

**LIFELONG
LEARNING
INSTITUTE
VASSAR
COLLEGE**

NEWSLETTER
February 2021

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT VASSAR COLLEGE

Newsletter Issue 5, February, 2021

Opening Scene...

After seeing a good movie, don't you feel compelled to talk about it? I know I do.

What made it enjoyable, or compelling, or exciting? What made it work? Then I go around and recommend it to friends. Afterward, I look out for another movie made by that director or one with an actor I admire.

To stretch the analogy, this newsletter is a neighborhood center where we reflect on, review, and spread the word about VCLLI. It's a place to publicly acknowledge and praise the cast and crew, to spotlight stars, and to get previews about what is to come.

This issue looks back to Fall 2020 and looks forward to Spring 2021.

To keep the show going, we need background extras, like prop masters, script supervisors, gaffers and grips. Opportunities for you to share your talents and contribute to the LLI production can be found in the list of committees at the end of this newsletter.

Suggestions and Submissions for the Newsletter are Always Welcome and Encouraged.

johausam138@gmail.com

Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue! *See article by-lines.*

Jo Hausam

Flashbacks...

A Cat's Eye View by Merrilee Osterhoudt

When VC LLI and Marist CLS Zoom classes began in September, I was often sequestered in front of the computer in our den. Our kitties would invariably search me out. Lucy's only objective was to be a complete nuisance. Once she became bored with batting pens and paper clips off the desk and chewing on the Scotch tape roll, she would wave her tail across the screen in dismissal and meander off looking for more stimulating entertainment.

Gracie, on the other hand, would peer at the screen, perhaps attracted by the colors or movement of the mouse arrow over the presentations. One CLS class, however, captured her complete attention. Each week, she would sit down in front of the computer monitor and attend **World Events Through the Eyes of Photojournalism**. She would arrive shortly after class began, and together we would go on a visual journey of historical events of the last 100+ years, captured by the cameras of photojournalists. At the end of the semester, I realized that she had purrfect attendance!



Photos by Merrilee Osterhoudt

For the finale of the course, I created a slideshow of personal photographs that were special to class members. I decided to put it to music using a recording of "Kodachrome" by Paul Simon. I had to replay the slideshow numerous times to get the lyrics synchronized with the photos. Whenever

Gracie heard “Kodachrome” playing, she would appear in the den, jump up on the desk and sit in front of the monitor to watch the slideshow, over and over as I refined it. She never got tired of it!

Not all of Gracie’s classroom experiences were successful. On one occasion, while I was attending a Zoom class, Lucy leaped on the desk, landing on the keyboard, catching her back paw on a lamp cord. The lamp went down on top of her and as she fled, she skidded across the desk on a stack of papers into a cup of tea, fortunately not hot, which toppled over pouring tea across the desk, and everything on it. I reacted shouting, “GRACIE, NO!” and as I tried to stop the flow of tea, I saw, in horror, that my Zoom camera and microphone were on!

Gracie was not the only cat who played a role in Zoom classes. Abby, a cat belonging to a CLS class manager, decided to assist her in her role. As Cathy tells it, “My only kerfuffle happened during our third meeting when I left the site for just a minute to get my book and when I got back, ***everything*** was going awry. Members were being made co-hosts, people were being switched around.... (After things were put back to normal), “I remembered that my cat had been in the area...and when Abby wants to go from Point A to Point B, keyboards don’t matter at all.”

If you would like to see a version of the CLS class slideshow you can view it at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffJXDabJ7vw&feature=youtu.be>

World Events Through the Eyes of Photojournalism is a class being offered by Vassar LLI for 2021.

Praise and More Praise for VCLLI

(I) by Susan Moore

Thank you Vassar College Lifelong Learning Institute for continuing to operate during what were, to borrow from Charles Dickens, “the worst of times”. Your course offerings were an escape, a welcome way to fill my time when I was self-isolating and my choices for activities were severely constrained. At a time when we were all plagued with restrictions and limited interactions, the LLI classes offered companionship and a comforting sense of continuity. The interesting courses enable me to focus on something other than whether I had enough paper towels and toilet paper! I know that converting to virtual classes required a great deal of time and work, so I want you to know that all your efforts were much appreciated.

continued

(II) by Susan Freeman

After retirement, the LLI program has been an intellectual life line for me since I first joined several years ago. And now since lockdown by COVID, I am saved from terrible mental isolation via the Zoom classes.

Mickey Steinman's Supreme Court class was hugely lively and so well presented and a necessity for understanding current events. I hope he will do a follow up class this spring.

And, I found Paul Stoddard's classical music class wonderful. I learned so much about a subject of which I knew so little.

I could go on and on ... each and every class has been a gift.

With gratitude, I thank you all for the consistently great courses you offer. 🙏

The Ultimate Reward: Friendships by Christina Hrynyk

VCLLI is not about the grade. It's about the reward of well-being received and the sense of community connection.

I have...

- memories of pleasant conversations during the "**Hikes in the Hudson Valley**" course....
- photos shared and continued friendships as a result of the "Photography" course...
- continued participation in "Yoga" and "QiGong"...
- continued curiosity regarding "**Hudson Valleys mystical connections**" as well as the "**Nature of Food and Shelter**"
- daily awareness of "**Breath and Movement**"

....and the list goes on

but the ultimate rewards are the friendships which have emerged!

Here are a few photos from Jim O'Brien's Bee Keeping class which I took in 2019. What a great introduction to beekeeping.



Bee swarm

I was offered the opportunity for “hands on learning” with Rob Cohen on his beautiful farm in Poughquag.

It has become an experience of a lifetime... weekly “round table” discussions with Jim and Rob followed by our established beekeeping tasks for the week became a “groove” to look forward to.

This experience resulted not only in shared knowledge, but an accord to behold!



Jim O'Brien and Rob Cohen

Winter has arrived and our beekeeping round tables have transformed into “hikes in the Hudson Valley”. Rob, Jim and I have a valued friendship as a result of the Vassar Lifetime Learning program.



Rob Cohen is the gentleman with the facial hair....Jim O'Brien is wearing the red cap.

Thank you VCLLI for affording us all the opportunity to stay young at heart. To continue to grow and love life!

VCLLI is a privilege and I am grateful to live in a community aware of its importance and value.

Photos by Christina Hynryk

Three Excellent Zoom Courses by Millicent Cox

Colonization in the Pacific. This course was timely due to the current U.S. relationship to both China and Japan, really the entire area. The intellectual rigor and care that Tom Walker brings to the historical perspective is the best! I have had the good fortune to be in all of his classes at Vassar LLI and as one of his monitors. His thinking is based on firm logic with an understanding of the 2020 issues. LLI should have more of his courses.

Whose Film is it Anyway? The class, as well as Sybil del Gaudio's other classes, have changed my appreciation of pictures forever. She's explained how the industry can organize our way of viewing and thinking as a mature audience. Sybil is like a surgeon. Sybil loves her subject with charming humor. Thank you!

Know Your Community by Lucy Johnson. Again I have enjoyed all of Lucy's classes!! Lucy has the strength to keep esoteric facts and ideas alive! What fun to connect so many ideas together... and learning from Vassar students' research was GREAT!!

These three courses bring light and faith to humanity at these dark times in the world. Thanks again, to the strong spirit in intellectual endeavors and the love of exchanging with others.

After-Effects: Beyond the Classroom by Jo Hausam

While we are in the classroom, whether physically in the room or virtually on Zoom, we usually learn something new, enjoy the time, and momentarily connect with others. All to be expected. What I didn't expect were the after-effects.

During my first semester, fall 2019, I learned how to make an artist book. The Book Art course was taught by Pam Wright. Her enthusiasm was infectious. As a result, I've continued making these books. I was pleased to have a new, at-home, creative activity to help me through the pandemic. To encourage me in my new-found hobby, my daughter gave me gifts of some fancy paper and a superior "guillotine", aka paper cutter. (The thwack of the blade is so satisfying!) I've made several books since the class. Here are photos of my carousel book. (The text is a villanelle, a form of poetry which I think resembles the repetitious rounds of a carousel.)

continued



Photos by J.H.

An unexpected after-effect from that class was meeting a fellow poet, Pam Spilke. She suggested we exchange a poem a month. Since then we've been reading each other's work and getting to know each other in this unique, poetic way.

Another class from that semester was entitled "Hudson River Rising---Women Rising: Stories of Women in Conservation". Cara Lee, an environmentalist who worked for Scenic Hudson and Nature Conservancy, conducted the course, which included several different speakers. One was Judith Enck, the founder and director of a non-profit, Beyond Plastics. Being an eco-friendly person, I admired her determination to focus on and attack this huge issue. (80% of plastic is litter! -- not recyclable.) The unexpected after-effect: I've become a financial supporter.

Look out for the unexpected after-effects of VCLLI courses!

Thank You Letters to Sybil Del Gaudio

(I) by Celia Serotsky

One of the first things Sybil DelGaudio said to us our first day of class was she promised to ruin our movie viewing. Whaaat? Wait, isn't this supposed to **enhance** our knowledge of movie production? Won't I come out of this class having a greater understanding and appreciation of the roles and work of the director, the cinematographer, the editor, etc? Sorry, Sybil, but you didn't meet that goal.

No, you accomplished all that I had hoped to learn in this class – and more.

Sybil DelGaudio was Professor of Radio/Television/Film at Hofstra University and served for six years as Dean of its School of Communication. She is the author of journal articles and books on film history and theory and her production work has combined her interest in animation scholarship with

a passion for documentary, resulting in two projects she directed for public television, *Animated Women* and *Independent Spirits*. Both films have been shown on PBS stations around the country as well as at international film festivals, garnering festival prizes, as well as an Emmy for *Animated Women*. Sybil's presentation style of humor (photo bombing her presentation slides is just one example), added to her well-organized subject matter to create a classroom atmosphere that was both entertaining and informative. What a lovely respite from the realities of recent everyday life. In the first class we were introduced to "mise en scène," the arrangement of scenery and stage properties in a play or film. This includes framing, composition, lighting, décor, costume, angle, focus, etc. Immediately, our film watching ability was expanded tenfold. After each class we were assigned to watch one or two films during the ensuing week. From Buster Keaton's two films, *Cops* and *College*, Josef Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* and *Blonde Venus*, Max Ophul's *The Earrings of Madame de...* and *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, Otto Preminger's *Advise and Consent*, and, most recently, to Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar*, we learned about long takes, camera movement, cluttering up a scene, continuity editing, montage theory, and Preminger's "democratic" style.

No, this class did not ruin our movie viewing pleasure at all. Instead, we all have a much more heightened awareness of the elements that go into making a great movie and how each director's choices influences their films. Thank you, Sybil, for taking the time and putting in the effort to create this educational and pleasurable class.

(II) by Susan Moore

Sybil DelGaudio, I cannot begin to tell you how much I enjoyed your class, *Whose Film Is It Anyway?* I have loved all of your classes, but I am particularly grateful that you agreed to teach your course in a new modality. The fact that you adjusted your strategy so successfully demonstrates your flexibility and dedication, two important qualities for a great teacher. The class was also a testimonial to your patience, as you dealt with students as we struggled to master the intricacies of Zoom.

Your classes make it clear that you have a mastery of your subject, which is, obviously, and important characteristic of a good teacher, but it is not enough to make an outstanding teacher. You achieve that level by sharing your knowledge in a way that is extremely engaging and supremely entertaining. Thank you for enlightening me, challenging me to think, making me laugh, and inspiring me to learn more. It's a real privilege to attend your classes. You are truly the best!!

continued

Spotlight On...

Rose Caspary, Volunteer Extraordinaire

Rose Caspary is one of the many volunteers that make up VCLLI. She served as class manager since she began taking classes in fall 2019. As of November 2020 she became the co-chair of the Curriculum Committee and she has just completed the spring 2021 catalog document. In addition, as a follow-up to Laurie Hedlund's VCLLI writing class, she facilitates an online writing group. This coming semester she plans on teaching a course, "Healthy Cooking". Rose strongly encourages others to get involved.

Rose earned a master's degree in nutrition and is a former dietician. She held various jobs in the nutrition field, including working with the developmentally disabled, dialysis patients, and health club members, as well as having her own private practice. With a love of eating healthy, she cooks regularly, creating her own recipes such as Butternut Mushroom Ginger Soup with Farro and Shitake Mushrooms and Beet Soup with Ginger and Tumeric.

Her recipes can be found at <https://rosejoy22.tumblr.com>.



In addition to her interest in cooking, she is a master gardener. She completed a course in herbal medicine and attended many herb symposiums and conferences across the U.S. A native New Yorker, she lived in south Florida for fifteen years and grew a multitude of herbs, spices, tropical fruit, and vegetables, often giving tours of her edible garden. Now living back in New York, Rose continues to follow sustainable, environmental, and people friendly practices. She likes to share her knowledge through presentations on healthy eating with a focus on plant-based foods and growing and cooking with herbs and spices.



Rose's New York garden

continued

As if that weren't enough, over the past 40 years she has attended art classes in different mediums. She works with clay, glass, paint, paper and textiles and creates, her words, "off-beat art": collages, mosaics, murals, pottery, and stained glass. Much of it celebrates nature.



Photos by Rose Caspary

Rose's blog, <https://rosejoy22.tumblr.com>, is an avenue for her to share with others what she does. She writes: "Simply creating and extending the joy of creating is my goal."

Creative Aging

by Pam Spilke

rather than aging
I'm now playing
with watercolor paint
crayons clay
in the kindergarten way
I tap into emotions
angry happy jealous sad
I use bold black lines
on a little square post-it note
to express power
creativity is ageless

continued

Cast & Crew...

FALL 2020 PRESENTERS & PRODUCERS

Kele Baker
Peter Buntin
Rob Cohen
Vincenza Dante
Sylvia DelGaudio
Sudhir Desai
Jean-Claude Fouéré
Christina Fusco
Anne Gardon
Ernest Giglio
Arthur Groton
Laurie Hedlund

Muriel Horowitz
Lucy Johnson
Kathy Kurosman
Scott Lavitt
Tanya Livingston
Anna Mayta
Chuck Mishaan
Nathan Rosenblum
Jim O'Brien
Betty Olsen
Michelle Olsen
Christopher Parks

Sophia Sciacca
Arnold Serotsky
Molly Shanley
Roberta Shayo
Mickey Steiman
Paul Stoddard
Tom Walker
John Wargo
Carole Wolf
Andy Weintraub

Coming Attractions...

IMPORTANT DATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spring 2021 classes will meet on Tuesdays and Fridays on Zoom

ORIENTATION

Class Managers and Presenters: March 3
Members: March 12

COURSE REGISTRATION

February 10 thru February 24

CLASSES BEGIN

Tuesday, March 16
Friday, March 19

Please see the [VCLLI website](#) for course descriptions and locations.

Preview Of Classes...

As usual, the spring line-up of classes is as enticing and diverse as past semesters, ranging from *Ancient Mysteries of Africa* to *The Hillbilly* to *Kate Millet* to the *Vassar Science Sampler*.

Already mentioned in this newsletter is Rose Caspary's *Healthy Cooking*, along with *World Events through the Eyes of Photojournalism*, presented by veteran photojournalist and filmmaker Gary Miller. Following the photography track, you are also offered *Guided Vision: Composition in Photography* and *The Aesthetic History of Photography*.

There are courses that explore the worlds of birds, honeybees, gardens, our human bodies, and the waters of the Hudson.

Many courses deal with hot topics: bias, race and racism, Covid-19, artificial intelligence, violence, and immigration policies.

Naturally, there are classes focusing on us, that is, those of us who are *of a certain age*. These include *Essential Planning Considerations in Retirement*, *The Mindful Senior*, *Chair Yoga*, and *Living Fully with Dementia: Inspired by Nature & Art*. Also available are *Medical Care as We Age* and *Hudson Valley Hospice*.

Rob Cohen returns with his "the nature of..." series. This one is **Pets**. Vincenza Dante re-visits *Timeless Goddess/Modern Times*. Marilyn Price adds to her courses on women artists. And Chuck Mishaan delves into more opera politics.

The Arts are well-represented. You can take gallery tours, free your writing voice, practice printmaking, examine ideals of beauty, craft porcelain bowls, listen to chamber music, and learn about dance in various cultures

Do you want to learn magic tricks? Andy Weintraub will teach you in *Zoom Magic for the Family*. Do you want to learn investing tips? Richard Nathan shares *Secrets that Wall Street Does Not Want You to Know*. Do you want to learn about managing conflict or how to move with the flow of Nature? Do you need help understanding the Law? Would you like to taste some French wine?! **It's all here!**

Thanks to the Curriculum Committee for compiling this plentiful buffet of enrichment. No doubt, there is something for everyone.

Behind The Scenes...

Executive Committee

Chair: Mihai Grunfeld

Curriculum Committee Co-Chairs: Sybil DelGaudio, Rosemary Caspary

Membership and Registration Coordinators: Sudhir Desai, Paul Stoddard

Treasurer: Larry Miller

Secretary: Joanne Valeo

Administration Committee Members

Administrative Assistants: Denise Laforgue, Joanne Valeo

Phone support: Howard Spilke

Bylaws: Betty Olson

General Council

Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership and Registration coordinators

Chairs of each committee

Two at-large members: Joan Blumberg and Carole Wolf

Please Consider Volunteering For One Of These Committees!

Class Managers Committee

Chair: Joanne Valeo

Take attendance, distribute on-line materials, distribute and collect on-line course evaluations, communicate with presenters and class members. Receive training re: Zoom and assist presenters during Zoom classes.

Curriculum Committee

Co-Chairs: Sybil DelGaudio and Rosemary Caspary

Coordination and planning of courses. The members suggest and organize new classes, recruit new presenters and consult with presenters about classes.

Classroom Support Committee

Chair: Sybil DelGaudio

Contact and communication with members and presenters; provide Zoom support.

continued

Member Services Committee

Chair: Terry Catapane

Maintain hospitality room (coffee, snacks), assist with social functions

Campus Support Committee

Chair: Michael Yarmoski

Room reservations, parking, shuttling, signage and support

Public Information Committee

Chairs: Glen Conciatori and Roseanne Ashby

Outreach and marketing, newsletter, annual posters, postcard distribution, public announcements.

Special Events Committee

Chair: Diana Salsberg

Plan and manage special events such as trips and tours, Fall and Spring luncheons, annual meeting.

Webmasters

Mihai Grunfeld, Sarah Kennedy

Responsible for LLI Webpage, Facebook, Newsletter.

Newsletter

Jo Hausam, Marty Zlotkin

Lifelong Learning Institute at Vassar College

124 Raymond Ave., Box 160
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604

Office: Blodgett Hall 237

Phone: 845-437-7229

E-mail: lli@vassar.edu

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