



# LLInes

Winter 2020-2021

[www.lifetimelearners.org](http://www.lifetimelearners.org)

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## LLI PRESIDENT'S LETTER



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It's been several months since I wrote to you in the last LLI newsletter. Our world hasn't changed much since summer with everyone spending much of their time at home, curtailing travel, rarely, if ever, eating at restaurants, missing family visits, etc. But LLI lives on!

We recently completed our Fall term, conducted entirely online via Zoom. It was an unqualified success. Course enrollments exceeded expectations, and no classes were cancelled due to low enrollment. Some classes had very high enrollments—even over 60. An advantage of online classes is that we are not constrained by NCC physical classroom size. The course evaluations for Fall were mostly outstanding, and there were very few complaints about the Zoom platform.

We are offering several member-only free events during the interim period between Fall and Winter and have a robust set of courses scheduled for Winter term. There will also be several free single class offerings and, of course, our Friday Lunch & learn programs. As always, there is something for everyone.

I have no idea when we will be able to return to in person classes on campus. I miss seeing my LLI friends in person and being able to have conversations before and after class, often in the hallways. But, interestingly, there was strong support on the

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## The Zoom Experience

Zoom: to go speedily, as in, the cars go zooming by. Or, to move with a loud low buzz.

Before the Pandemic, most of us would have given one of those definitions of the now-pervasive word. Its new definition has not yet hit the dictionary but I wouldn't be surprised to see it in the next new edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Now, we all Zoom! We Zoom with friends, relatives and doctors. We have therapy sessions on Zoom. We have attended Zoom Bar Mitzvahs and, sadly, funerals. We Zoom with our Book Club, our cousin in Europe and our grandchildren in California. And, here at LLI, we attend Zoom classes. While many of you have chosen to let your membership lapse during these trying times, I'm here to tell you about the Zoom experience and what you have been missing in the hopes that you will rejoin as a member.

Remember having to search for a parking spot? Not with Zoom! Your car never leaves your driveway. And having to maneuver through the halls of NCC to (finally!) locate your classroom? Nope, you can Zoom from any room in the house! And upon arrival in your assigned room, you would look for the best seat ... a good view of the instructor, not too near the window, away from a person you're trying to avoid .... After getting settled, a tall person would sit directly in front of you, obscuring your view! You know what I'm gonna say ... not gonna happen with Zoom! You'll have a "front row" seat with a clear view of the instructor as well as everyone else who is in the class. No more looking at peoples' backs!

Once in the classroom, you'll connect with old friends and be able to interact with them and the teacher. We all know how important it is to socialize, especially

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## Board Members

*Doug Fine, President*  
*Jackie Barchilon, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*  
*Roman Lascuk, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*  
*Vicki Phair, Secretary*  
*Ann Bello, Treasurer*  
*Barbara Cartsounis, NCC Liaison*  
*Gene Bauchner*  
*Frank Izzo*  
*Jacqueline Labatt-Simon*  
*Gary Lishnoff*  
*Steve Matis*  
*Frank Phillips*

## Newsletter Committee

*Morgan Corrigan, Editor/Chair*  
*Gil Herman, Associate Editor*  
*Amy Ewing*  
*Bea Friedman*  
*Arlene Yolles*

## LLI Winter Session

The upcoming winter session is offering an exciting variety of paid courses, free sessions and Lunch & Learn events.

The six-week paid courses scheduled are:

Armies of the Uprooted and Disinherited – Mark Albertson  
 Art Greats of Spain – Darby Cartun  
 Foundations of the American Republic – Mark Albertson  
 Masters of Silent Comedy – Bill McCarthy  
 Monsters – Dr. Elissa Kaplan  
 Painting Your Personal Vision – Christine Goldbach  
 Seated Gentle Stretch – June Bird  
 Eight Musicals and Their Social Messages – Art Gang

In addition, there are four **free** one-session classes:

Dining Out at Home – Debi Rubel  
 Famous Collaborators – Burt Bacharach & Hal David –  
 Dr. Joe Utterbach  
 Lady of the Canyon: The Music and Poetry of Joni Mitchell –  
 Sandy Soson  
 Traveling in Sri Lanka – Roman Laszuk

Our Lunch & Learn lineup is:

Galapagos Islands: Natural Wonders – David Pressler  
 The Clara Barton Story – Bob Machson  
 Romanticism in the Opera – David Shafer  
 The Rohingya Crisis in Southwest Myanmar – Paul Sarno  
 Collecting Bees: Discover What Is Going On In The  
 Bee Colony – Howland Blakistone

## LLI PRESIDENT'S LETTER *(continued from page 1)*

evaluations for continuing to offer some courses on Zoom even after we return to campus. The Curriculum Committee will be looking into that option.

Finally, you will find a list of LLI committees in this newsletter. I suggest you look them over and consider joining a committee to help run and support LLI. Our organization is run almost entirely by volunteers, and we always need help.

If you have family and friends who might enjoy and benefit from our offerings, please spread the word. Members can now be located anywhere and still enjoy our virtual courses and events. We have a few past LLI members who moved away from the area and have rejoined us during the pandemic.

All my very best wishes for a happy holiday season. See you all soon on Zoom.

Doug Fine  
 LLI President

## **INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: JEAN HOFHEIMER BENNETT**



Bernie Weiss Photos

Civics lessons started early for Jeanie Bennett. Her parents talked about current events around the dinner table, and as each of his four children turned ten, her father (a founding member of Human Rights Watch) took them to Washington, D.C., to tour the Capitol and meet those who represent them. He wanted to teach how wonderful democracy is and how exciting it is to be a part of it. And his lessons stuck! As a student Jeanie was involved in the civil rights and anti-war movements and heard Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at a 1967 rally against the Vietnam War. She has been politically engaged ever since.

Jeanie became hooked on history thanks to her “amazing” high school history teacher, Eric Rothschild, who sparked her interest in how we as a nation got to where we are today.

Jeanie studied sociology and English and then earned a Masters degree in History Education at NYU, where she did her student teaching in Harlem. She taught for thirty-five years, the last 25 years at Weston High School, where she taught Advanced Placement (A.P.) U.S. History and “Facing History and Ourselves,” a human rights course that she brought to the high school (and which she taught at LLI last spring). “I enjoyed teaching as a way to tell my students they matter, and that each of them could make a difference through the lives they led and in the decisions they made.” She told her students that her class “was not a spectator sport” and in addition to setting high expectations, she urged her students to keep an open mind. “Each student’s interpretation of history is not the only interpretation, and it is important to listen to other views.” One of her students referred to her A.P. U.S. History class as “the hardest class you’ll ever love!” and many

of her students keep in touch.

Jeanie also served for ten years as a Reader for the College Board, scoring A.P. History essays from students across the country. She is the co-author of *Cracking the A.P. U.S. History Exam* and contributed to the Thirteenth Edition of *The American Pageant*, which is said to be one of the most popular, effective and entertaining American history texts.

In her retirement Jeanie is still teaching, both at Literacy Volunteers and at LLI. Because many in LLI have lived through much of the history she teaches, she finds that her classes are greatly enriched by their perspectives and contributions to class discussions. Also, LLI students “display a special brand of enthusiasm towards learning.”

Jeanie’s other passion is music. Growing up she studied piano, accompanied her high school chorus and attended the National Music camp at Interlochen, Michigan, where she picked up guitar. One of the first people she met when she moved to Connecticut, was Sandy Soson, who she was delighted to discover had also attended Interlochen; they’ve been fast friends ever since. Jeanie also likes to sing and is a member of the 92Y Broadway Chorus in New York City. (Their last performance was March 1<sup>st</sup>, days before the Covid lockdown.) During Covid-time she has found it restorative to start her days by playing music.

Jeanie has three children who received their civics lessons early by accompanying her into the voting booth, through yearly trips to Washington, D.C., and by visiting the National Parks. All of them chose professions of service to others. Her son, an electrician, is a volunteer fireman in Weston, CT; her older daughter works in a skilled nursing facility in Indiana; and her younger daughter teaches middle school Language Arts/ Writing in Harlem. Clearly, in her family, democracy is not a spectator sport!

Amy Ewing

## **LLI COMMITTEES**

What is involved in making LLI run smoothly? The 15 volunteer committees. These committees do the work that makes the courses and events possible. We hope that the brief summaries of each committee will pique your interest and entice you to undertake a new volunteer opportunity.

### **Catalog**

Gil Herman, chair

Receives and edits the information to be included in the fall, winter, spring and summer catalogs. We have several meetings four times per year to edit each catalog. Members who have knowledge of editing are encouraged to join.

### **Curriculum**

Gary Lishnoff, Leah Tillman, co-chairs

Responsible for courses offered during the fall, winter, spring and summer terms. These responsibilities fall into three general areas:

- ◆ Curriculum: Plan and schedule courses for all four terms, including recruiting and evaluating instructors.
- ◆ Development: Plan and conduct instructor workshops each term. Provide information and other support to instructors.
- ◆ Administration: Maintain course information in LLI's database. Reserve and schedule rooms and equipment in accordance with the requirements of instructors.

### **Hospitality**

Leon Breault, Nicole Takacs, co-chairs

Coordinates with Special Events and procures pastries, coffee and tea for the Brown Bag Lunch & Learn programs, the Annual Meeting and the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.

### **Human Resources**

Jackie LaBatt-Simon, Leah Tillman, co-chairs

Collects information regarding LLI members, recruits members to chair committees and works to develop leaders for LLI's future needs.

### **Marketing**

Steve Matis, chair

- ◆ Develops & updates marketing strategies that uphold the mission of the organization.
- ◆ Promotes activities and events of the organization.
- ◆ Promotes membership.
- ◆ Provides timely communication with members.
- ◆ Maintains contact with media.
- ◆ Coordinates with other committees.

Meets as needed several times a month.

Seeks volunteers who have experience in marketing, copywriting, advertising or promotion.

*"After years of advertising products I did not always believe in, I am using my talents for something worthwhile." Frank Izzo*

*"I volunteered for the LLI Marketing Committee because I wanted to share my excitement for the work of the organization. It has brought me new skills, new friends and a rewarding sense of involvement." Fay Ruotolo*

### **Membership**

Ann Bello, chair

Maintains membership records; receives, records and transmits payments; trains new members in registration procedures; enters member names and course registrations into the computer system; and sends confirmation letters and membership stickers. Meets before each registration period. Members need to be computer literate or like to respond to telephone inquiries. Training on database provided.

### **Newsletter**

Morgan Corrigan, chair

Writes and edits information of interest and value to LLI members; assembles material into a newsletter entitled LLIInes (Lifetime Learners Institute News Events Summary). Meets as needed to prepare three issues per year. Volunteers welcome to contribute reporting, writing and editing.

*"Committee members enjoy sharing ideas for articles and helping each other to ready them for publication."*  
Morgan Corrigan

### **Scholarship**

Jackie Barchilon, chair

Reviews scholarship applications from NCC students to determine eligibility and merit, and conducts interviews of eligible candidates. Selects which students will receive scholarships, which is both difficult and rewarding work. The committee is active in the spring, typically in March and April.

### **Special Events**

Roman Laszuk, chair

Creates educational and social opportunities for LLI members. Events organized include:

- ◆ Lunch and Learn Events
- ◆ The Volunteer Recognition Luncheon, once a year at the end of the spring semester
- ◆ The Annual LLI Membership Meeting at the end of May

Meets monthly, starting at 10 a.m., on the second Monday of each month except July. Any willing and able LLI member is encouraged and welcome to join the current Special Events team. We are looking for people who are comfortable with computers and know how to use word processing software, email, internet and Zoom. Additional volunteers are needed with Zoom video recording skills and with video/audio post-production ability.

### **Volunteer**

Beverly Erickson, Connie Ragosa, co-chairs

Meets normally four or five times a year, for two or three hours each time, to prepare the mailing of our newsletters, catalogs, fundraising letters, election ballots, and/or any other communications required by the LLI office. We collate, sort, staple, fold and/or stuff items into envelopes. Volunteers are needed and greatly appreciated.

For the following committees, membership is on an invitation-only basis:

**Election**

Ann Bello, chair

Conducts the year-end election of Board members and works on revisions of bylaws.

**Finance**

Ann Bello, chair

Presents financial issues and recommendations to the Board of Directors; prepares the budget for the upcoming fiscal year to the Board at the April meeting; and maintains the financial records of the organization.

**Financial Development**

Leon Breault, chair

Develops short- and long-range plans for the financial stability of LLI.

**Nominating**

Fay Ruotolo, chair

Identifies, interviews and recommends a slate of board candidates to the LLI Board of Directors.

**Policy**

Doug Fine, chair

Advises the President and Board of Directors on future direction and areas of interest.

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**The Zoom Experience** *(continued from page 1)*

during Covid, and you don't even have to wear a mask or be socially distanced! You can ask questions as well. A break is provided so you can walk away from the computer and attend to other duties.

Lunch and Learn programs continue using Zoom. You can hear perfectly by adjusting your computer's volume to any level that works for you. By screen sharing, the presenter shows us his PowerPoint, video, photos or slides. Clear and simple! The only thing you have to supply is the cookies!

Having a bad hair day? Don't feel like shaving your 7-day stubble? Feel like lounging in your pajamas all day? Don't want anyone to know that you smoke cigars at home or enjoy a 4:00 daily cocktail? Want to prepare dinner while listening to the instructor? Your secret is safe – simply join without the video!

For those of us who already have taken part in worthwhile classes and presentations, we look forward to continuing with the platform as long as is necessary. For those of you who have left us, we urge you to come back and see what you've been missing. If you need help with the Zoom program, contact the office and someone will get back to you with the help you need.

And, while we're at it, have you taken advantage of all the venues out there that offer shows using such platforms as Zoom, YouTube or Facebook live? Guess what? You don't have to travel into the city to see, for example, the fabulous series "Lyrics and Lyricists" from 92Y, or a show, concert or play. Libraries, too, provide wonderful cultural experiences. Check them out. So, rethink your reluctance to use this new technology and come back to LLI. See you on Zoom!

Arlene Yolles