Service-Hospitality Room - Theresa Catapane, Newsletter - Cary Auerbach, Public Information and Diversity - Diana Salsberg, Special Events - Diana Salsberg, Webpage - Sharon Phillips, Members-at-Large - Carole Wolf, Joan Blumberg

Spring 2018 course highlights: the arts

An afternoon at a horse farm... a family's history...a hike to a waterfall... trees and flowers and a train station... what do they all have in common? These were just some of the photographs that were shared with and by the members of the **LLI Photo Series class taught by Sasha Bush**. Each class member spent many hours delving into nooks, crannies and panoramas in an effort to tell unique and personal stories of places they explored and shared through photos. This was not a class about cameras, equipment or techniques but rather a place to discuss ever-evolving works of art; a place to give and receive supportive feedback and suggestions for improvement. Each week was a series of surprises as members showed their recent photos and shared their newly discovered perspectives. Final projects were made up of members' photos presented in story-sequences. With Sasha's guidance and support, members stretched their creativity and gained a new appreciation of using photography to tell their own unique stories during this wonderful seven week photo odyssey.



from train station series by Joanne Valeo



from nature series by Karen Consolato





Muriel Horowitz is a storyteller who uses improvisational theatre to bring biblical figures to life. She brought this technique and other modes of inquiry to her class “**Women of the Bible**” to guide students in the art of modern midrash, or biblical interpretation.

Midrash interprets the Torah using white space, the area around the text and between the letters to explore the written word. The premise of the class was that biblical women played more decisive roles than they are credited with and ‘our midrash’ consisted of imagining what these might be.

Students from diverse religious backgrounds discussed and enacted stories from the perspective of the female characters. Through improvisation, students came to an intuitive understanding of the material and wide ranging discussion allowed students to interpret story and character through a contemporary lens.

Through the retelling of stories, we uncovered themes that make the ancient stories meaningful today.

Behind the Scenes at LLI: Website Committee

Although the inaugural session of the Lifelong Learning Institute has just ended, over the summer much is going on to prepare for the fall semester. One example is the work of the website committee (Sharon Phillips, chair, Mihai Grunfeld, Barbara Durniak, Lynn Lipton, and Kathy Kurosman). In addition to adding content about fall courses, the website will provide registration information for current and new members, more specific information for course presenters, details on ways in which members can become more involved with LLI, and enhanced features such as a link to the LLI calendar, newsletter, and Facebook pages.

The LLI website is generously supported by the Web Development team at Vassar College. The website committee has some ambitious plans, including a major redesign sometime next year. For the time being, the website committee will make sure content is updated as needed, work on design ideas, and review data from an underlying web analytics program to determine where improvements can be made. If you have suggestions please contact the website committee through the LLI office.

Meet the Presenters: Jeanmarie Chenette

Jeannie Kern Chenette is a performing harpist, teacher and composer of pedagogical harp works. She holds the MM in Harp Performance from the New England Conservatory and the BM Ed from Butler University. Faculty appointments in music theory and harp at Iowa State University, Grinnell College, and SUNY Dutchess. Jeannie introduced her course Music as Energy in the Spring 2018 Vassar LLI. A more detailed bio can be found on the Vassar LLI website.

-What gave you the idea for this class?

First of all, I wanted to share the incredible awareness I have of the energy produced by a large ensemble of performing instrumentalists. As a professional harpist, I have spent thousands of hours surrounded by the amazing energy of my fellow orchestral musicians, and the effect of being inside that swirl of energy is amazing. To that end, I approached the Vassar College Orchestra director, Eduardo Navega, about interspersing LLI students in the orchestra during rehearsals, and that effort has produced similar effects for those in the class this past spring.

My second impetus is that I like good mysteries! When I hear a particularly thrilling or moving piece of music, I want to know “how did they do that?” Music theorists address that question by analyzing the various musical elements of a piece and then publish their analyses for other music theorists to appreciate. But what about the rest of us? Well, we all have ears! We can hear the energy of a piece and learn to identify the elements that helped to construct it. I wanted to start with the energy of a piece and work back to the musical sources. I try to accomplish this in a way that helps others follow even if they have limited musical knowledge.

-What did you learn from teaching it the first time?

I learned that I like exploring music on its own terms. I tried to plan the course around various live concerts in the Mid-Hudson region so that participants could experience the material from class activities (lectures and video presentations) in the concert hall. That is where the real energy is released. This led to some great discussions when we reconvened the next week.

-What do you look forward to in the fall iteration?

I look forward to having a totally new set of music concerts to draw from so that the exploration will continue for anyone who participates, including me! I also look forward to making more friends through this class. It is a joy sharing time with other music lovers.

FALL COURSES, 2018

ARTS

Understanding Movies: The Language of Film
Latin Via Ovid II
Music as Energy
Thirty Years of Theater
The Photo Series, An Ongoing Conversation
Opera as Politics II

LIFE

Stay Safe, Stay Active, Stay on Your Feet
The Creative Self
Magic for Grandparents -or Aunts, Uncles, Friends
Memoir Writing
Chinese Tea Art
Experiencing the Hudson Valley Healing Center
Tee Time with Rhett at the Vassar College Golf Course
Your Best Health: Advancing Care Close to Home
Gentle Walks in the Hudson Valley

SCIENCE

Tools Maketh the Man
Sustainability: Definition, Issues, Ideas
Bees and Beekeeping
Astronomy: What to Expect

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Medieval West Africa, ca. 1000-1600 CE
Just the Facts: News and Politics in the Age of New Media
The Revolutionary War, Spies, Gods, and Guns
Women of the new Deal
Geography and the Environment
Art and the Enduring Legacy of the New Deal
First Ladies
It's the Law: A Primer to American Jurisprudence

Course Offerings, descriptions, and times can be found on the LLI website

Important Dates, Announcements

Membership renewal: June 15- June 30

New membership applications: July 2 through July 20

Fall course catalog available July 1 on LLI website

Fall course registration: July 27 through August 17

Fall orientation: September 7

Fall classes: September 14 through November 2

The Vassar College shuttle will, once again, provide transportation for the fall semester. The shuttle will ferry students to and from the South Parking Lot each Friday during classes. For those who prefer to walk, additional parking can be found in the North Parking lot and on Collegeview and Raymond Avenue.

(Note: Please do not park in the lot across from the nursery school or on the grounds behind Kenyon.)

With appreciation for our Spring 2018 Presenters:

Steven Bassin • Stuart Belli • Sasha Bush • Jeannie Chenette • Lynn Christenson • Fred Chromey • Paul Coleman • Ernest Giglio • Muriel Horowitz • Lucille Johnson • Sarjit Kaur • Steve Kenney • Anne Lancellotti • Joanne Long • John McCleary • Chuck Mishaan • Ann Patty • Marilyn Price • Meg Ronsheim • Jill S. Schneiderman • Xiaodong Smith • Robert Ulrich • Jim Williams • Ted Wolf

A special thanks to newsletter contributors:

Joanne Valeo, Sharon Phillips, Jeannie Chenette, Karen Consolato, Mihai Grunfeld, Sasha Bush, Barbara Durniak

additional photo credit: Sharon Phillips

We welcome contributions (and suggestions) from the LLI community.

Best, Cary Auerbach and Michael Yarmosky