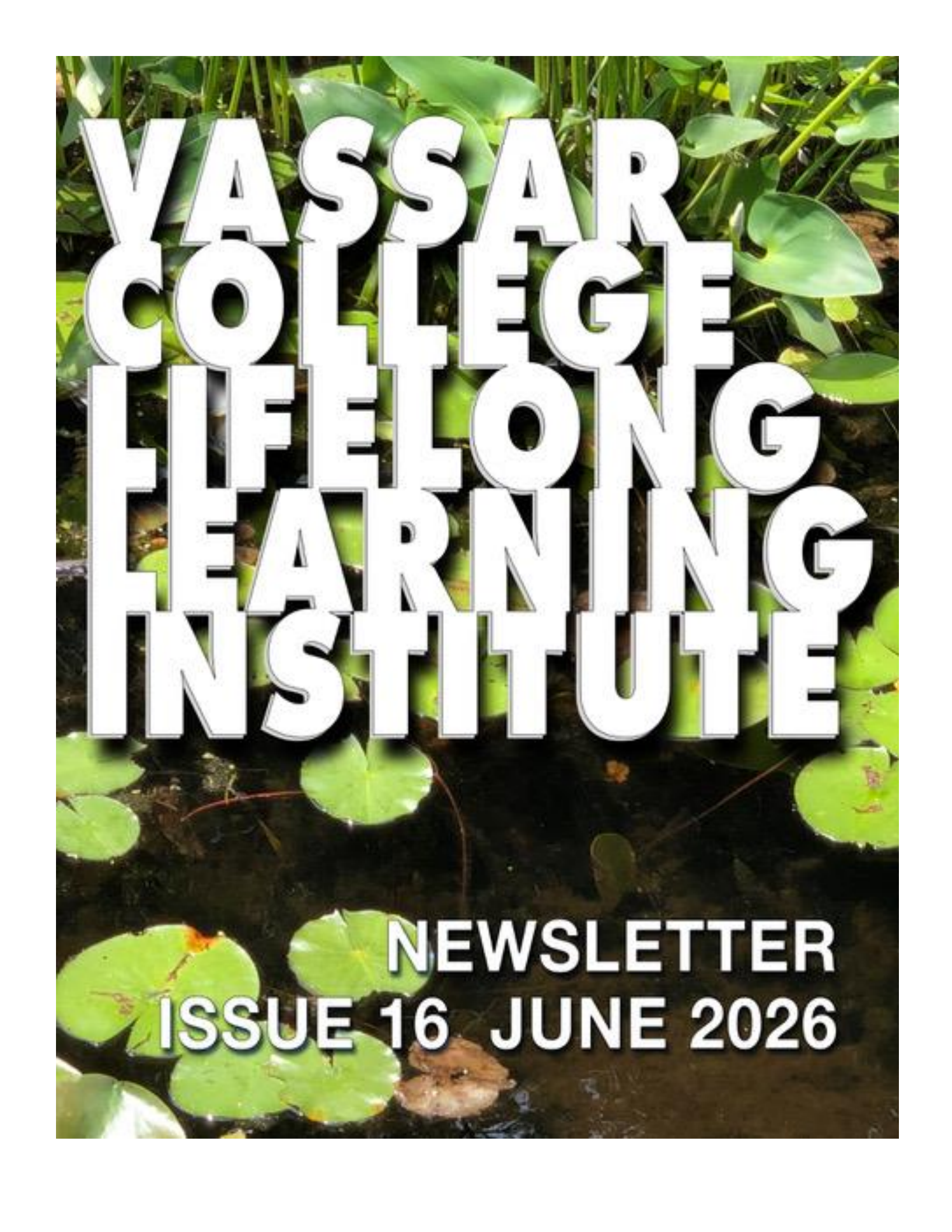




VASSAR COLLEGE LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 16 JUNE 2026

Circling the Moon



As I watched the launch of Artemis II on April 1, 2026, my mind and my emotions jumped back to the 1960s. We are the generation that witnessed the infancy of manned space flights. I remember the excitement generated by the launches, beginning with Alan Shepard, the first American in space. And then after other liftoffs, in 1969, we watched the moon-landing, a thrilling and uniting moment for all the world.

Photo source: <https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasas-artemis-ii-crew-beams-official-moon-flyby-photos-to-earth/>

This most recent launch, I believe, summoned us back to common ground and gave our unsettled, conflicted world a rocket of hope, instead of rockets of destruction. It was a mission of discovery. Once again I felt awe and joy. It gave my spirit a much-needed boost.

In our own little corner of the planet, in a miniscule way, our LLI classes allow us to be explorers, to indulge in this human impulse to circle the moon and peek at the “dark side”—the unfamiliar, arcane, esoteric aspects—of our world. In spite of all our many years of learning, we still yearn to see and to experience what we haven’t seen or known before.

Once again, a space journey allowed us to see Earth from the perspective of the Moon. This past semester our LLI courses offered us new perspectives—via sights, sounds, thoughts, and ways of moving.

Evolution and Literature, taught by **Judith Saunders**, focused, as its title suggests, on the science of evolution as revealed in the art of short stories and poetry. In **John McGiff’s** class, *Imagining the Big Moment*, students had a new, contemporary view of the iconic painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware”. Presenter **Candace Lewis** re-visited *Sherlock Holmes with “a little art jargon”*. **Shannon Butler** revealed some aspects of *Poughkeepsie History* that even locals did not know. (See p. 26.) **Mihai Grunfeld** taught us history by watching *Latin American Cinema*. **Marty Zlotkin** introduced his class to a healthier way to walk—*Nordic Pole Walking*. (See p. 14.) And in **Andrew Hartman’s** course, *The Romantic Era of Classical Music*, a student unexpectedly uncovered the underlying reasons of a family dispute. (See p. 22.)

We *circle the moon* whenever we create something. **Thank you** to those writers who contributed to this newsletter and fill these pages with what they have explored and discovered.

Special thanks, as always, to our cover artist, **Marty Zlotkin**, our proofreader, **Sandy Corwin**, and to the photographers, especially long-time photographer **Sarah Kennedy**, and our newest full-time shutterbug, **Jennifer Henion**, (see p. 7) who says, “I love taking pictures!”

Let us all keep circling the moon.
Jo Hausam, Editor

Campus Spaces for Exploration & Discovery

During the Spring 2026 Semester, two sessions of the *Science Sampler* course dealt with astronomy and were taught by Vassar College Faculty: **Debra Elmegreen, *Galaxies across the Universe*** and **Colette Salyk, *Observing Planet Formation with the James Webb Space Telescope***.

These professors and many others reflect Vassar College's long-time interest in astronomy. The Vassar Observatory was the first building to be completed on campus in the summer of 1865.

Maria Mitchell, already famous for discovering a “telescopic” comet, (too distant to be seen with the naked eyes), was one of the first teachers recruited by Matthew Vassar. Her students studied the heavens from the dome at the top of the observatory.

The Maria Mitchell Observatory was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1991. In 1997, a new observatory, the Class of '51 Observatory, was completed. It houses three telescopes.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vassar_College_Observatory



Not far from the old observatory, in front of the Pratt House, now the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, a labyrinth was installed in April 2022. It, too, is a place of discovery—self-discovery—a way to *circle the moon* by literally walking in a circle.

Photo Credit: Grace Adams Ward

Source: <https://www.vassar.edu/news/vassars-new-labyrinth-offers-space-contemplation-preserve/30/>

There is another Vassar labyrinth, the Willow Grove Labyrinth, located behind the community garden plots on the Vassar College Farm and Ecological Preserve. It has been transformed into a pollinator habitat.



Image taken 12/7/21. Photo Credit: Chad Fust

Source: <https://labyrinthlocator.org/labyrinth/vassar-college-farm-and-ecological-preserve/30/>

Thro all the Labyrinths of Learning go...

--Lady Mary Chudleigh, from *The Ladies Defence*

Integrating the Lifelong Learning Institute with Vassar College

As a way to support Vassar students and as part of LLI's ongoing efforts to further integrate our program into the greater Vassar College community, Mihai Grunfeld announced that we are introducing a new **Performance Prize for Vassar Students**.



In our inaugural event, the prize (\$150 per student) was awarded to a trio of Vassar musicians: Theodor Olsen (flute), Anthony Orsi (viola), and Caius Gordon-Bruno (cello).

On April 17th they performed works by Franz Schubert and spoke about their work.



Some LLI members attended the performance at Blodgett Hall.

Mihai says he hopes to expand the prize to students in Dance, and if possible, other departments as well.

Photos by **Jennifer Henion**

Engagement with New Members

Submitted by **Denise Murphy**

The New Member Welcome Committee, also known as the New Member Engagement Committee, began the semester with a new Chairperson, **Denise Murphy**, after the departure of Ed Kinkade.



The committee continued the work that was initiated in the Fall Semester and began discussing additional ways to engage new members in the program:

New, embellished ID tags were introduced in the hopes that established members would more easily recognize and approach new members to assist in their integration.

More frequent email contact is being made to reinforce general information about events, as well as a request for feedback regarding the effectiveness of the workings of the committee.

Going forward, the committee hopes to assist in connecting new members with activities that match their interests and enhance their participation in the program, the overall goal being to provide a smooth and universally rewarding transition into VCLLI.

Rockefeller Hall: New Venue for Classes

Photos by Jennifer Henion

Outside



Two afternoon courses, *Science Sampler* and *Latin American Cinema*, met in Rockefeller Hall during the Spring Semester.

Many attendees walked to class, but the shuttle was available for those who needed a ride.

The spacious room allowed many more to attend these sessions.

Inside



“How little we knew of our neighbor!”

Article by **Adeline Anderson** and **Janet Burati**

Photos by **Jennifer Henion**

How little we knew of our neighbor! He lived just up the road on Route 9 in Hyde Park in a stately home—with his very own library on the property.

After taking the course ***Learning about the Roosevelts*** with **Jeffrey Urbin**, we have a whole new appreciation for the life and presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. During our four classes we sat absorbed, as we (who thought we knew so much about history) learned so much more about Franklin and Eleanor and the far-reaching impact they had on America and, fair to say, the world.



While we were impressed with the accomplishments of this amazing couple, the presentation by Jeff Urbin (photo on the left) was what we probably remember most. His warmth, humor, and ever-so-interesting style captivated us for each session. (See next page for a brief bio.)

If you get the chance, grab the next available seat at the Visitor's Center at the Hyde Park home of Franklin and Eleanor. You will be glad you did!

Walking on the paths of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum



Listening to a lecture at the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center Auditorium





More about Jeffrey Urbin

Jeffrey Urbin is the Education Specialist and Director of the Pare Lorenz Film Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Museum. He is in charge of all the education programs from second grade to adult learners. He also heads the Library's Distance Learning programs and accessibility efforts.

<https://destinationdutchess.com/spotlights/accessible-travel-series-jeffrey-urbin-from-the-franklin-d-roosevelt-presidential-library-and-museum>

One of Jeff's props is an over-sized puppet-head of Fala, the Roosevelt's famous Scottish Terrier. FDR named him after a Scottish ancestor, "Murray the Outlaw of Falahill". His nickname became Fala.

<https://www.nps.gov/places/fala-dogs-of-the-nps.htm>

The Poetry of Rock and Roll: Springsteen Edition

What an experience!

by Celia Serotsky

Not only did **Skip Weisman** bring his passion, his knowledge, and his experience to this class, but we had the added pleasure of hearing from Skip's friend in Germany, **Nils Linnechen**. Nils joined us via Zoom for the first five weeks of the class but flew here and attended the last class in person. These two men met many years ago at a Springsteen tour, bonded over their passion and respect for Springsteen, and have remained friends ever since. Nils came to the U.S. to attend one or more of the concerts with Skip that Bruce Springsteen is doing called "The Land of Hope and Dreams American Tour."



Photo by Celia Serotsky

I attended Skip's Fall Semester class about Bruce Springsteen knowing only the name and that the singer/composer was a talented and skillful musician. I was not at all familiar with his songs, nor the depth of meaning in his lyrics, nor the intricacy of his music. Thanks to Skip, and in this session, Nils, I now know more. This class opened my eyes, and those of my classmates, to the poetry and beauty of his lyrics.

Springsteen is no ordinary rock musician—in fact, he has recently been honored by the *New York Times* as one of "The 30 Greatest Living American Songwriters." As we viewed each video of one of the songs accompanied with subtitles of the lyrics, we learned there is more to Springsteen's music than simply a good rock beat that lends itself to dancing (as witnessed in a video of Nils at one of the concerts!). Each week Skip sent us a list of about 5 or 6 songs that we were to listen to and be ready to discuss. With each assignment Skip included a set of questions related to the poetry of the lyrics and their meaning. This homework lent itself to some very robust and lively discussions in class, enriching our experience even further.

My thanks to Skip and Nils for sharing their love and respect for Bruce Springsteen with us. I will never hear another Springsteen song without thinking of both of the classes Skip has offered at Vassar LLI and how much they have added to my knowledge and enjoyment.

Amusing Musings

by Maureen Rant

#1. It has been observed that a fisherman has a favorite spot to which he always returns. Some say it is because he remembers the spot. Philosophers suggest that he returns because the water remembers him. Maybe it's a combination of both. In any event, the fisherman wants to be there.

On a trip to The Albany Institute of Art and History, organized by **Diana Salzberg**, we saw a perfect example of this in a painting, *Landscape with Fisherman*, by Walter Mason Odie. In this magnificent landscape, the challenge for the viewer is to find the fisherman, a tiny figure which, at some point in time, was painted out. It is not known who the fisherman was or when the fisherman was covered, but the exciting thing is that the fisherman, however faint, is back. You have to look really closely, but he is there, fighting his way through layers of paint. You have to admire this angler. This is his spot and he wants to be there. No, he needs to be there. At first I wanted the image to be bolder, but later decided that the figure is faint because what we are seeing is the fisherman's spirit. Lean in closely and you can almost hear him: "If there is a paradise on Earth, it is this, it is this, it is this."* What a perfect place to spend eternity.



*The quote is from a Persian proverb/verse attributed to Amir Khusrau. <https://allpoetry.com/Couplet-7>
Editors' note: The image shown is *River Landscape*, Walter Mason Odie.

#2. I attended a *Lunch Then Learn* session called ***Getting to Yes: Negotiating without Giving In***. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the course description promised a "step-by-step strategy for reaching mutually acceptable agreements in every sort of situation."

It turns out that the presenter, **Kathryn Lazar**, was focused on mediation techniques used to avoid court action in divorce proceedings. Although I am not interested in divorce at this time (except maybe from my cat), I still hoped to gain some hints for dealing with my current situation.

The problem is my cat, Bella, or rather Bella's inconsistent use of the litter box. I have tried negotiating with her, taking her to the veterinarian where expensive tests showed nothing, buying all kinds of boxes and litter, and following every suggestion from ChatGPT. Nothing has worked. I had just about given up when, in the *Lunch Then Learn* lecture, we got to one of the key principles of mediation: Develop options. We were advised to "Use your imagination, think of wild and crazy ideas, as well as ones you 'thought' were your bottom line." I hate to brag, but this is where I excel.

My solution was so simple I should have thought of it sooner. Every time I came to campus I saw the answer posted on restroom doors. Maybe Bella wasn't trying to be difficult. Maybe she was just confused. I have since labeled her litter boxes, "Gender Neutral" and "All Gender".

It's working.

Photo by **Maureen Rant**





Spotlight on New Member and Newsletter Photographer Jennifer Henion



I've always been interested in photography. Even back when we had to use film cameras, I always had a camera with me and I was always planning shots. But then, more carefully than now, since I can always delete digital photos.

Fall 2025 was my first semester in Vassar LLI. Even though I'm just completing my first year of LLI, I feel connected to the community and really did from the start. My friends Gail and Gala encouraged me to apply when applications opened last year.



I love learning and meeting people. So it was a great fit for me, with such a variety of classes to take, from wine to Nordic Pole Walking to Faberge, American Style and countless other options I've also loved. And I do know a number of people from past experiences in the community.

I have always lived in the Hudson Valley and I love living in Hyde Park.



I am a Vassar Grad (French and economics major), so being on campus feels like being back home. I have an MBA in Finance, e-commerce and Marketing from the University of Rochester. From business school, I went into consumer insight and strategy for Kraft Foods then Procter and Gamble. I've enjoyed getting to travel and truly understanding what people are looking for in products and how companies can meet the needs of consumers.

Outside of work, I have always volunteered with local organizations. I worked with a group of people to found Northern Dutchess Symphony Orchestra 20 years ago and I continue with the organization (Ndsorchestra.org). I play instruments (currently mainly violin, trumpet, French horn) in various community groups. I also volunteer in the National Parks Gardens. I photograph all of my activities. I love having the memories to look back at later and share with others who are involved.

One final note is the perspective I had when I was taking photos on campus the other day. I was remembering back to my undergraduate days at Vassar. I was appreciating how much I can see the beauty of the campus even more now. Without pressure for grades or thinking about the next step, the learning I am experiencing now is truly for me. I look forward to spending more time learning in this enlightening way and meeting more friends.

Photos submitted by **Jennifer Henion**

Presenters:

The Rockets That Launch Us into New Spaces



Photo by Jennifer Henion

Andrew Hartman

Paul Ciminello

Rob Cohen

Cora Stempel

Judith Saunders

Gary Quartararo

Carol DiPalo

Candace Lewis

Gala Leganof

David Bloom

Jacqueline Goffe-McNish

Martin Charwat

Kathryn Lazar

Marty Zlotkin

Ali Ece

David Roberts

Nancy LeVine

Brian Mann

Nathan Rosenblum

Diane O'Leary

Galina Vromen

Jeffrey Urbin

Maureen King

Mihai Grunfeld

Miriam Cohen

Shelley Tatelbaum

John McGiff

Marcy Heidish Dolan

Anita Kiewra

Linda Bouchey

Sue McLean

Dana Lucas

Shannon Butler

Arnold Serotsky

Samantha Fulton

Sandra Opdycke

Marilyn Price

Kelsey Ponesse

Skip Weisman

Chuck Mishaan

John Platt

Janice Hardgrove

Sudhir Desai

Teresa Quinn

Al Vinck

Nils Linnecken

Vassar Professors: *Leathem Mehaffey, Brian Daly, Debra Elmegreen, Jeff Walker, Colette Salyk, John Zayac, Haley Affronti, Laura Hayes*



Photo source:

https://www.gettyimages.com/search/2/image?phrase=artemis+rocket&tracked_gsrp_landing=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gettyimages.com%2Fphotos%2Fartemis-rocket



Presenter's Perspective

The Hidden Benefits of Intimidation

by Paul Ciminello

Intimidation can be a powerful motivator. When I proposed my first class at LLI, it was a variation of a class that I had taught for 25 years to Marist College undergraduates. The “bones” were there and it seemed that all that was needed was a little tweaking of the Power Point slides (would the jokes that resonated with 19 year olds still work on 70 year olds?) and some updating of the data. And so I proposed a 4 part class on Water Resources.

What I hadn't anticipated was the nervousness that crept into my class preparation as I began to fully appreciate who the new audience would be: 30 individuals with rich life experiences, some of whom had interests in my field of expertise (none of my undergraduate students had spent time on their County's Environmental management Committee); and 30 professional careers, some of whom were as (or more) knowledgeable about aspects of this topic as I was (no student, to my knowledge, had a PhD in Chemistry).

And maybe even more daunting was the realization that the students in this new class weren't asking: “Will this be on the test?” but were, instead, keenly interested in what this information meant in their lives and in their communities. Knowing that the bar was higher than in a typical college classroom became a motivating force behind my desire to build a better 4 part course on water.

Rechanneling this intimidation became the foundation of a more meaningful course and, as a result, a more meaningful teaching experience. I have thoroughly enjoyed the LLI teaching opportunity: the thoughtful questions, the insights from life experiences, and even the occasional corrections to the Power Point slides. I look forward to our next class together.



Thank You Frankie--Our Faithful Friendly Shuttle Driver



Waiting for a ride.

Photos on left & right by Jo Hausam; photo in the middle by Sarah Kennedy.

General Council & Committee Chairs:

Mission Control

VCLLI is administered by a **General Council**:

the Chair: **Mihai Grunfeld**

Vice Chair: **Neila Radin**

Treasurers: ***Carolyn Lampack** and **Yvonne Sewell** (ending Spring 2026);
Catherine Boker (commencing Fall 2026)

Secretary: **Maribeth King**

At-Large Members: **Carole Wolf & Terry Quinn**

Administrative Assistant: **Rachel Etkin**

and the **Chairs of Committees**:

Executive Committee, Chairs: **Mihai Grunfeld & Neila Radin**

Curriculum Committee, Chairs: **Sybil DelGaudio & Andrea Ciminello**

Classroom Managers Committee, Co-Chairs:

Nora J. Quinlan & Patricia Fitzpatrick

Membership and Registration, Co-Chairs: **Sudhir Desai & Paul Stoddard**

Hospitality Room Committee, Co-Chair: **Tim Ryan & Terry Catapane**

Special Events Committee, Co-Chairs: **Diana Salsberg & Terry Quinn**

Communications Committee, Chair: **Joanne Valeo**

Newsletter Editor: **Jo Hausam**

Phone Support Coordinator: **Howard Spilke**

Course Catalog Managers: **Sybil DelGaudio & Neila Radin**

Photographers: **Sarah Kennedy & Jennifer Henion**

Newsletter and Catalog Artwork: **Marty Zlotkin**

Webmasters: **Mihai Grunfeld, Neila Radin, Rachel Etkin**

Member Engagement Committee: **Denise Murphy**

Transportation Committee: **Terry Quinn**

Mostly unseen, this group of volunteers is akin to a flight control center, or operations center. It manages the VCLLI program, from the launch of courses until the end-of-the year celebration. These “flight controllers” and “support personnel” monitor all aspects of the LLI mission.

***Thank you** to **Carolyn Lampack** and **Yvonne Sewell** for your time and effort keeping track of the financial accounts of the LLI community.



Photo of NASA Mission Control Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/international-space-station-flight-controllers-have-royalty-free-image/534929188?phrase=nasa%20mission%20control%20center&adppopup=true>



Spotlight on Top-Notch Volunteer Paul Stoddard

Paul Stoddard serves many roles within the VCLLI community: Co-chair of Registration and Membership, Presenter, and Class Manager.

Paul is a retired computer systems architect living in Poughkeepsie, NY. He has a B.A. from the University of Rochester. He worked at AT&T for 38 years. He taught a course called *Technology & Ethics* at Ashesi University in Ghana and closer to home at VCLLI and at the Marist Center for Lifetime Studies.

He not only volunteers for LLI, but also serves on the Dutchess County Advisory Board of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley and as a “Book Buddy” for Dutchess County Literacy Connections. In addition, he is the President of the Board of the Howland Chamber Music Circle in Beacon, NY.

Paul loves all kinds of music, but especially classical. A few years ago he taught *Favorite Chamber Music* at VCLLI. Because of his concern about the current political climate of our country, he developed and taught an LLI course during the Fall 2025 Semester called *What Can We Do about Political Polarization?* The course will be repeated in the Fall 2026.

He loves participating in the many interesting courses here and getting to know the wonderful members. He likes to ride his bike to classes and appreciates the other LLI bikers.



Vassar College: A Personal Essay by Millicent Cox

In the early 2020's I was working on my family genealogy, and I thought it would be interesting to be exposed to current views on American history. Therefore, I contacted Vassar's History Department and asked about sitting in on a class as an alumna's daughter. Professor James Merrill agreed, so I was able to stay for two semesters taking Early America (1500-1750) and the American Revolution (1750-1830).

I've always been interested in American history since one of my ancestors, Robert Beverley, (1667-1722), born in Jamestown, a representative in the House of Burgesses, was the author of *The History and the Present State of Virginia*, published in London in 1705. It was the first comprehensive history of a British colony written by an author born in North America. The book was illustrated with woodcuts of watercolors painted by John White, the Governor of the Lost Colony on Roanoke. Currently the British Museum has all of his original art work



While attending these courses, I often thought of my mother sitting under the biggest tree* on campus! She was a member of the Vassar College Class of 1936, having been awarded a voice scholarship. Two other family members also attended, Jean Storke and Marion Day, both from California.

The Lifelong Learning Institute is the essence of enjoying learning for the sake of learning, a spark that should never go away.

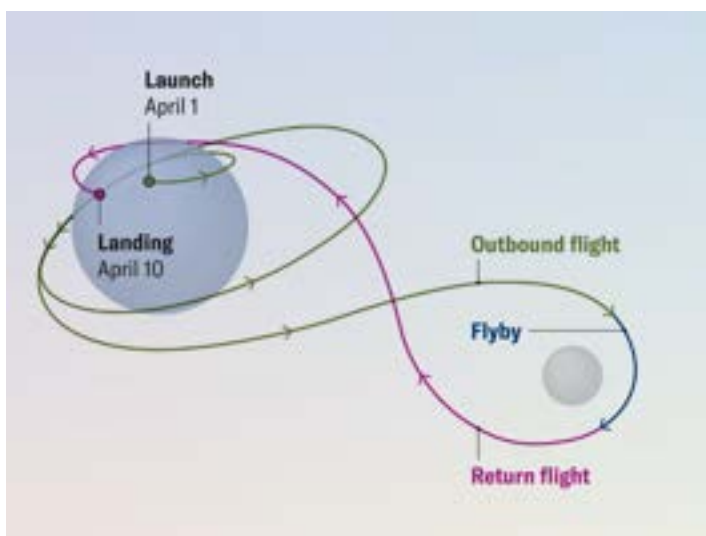
Editor's note: this is a reprint from an earlier issue.

Photo of the London Plane Tree* by **Sarah Kennedy**.

*The London Plane tree, Class Tree of 1906, is a type of sycamore.

Class Managers: Mission Trackers

Madaline Cole	Cary Phillips Auerbach	MaryAnn Williams	
	Sara Rothman	Sarah Kennedy	Nancy Miller
Nadine Revheim	Susan Fink	Betsy Kopstein	
	Roger Perkins	Anne Saylor	Phillipa Goodman
Valerie Carlisle	Jennifer Henion	Joh Dux	
	Bill Davies	Joette Kane	Rachel Reisman
Linda Rizzotto	Celie Serotsky	Christopher Baltus	
	Skip Weisman	Kathryn King	Muriel Horowitz
Ron Tatelbaum	Renee Capitano	Christopher Parks	
	Jayesh Modi	Maureen Potter	Mary Hannah
Marian Pompa	Tish Fitzpatrick	David Bloom	
	Roseann Ashby	Patti Wineapple	Ruth Kava
Lucy Johnson	Regina Klein	Judy Elkin	
	John Coleman	Paul Stoddard	Maribeth King
Theresa Bracchi	Maureen King	Teresa Quinn	
	Katy Anson	Nora Quinlan	



THANK YOU to all the Class Managers who keep both the presenters and the students on the right track throughout the semester. They monitor attendance and provide information that guides us on our educational mission.

Special thanks to **Nora Quinlan** and **Patricia Fitzpatrick**, who assign, guide, and keep track of the Class Managers.



Spotlight on Class Manager & Early VCLLI Supporter

Roseanne Ashby

In her own words....

Not surprisingly, IBM brought my husband and me to the Hudson Valley early in January 1993 during the great IBM downsizing. The IBM TPF site in Connecticut was closed, and we moved to Poughkeepsie with a 3-month old infant.

After my maternity leave I did not return to IBM but followed my passion to earn a 2-year certificate in landscape design from the New York Botanical Gardens and worked in that field for several years before a family challenge needed my full attention.

Officially I have two years of college, also completed the Katharine Gibbs course for college women, and took the opportunity to take classes whenever available, which included math and computer science from IBM, sociology, and art. I love art, dance, music and theatre, all of which I find prolific and close at hand in this outskirts-of-NYC area. I also love hiking in this amazingly beautiful area.



I am an active member of the Elmendorph Handspinners Guild and the Dutchess County Sheep & Wool Growers Association, so I am lucky to visit many of the beautiful Hudson Valley sheep farms and be involved in the marvelous fleece from these sweet docile animals.

Why did I want to join Vassar LLI? It gave me the opportunity to be back in a college classroom stimulated by ideas outside the scope of my current life, as well as by the interesting people who would be involved in such a project.

When I originally found out about the Lifelong Learning concept I tried to sign up for Marist's CLS program, however, they were so over booked they would not even add another name to their waiting list. So I joined the New Paltz LLI, which I attended and enjoyed for several semesters. That's where I heard the rumor that Vassar was looking to start their own LLI. I was very anxious to support this effort and attended strategy meetings and originally served on the marketing committee to promote awareness of the Vassar LLI. I did other small jobs which now elude memory, but I do remember the people on my team and my enjoyment in working with them. This is one of the great benefits of the LLI — meeting and working with interesting and motivated people. Because of a busy schedule these days, I have had to limit my Vassar LLI volunteerism to class management right now.

I am grateful to the many individuals who volunteer so generously, and I try to do whatever I can so support such a valuable asset to our community. It is a complicated and challenging job to keep this LLI successful, and I so appreciate not only the folks who made it happen in the first place, but the individuals (mostly the same folks!) who keep up with the ever expanding challenges of this success.

A New Way of Walking: Fitness-Building & Fun

by Nora J. Quinlan

When I saw the *Nordic Pole Walking* class listed in the VCLLI Spring 2026 catalog I knew right away I wanted to take it as I thought it would benefit me, but also, because it was also the most unusual class being offered. I tried to register, but the class was already full. I was disappointed but I took advantage of the new waitlist just in case. A few weeks later I got a call telling me that someone had dropped the class and I was on the waitlist and was I still interested in taking it? I shouted yes and started laughing. I just knew this would be a fun class. I already owned one trekking pole so I ran out to buy another pole. Trekking poles are not true Nordic walking poles but they would do.

In the class description the first class was to be at a Vassar gym so that **Marty Zlotkin**, the instructor, could train us indoors. After the first week we would practice on the Walkway. Unfortunately the first class was scheduled during Vassar's spring break so we ended up practicing outdoors at Noyes Circle on campus. Luckily we had a nice day. Students showed up with a variety of poles: ski poles, trekking poles, and several different styles of old and new Nordic walking poles with different feet and wrist straps. Some people had collapsible poles, others fitted. No two sets of poles were the same! Marty checked all our poles, showed us how to fit them to our height, how to hold the poles and how to walk with them.

Photos by **Jennifer Henion**



Marty is very tall and his poles are very long and he is very experienced. So when he started demonstrating how to walk, he went off flying so fast we could barely keep up with him. It was very funny to see everyone walking around flailing their poles trying to figure out how they worked and how to walk like the instructor, all moving at different paces, rhythms and directions. One of my poles kept folding up and I just could not keep my straps in place. And I could not stop laughing at how much fun we were having!

Plans to have the next class on the Walkway Across the Hudson fell apart because of the parking situation on the east side and no free parking on the west side.

It was decided to meet at another location for the second class, The Morgan Lake Trailhead on the Dutchess County Rail Trail. Unfortunately Google Maps has the wrong location for parking at the trailhead so this caused great confusion in finding the park. So a little late, we all assembled on a VERY cold Wednesday. I had at least four layers on and was wearing two pairs of gloves and socks trying to stay warm. Fortunately the rail trail is very level in this area for a mile heading east and the class found it easy to practice on. We all took off, still flailing our poles, holding them wrong, and walking incorrectly, some fast and some slow.

(Continued on the next page.)

Marty, dressed in a very red winter coat and hood that could be seen for miles, went back-and-forth, moving very quickly up and down the trail checking on all of us like a mother hen with her chicks. Marty had his work cut out for him as some of us, including *moi*, started to drift to the back of the line and poor Marty had to come chasing down the trail to find us, calling out “Come back, come back.” But as we walked and practiced I started to get the rhythm and feel my body working to master this new walking style. I also found that the exercise warmed me up despite the cold weather.

The third week we went back to Morgan Lake as we agreed it was a good location. Again we practiced and some of us still fell behind, but we were getting better. Marty urged us to practice between classes and I did, going down to the Walkway on my own to practice my new skill. For the fourth and final session the class made it from Morgan Lake to the Walkway and back and had great fun.



This was a very enjoyable class with a good instructor and good company. Our diligent and efficient Class Manager, Jennifer Henion, kept us well-informed. I learned a new skill to make walking easier, and I found it very beneficial for me as it works both the upper and the lower body while providing support and balance at the same time. A win-win! Thanks for offering this class Marty!



Spotlight on

Presenter **Nancy LeVine**

Classroom photos by **Kathy King**



The course, *Exploration of Your Vision*, presented by **Nancy LeVine**, was designed to help photographers who have reached a certain level of technical achievement but need guidance and constructive critiques to help define their approach to making photographs that resonate powerfully with their ideas.

Photo on left source: <https://www.mainemedia.edu/faculty/list/nancy-levine/>



VCLLI was fortunate to have **Nancy LeVine** (photo on left) as a presenter. She is an award-winning photographer “whose expertise spans portraiture, pharmaceutical advertising, and evocative dog photography.” Her book, *Senior Dogs Across America* (Schiffer Publishing, 2016), has been featured on *The Today Show*, *Oprah.com*, *The New York Times LENS Blog*, the *BBC* and others. Nancy has traveled worldwide on a variety of assignments. Her client list is extensive and includes Seattle Children’s Hospital, Starbucks, Microsoft, and PBS.

In 2019 she moved from Seattle, WA to Beacon, NY. During the initial COVID lockdown, she drove around the city to take portraits of the residents at a safe distance. She created a historical photographic record of 88 households, entitled *Beacon in Quarantine*.



Source of quoted material: <https://www.tmgrepresents.com/nancy-levine-photographer/#:-:text=The%20Montgomery%20Group.%20All%20rights>

Bluegrass Concert in Kenyon Hall



A lively concert by members of the Hudson Valley Bluegrass Association entertained an appreciative crowd in the Hospitality Room in Kenyon Hall on May 1st.



The musicians not only played but spoke about the history of bluegrass music, the instruments used (fiddles, guitars, a mandolin, a dobro, and a bass fiddle) and their origins, explaining how these instruments come together in this uniquely American musical tradition.

There was lots of toe-tapping and foot-stomping.



Photos by **Jennifer Henion**

Art, Art, and More Art



The Art of the Egg presented by **Anita Fina Kiewra** explored several traditions and techniques of egg decoration: Pysanky Traditional Ukrainian Easter eggs; Etched eggs; and Polished eggs.

Eileen Bailey designed and photographed the eggs pictured in the photo on the left.

Presenter **Gala Leganof** offered another look at egg decoration in the course *Fabergé: The Art of Its Own*. In her introduction to the course, Gala writes: In 1882, brothers Carl and Agathon Fabergé took over their father's jewelry workshop in St. Petersburg. With unmatched artistry and sharp business sense, they transformed the shop into a world-renowned jewelry house, turning natural forms—flowers, animals and delicate motifs—into breathtaking masterpieces in metal, wood and gemstone.



Photo submitted by **Gala Leganof**

Drawing from Observation and Imagination presented by **Marilyn Price** involved drawing with color by observation. Colored paper and chalk pastels were used to help each participant gain experience in observation, composition, and the use of imagination to foster their own individual expression.



Photos by **Mimi Tannen**

Fiction Feature:**You Can Find It in the Library**by **Linda Rizzotto**

Volunteering at the local library cyber café was an effortless way to load up on caffeine while helping people with issues, for the most part, on their phones. There was always something to do, especially every time Apple released a new update. Apps that had worked seamlessly would be just a scooch different sending people into a tizzy and the latest release was no different.

The volunteer looked off to her right and there at one of the workstations was an older woman. Whatever her issue it was on her laptop. She was combing her fingers through her hair and if there had been any style to it that was long gone. Closer examination revealed the woman appeared to be crying. Why not, she thought. I'm tired of clearing up Apple issues.

She made her way over. "Do you need some help, ma'am?" The woman gave a start but that was nothing new. It invariably happened when people first laid eyes on facial piercings, the tattoo sleeve, and neon colored hair. "Yeah, I know, I look like a freak, but I'm quite computer savvy." She bent to look at the computer screen. "And I do know my way around a computer."

The woman brushed away a tear and wiped at her nose, sniffing. "Looks like a bank statement." The woman nodded. "Someone is taking my money. The bank has been helpful, but I have to wait for the fraud claims to be researched." She began to sob. "I was changing my passwords."

"Well, that is a good first step. I am sure I can help."

"It...he...this **thing** is making fun of me," said the woman as she turned the screen so the computer nerd could see. In all caps she read: "STUPID COW. DO YOU THINK THOSE MORONIC PASSWORDS WILL STOP ME? I OWN YOU MARGARET."

"Margaret, let me sit there and see what I can do." Margaret watched as the weird girl let her fingers fly over the keyboard. Screens popped up, and just as quickly they disappeared. She hovered over an address. "Margaret, do you know anyone named Simon?"

"No."

"Simon is a creep. I can see you're not his only victim."

"It's because I'm clueless about all this technology, isn't it?" asked Margaret.

"No Margaret. It's because he is a douche."

"I wonder if he has ever had anything like this happen to him. "

"I've taken care of the financials Margaret. You are all safe now."

There was more keyboard clicking. "Simon also thinks he's quite the catch, using other people's money to get around. Would you like to give him a taste of his own medicine?"

This made Margaret laugh. "If I could see it that might be fun."

Margaret noticed a glow surrounding the girl who was helping her. There was video on the screen, police surrounding a man on his knees, hands on his head. A chyron came across saying he was wanted for sex trafficking.

"That is Simon. When they look at his devices they will be convinced he's a sex trafficker. What goes around comes around." The girl stood up and smiled at Margaret.

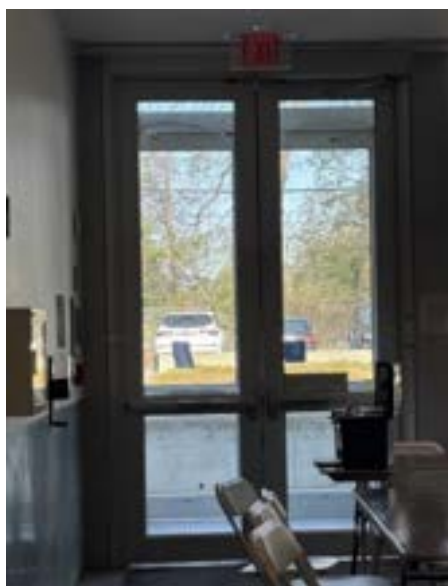
Margaret looked up at her. "Did you really do that? What's your name?"

The girl was packing up her stuff. "People call me Karma." And she was gone.

Author's note: One of the best things for me at VCLLI was ending up in a fiction writing class back a few semesters when time opened up in my schedule. Thank you Robin Roy for providing the nudge I needed to get back to writing. Thank you Skip and Diane for added encouragement.

This piece was the result of my being scammed several months ago. **Linda Rizzotto**

Members Adapt to Glitches & Switches



Temperamental door



Snacks and lunch in the Kenyon Lobby due to the closure of the Hospitality Room

Technical conundrums



The frustration of the



The kerfuffle of room switches between Blodgett, Kenyon, and Rockefeller



Packed parking lots



“How Do You Say Bagel in Mohican?”

A Film Discussion at Dutchess Community College

by Jennifer Henion

A presentation in April, sponsored by the Gillespie Forum*, held at Dutchess Community College, brought together community members and students for a thoughtful discussion about Mohican history, language, and culture. An invitation to attend was sent to Vassar LLI. I wanted to share what I took away from the session.

It was appropriate to have the program in Poughkeepsie because the Mohicans once lived in the Hudson Valley. Also, the film producer lives here. Today there is a significant community of Mohicans on a reservation called the Stockbridge-Munsee Community in Michigan, which is at the center of the preservation of Mohican language and culture.

The Mohican language nearly disappeared in the early 1900s. In many cases, the preservation of the language was done word by word, based on single words remembered and/or passed down from past generations.

The Muh-he-con-ne-ok

The People of the Waters that Are Never Still have a rich and illustrious history which has been retained through oral tradition and the written word.

Our many moves from the East to Wisconsin left Many Trails to retrace in search of our history. Many Trails is an original design created and designed by Edwin Martin, a Mohican Indian, symbolizing endurance, strength and hope. From a long suffering proud and determined people.



We watched two films that explored Mohican history, identity, and language preservation, one of which was produced by the DCC presenter, Jan Müller. The films highlighted both the historical displacement of the Mohican people and ongoing efforts to reclaim and revitalize their language. A key theme was how language connects directly to culture, memory, and identity. The idea that even something as simple as a word like “bagel” (round bread) can reflect deeper cultural exchange and history.

Symbol source: <https://www.wamtheatre.com/thanksgivingplay/meetmohicans/>

Following the films, participants reflected on the role individuals and communities play in keeping traditions alive. Overall, the class offered a valuable opportunity to learn about the Mohican people and the rare chance to hear the almost lyrical Mohican language. Also, it was a reminder of the importance of listening to and preserving voices that have too often been overlooked.

All of this made me realize how fortunate I am to have local family that speaks Greek. As a Greek-American, I know some Greek, but I have a lot to learn. This program inspired me to pursue a further study of Greek.

**Note: The June and Aaron Gillespie Forum collaborates with local colleges and organizations to provide movie screenings, discussions, and lectures free of charge to foster discussion on engaging and relevant topics. Programs are free and open to the public.*

Popular *Lunch, Then Learn* Sessions



Tish Fitzpatrick was the class manager for all five *Lunch, then Learn* sessions. Attendees filled the room at each event.



Sudhir Desai, (left) LLI's very own magician, (and co-chair of the Registration & Membership Committee), once again astounded his audience while performing *A Little Magic at Lunchtime*.



Kathryn Lazar (below left), an attorney and an expert on mediation, spoke about *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In*.



Diane O'Leary (right), a retired Poughkeepsie attorney, introduced us to *Two Remarkable Women* [Charlotte Frank and Susanna Bedell]: *Trailblazers in the Law*.



Martin Charwat, founding member of the World Affairs Council of the Hudson Valley, looked at *Six Maritime Chokepoints and Why They Matter*, including the Strait of Hormuz, now in the news. Photo by Sudhir Desai



Galina Vromen, (left) a reporter and author of the novel *Hill of Secrets*, shared her research about *The Atomic Age from 1945 Los Alamos to Now*.



Photo by
Tish Fitzpatrick;

Audience listens attentively.



Photo by Sarah Kennedy

Music Mirrors the Complexity of Human Experience

by Gail McGlinchey

We LLI members comprise a diverse group; even our ages range considerably. Nonetheless, like pupils everywhere, we transform classroom experience for personal use. At the conclusion of Andrew Hartman's course, I gained a recognition about the decades' long debate between my maternal, 'Little Frenchman' grandfather and my realistic, business-pragmatic father. Kindly let me explain.

Professor Andrew Hartman made the study of classical music accessible to a varied audience. With gentle humor and fine scholarship, he explained that social and economic conditions influenced the careers and accomplishments of composers. European life changed rapidly during the 1800s. The rise of the bourgeois class, new travel vehicles, such as the railroad and steamship, and community halls built for local entertainment created an environment which enabled composers to achieve greater financial independence and artistic freedom. Although the 19th Century did include both secular and religious music, with some composers adhering to and others rebelling against traditional forms, opera and operettas were extraordinarily popular. The staged spectacles had lavish background sets, intricate ballet steps and stellar musicians.

An appreciation of beauty, perspective and narrative is central to the arts. During each session of the course, we heard recordings so fine that we clapped at their end. Thanks to Andrew's biographical sketches, we laughed at a recurring motif: a young composer, hired as piano instructor, falls in love and marries his woman student. Bel Canto and Grand Opera storylines helped us contemplate the power of intense emotions: love (worldly and spiritual); loss and grief; merriment; national pride. We experienced sacred choral music; although we were seated, we moved our feet to light rhythmic harmonies. One participant spontaneously left her chair to dance.

At any age one may learn to accept points of view which originally appear irreconcilable. My grandfather had lived in Paris during the 1890s, spending his meager milliner's salary on inexpensive opera tickets. My father valued nuance within symphonic movements but found opera overly dramatic. These two men continued their good natured disagreement as long as 'Gramps' was alive. After taking Andrew Hartman's excellent course, I now realize that my grandfather and father shared unsaid insights: music both mirrors human nature and emphasizes the complexity of human experience. Upon finishing a marvelous meal, a colleague of mine wisely said: "This tastes like *more, please.*"

A Trip to the Oldest Museum in New York

Article by **Howard Spilke**

Photos by **Diana Salsberg & Kathy King**

On a beautiful spring morning, we met at the north parking lot to board a luxury bus to the Albany Institute of History and Art, founded in 1791. At the museum we were met by two docents who were our guides.

At the first gallery we were introduced to “Blanche Lazzell Becoming an American Modernist”. Through viewing her work, and the docent’s review, we could see how she translated Modernism into an American Art Form. She combined painting and white line woodblock prints to form stunning large-scale abstract paintings.



The next gallery was “A Life in Bloom, the Floral Painting of Julia McEntire Dillon”. She was born near Kingston and was regarded as one of the greatest flower painters of her generation. Her rose painting seemed so real, you were tempted to get up close and smell the painting for fragrance.

Our final gallery tour was to one of the largest collections of nineteenth-century American landscape paintings of the “Hudson River School”. We viewed paintings of Thomas Cole, Frederick Church and others. The docent remarked how fortunate we were to have the Vassar College Loeb Art Center which also has a “Hudson River School” collection.



When the tours were completed we had lunch at a restaurant. Then, some of the group explored downtown Albany and others returned to the museum for more viewing.

The bus ride back went smoothly and we experienced a wonderful day of art appreciation.

A Visit to the Art Studio of Madeleine Segal-Marx: A Photo Montage

Photos by Jennifer Henion



During the 2025 Fall Semester, **Madeleine Segall-Marx** presented the course ***Listening to the Enemy***. This past semester VCLLI members were invited to view the 25 artworks comprising this project which are installed in a barn at WestCrest in Hyde Park.

Thanks to **Carole Wolf**, trip organizer.



(Continued on next page.)

LLI members, in the art-filled home of Madeleine Segal-Marx (photo on left), listen to her speak about her project “The Singing Bowl: Voices of the Enemy”.



Photo source; <https://www.sanctuary-magazine.com/july-16-featured-artist-madeleine-segall-marx.html>



Snacking, Relaxing, & Hobnobbing Between Classes in the Hospitality Room



Thanks to **Tim Ryan, Terry Catapane**, and their reliable crew for all they do to keep us supplied with coffee, tea, and snacks.

Photos by **Jennifer Henion**



“The Poughkeepsie History Class was Terrific!”

-- quote by **Susan Horstmann**

Article and photos by **Tish Fitzpatrick**

I signed up to take the course, ***Poughkeepsie's History***, presented by **Shannon Butler**, with great curiosity and eagerness. The course was of particular interest to me as my family moved to Pleasant Valley, NY, when I was two years old. Because my father owned a business in Poughkeepsie on Church Street, many of my friends lived and/or worked there. I, too, eventually worked there, and when my sisters married and started their families, they lived there as well. I have fond memories of running in the YMCA sponsored annual Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot race for kids, listening to many bands at The Chance, visiting the Teepee Dashery “head shop” on Academy Street, shopping at Wallace’s, Lucky Platt’s, and Up-To-Date, going to movies at the Bardavon, and eating meals at Cy’s Diner on Market Street. So, a history course about Poughkeepsie held great appeal for me, realizing, ironically, that I am part of what has now become “history.”

Shannon Butler is a wonderful presenter. She is easy to listen to, has a great sense of humor, and provides her audience with an organized and focused surplus of interesting historical information and anecdotes, accompanied by many pictures to illustrate that history.

She took us on a journey into four distinct topics over the span of the course’s four week run. In the first week, the course focused on what Shannon referred to as ***Poughkeepsie's Artists, Eccentrics, and Weirdos***. We were provided with a fun study of the city’s most interesting characters, all of whom were born or lived in Poughkeepsie.

First up was Ed Wood, the B Movie Cult Icon whose film “Plan 9 from Outer Space,” was dubbed the “Worst Film Ever” and the award for the “Worst Director” was bestowed upon him.



Then there was Billy Name. He was passionate about art and photography and Andy Warhol “discovered him”. He was a part of The Warhol Factory and one of his photos of Andy Warhol was used as a commemorative USPS stamp.

Shannon spoke about Lee Miller, who was the Vogue cover model and legendary World War II photojournalist who vividly photographed the impacts of war and what went on in the concentration camps. She is known for her infamous self-portrait, sitting in Hitler’s personal bathtub after he died, washing off the dirt and ashes of the atrocities she witnessed. The film “Lee” documents her life.



Shannon also introduced us to Dick Wood, “The Hudson River Grappler”, known for recovering, with his grappling hooks, over 150 bodies of people who drowned or were dumped in the Hudson River and other nearby bodies of water. In his 28 year “career”, he only failed once to recover the body. He even wrote an article that has “dos and don’ts for amateur grapplers”, such as “don’t use dynamite...it never raises a body to the surface”.

(Continued on the next page.)

Lastly, we learned about Joe Mendillo, aka Joe Netherworld. He was a charismatic collector, witch, and Satanist who lived on the corner of South Clinton and Church Streets. He coined the phrase “The Witchcraft District” to name his neighborhood of Victorian homes and his collective group of friends. Joe’s house became known as “The Halloween House”, with year-round spooky decorations inside and out. An arsonist burned the house down in 2021, but his community lives on today in the same “Witchcraft District.”



In the next class, Shannon talked about **Historic Murders in Poughkeepsie** covering the span of time between the 1800’s and early 1900’s. (Photo on left by **Susan Hortsmann**)



We first heard about Nina Tower, wife of millionaire Albert Tower, who shot and killed their 14 year old son Albert E. Tower III and then shot herself. No one understood the motive. It was a shocking tragedy.

Then Shannon related the incredible story of Fela Palick, wife of Samuel Palick, who owned a restaurant, “The Red Rose Lunch Room”. on Main Street. Fela met Henry Gagnon there, as he stopped for lunch regularly on his way to his construction job building the Mid-Hudson Bridge. Fela and Henry, both married, had an affair and Fela became pregnant. When

she told Henry the child was his, he denied paternity. Enraged over Henry’s betrayal, Fela waited for him one day as he walked down Main Street. She came up behind him and, with many witnesses present on the busy street, Fela fired five shots, hitting Henry with four. As he lay bleeding to death on the street, Fela calmly walked back to her restaurant and told her staff to call the police. She was eventually found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 10-20 years in prison, her infant son serving part of that time with her.

We also learned about the murder of John Schatz, who lived in a very fashionable home at 16 Garfield Place in Poughkeepsie. He was the owner of Schatz Federal Bearings, murdered by his former butler. Schatz had fired the butler earlier that same day for being insubordinate. The butler was enraged over his termination and retaliated by beating and hacking Schatz with an axe, hammer, and knives, going from room to room, floor to floor, in the attack. He also seriously injured a young woman who had spent the night with Schatz. The butler was discovered by police hiding in the home, his clothes still covered in blood.

[When we arrived for the third week’s class in Blodgett Hall, we discovered the projection screen was not working (seems something had feasted on the wires). So, in record time, the tech staff were called for a repair that could not be done, a new auditorium was quickly found, the shuttle bus was called, and we were all transported in record time to our new location. Amazingly, the problem caused by the screen snafu resulted in only a five minute delay to start the class. That is a testimony to swift action of the tech staff, Katy Anson, Nora Quinlan, and Ed our shuttle driver, who together, pulled out all of the stops to make sure this class was held. That’s what you call teamwork!]]

(Continued on the next page.)

This third week, Shannon taught us about some of the *Long Lost Buildings of the City of Poughkeepsie*.

One of them was the Nelson House Hotel on Market Street. It opened in 1876 and closed in 1969. Sadly, it was torn down. When it was a hotel, it was said to serve once as a quick hideaway for “Legs” Diamond, the gangster. It also served as temporary White House offices. FDR is also said to have given a few campaign speeches from the hotel’s balcony. Other notable people, including Dwight D. Eisenhower, Eleanor Roosevelt, and IMB’s Thomas Watson.

We learned about the history of the Vassar-Warner home, once known as The Old Ladies Home. It was also one of the first schools in Poughkeepsie, known then as the Dutchess Academy, and located on the corner of South Hamilton and Hooker Avenues.

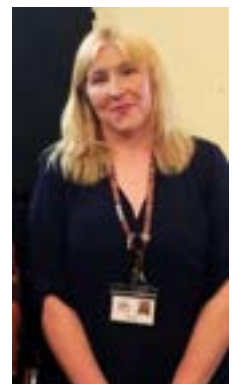
Shannon also talked about The Exchange Hotel. It was built in the early 1800’s and was located at the base of Main Street at the Hudson River’s edge. It was considered a resort and was frequented often by visitors who were travelling by steamship and docking there.

The Pringle Home, aka The Pringle Home for Aged Literary Men, was located on Academy Street. It was a mansion that offered one room units to retired men with noteworthy backgrounds. Those living there included artists, clergy, writers, editors, and teachers. As the aging population died, they were buried in the Pringle Memorial Home’s plot, comprised of two long rows of graves, at the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

Shannon’s topic for the final week of class was *Early Cemeteries and Burial Grounds of Poughkeepsie*. She pointed out the locations of early burial grounds on the northwest corner of Vassar and Mill Streets, and another on the corner of Main and Market, belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church. Another was on the grounds of what is the Samuel F. B. Morse Elementary School, now renamed Sojourner Truth School, which once was the old Baptist Church burial grounds. She then highlighted the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery where many notable people are buried, including Matthew Vassar, the Smith Brothers of Cough Drop fame, John Adriance, and Dr. Anandi Gopal Joshi, the first Indian woman to receive a degree in Western Medicine.

This course was a thoroughly interesting, informative, and enjoyable walk-through of aspects of Poughkeepsie’s history that I knew nothing about. Shannon offered a considerable amount of information that was, for me, a mix of nostalgia, enlightenment, and just all-around fun to learn and behold. I sincerely hope that she will return next semester (and many semesters thereafter!) to offer another course about Poughkeepsie’s history. There is so much to discover, and Shannon teaches so well, this semester’s course made me wish for more!

Shannon Butler is the historian for the Poughkeepsie Public Library District. She has served in this role for nearly six years. Previously she served as the historian for the Town of Hyde Park and worked as a park ranger at the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site. She is the author of two books, *Hyde Park in the Gilded Age* and *Roosevelt Homes of the Hudson Valley: Hyde Park and Beyond*.



Joyfully Discovering Minnewaska

Article and photos by **Gala Leganof**

I'm excited to share a few photos from the class trip to Minnewaska State Park Preserve. The views were absolutely breathtaking, the presenters were engaging and inspiring, and the group made it all the more enjoyable. It was a wonderful, joyful day of hiking, learning, and taking in the beauty of it all.



End-of-Semester Cocktail Party

May 15, 2026

Photos by Jennifer Henion

Delicious Food



Friendly Faces



Spring Flowers

Pleasant Music



Musicians: Jon Ahmadian, Robert Bard, and Steve Horowitz

Impromptu Dancing



(Continued on next page.)

Words of Thanks

Neila Radon and **Mihai Grunfeld** reflected on the completion of our 8th anniversary and reviewed the successes and the problems of the 2026 Spring Semester.

They thanked all the LLI volunteers, as well as the Vassar College staff that assists our program: **Sal Incorvaia** (security), **Frankie Bartucciottto** (shuttle driver), **Peter Conklin & Tony Gonzalez** (media technicians), **Bea Pitt Stoller** (student technical support), and **Rachel Etkins**, our efficient administrative assistant.

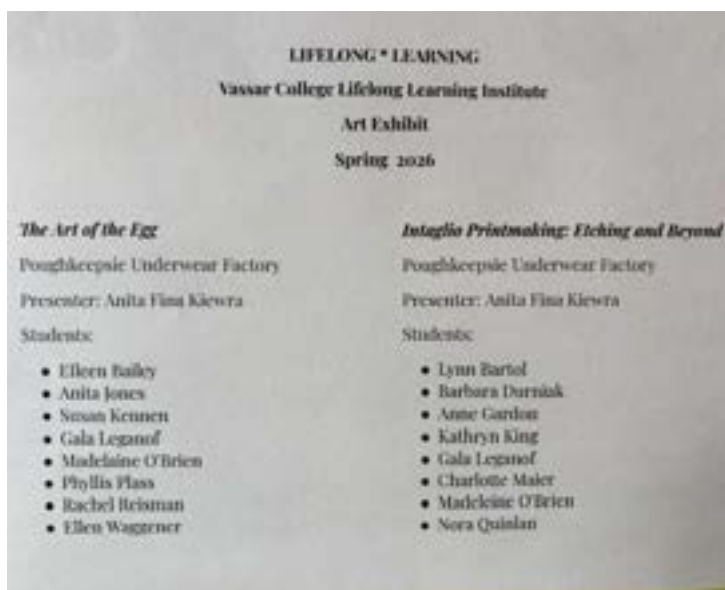
Committee chairs for Curriculum, Hospitality, Member Engagement, and Class Managers, named and honored their volunteers.



Plus, An Art Display



Anita Fina Kiewra



Nora Quinlan

Photos by Jo Hausam



Ellen Waggener with decorated eggs.



Spring Scenes on the Vassar Campus

Photos by Sarah Kennedy



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