

Lifelong Learning Institute

at

Waubonsee Community College

President's Corner

Dear LLI Members,

We are now into May and I am so looking forward to warm temperatures and sunny skies. I am also looking forward to our end-of-year Spring Luncheon-Annual Business Meeting on May 29 and I hope to see many of you there!

Speaking of “end-of-year,” my term as LLI Board President will come to an end on June 30, 2025. It has been my absolute pleasure and honor to have served in this capacity for the past two years, working with so many others who are dedicated to ensuring that LLI is a vibrant and active organization for our members.

It is exciting to see the growth that has happened in the last two years. Not only do we have fascinating courses that keep us learning and great brunches and lunches to feed our bodies, but we now have so many added ways to gather. Our Special Interest Groups are going strong, with new ones forming and others growing - building the special community that is LLI. We are also dipping our toes into the world of international travel, offering an exciting trip to Iceland! A number of our members, with friends and family, will embark on this adventure in October. Members can still reserve as long as seats are available, although our “special” group price deadline has passed.

In these newsletters I have often talked about “something in the air” and I still feel it! I absolutely find my joy in learning from our wonderful facilitators, socializing with members in various ways, and...helping to make all of this happen. I know that if we want LLI to thrive, it takes a village of volunteers! Our Nominating & Recruiting Committee has done a phenomenal job recruiting good people to fill our open positions. Since there is only one candidate per position, however, no election is required.

We are pleased to present the following elected slate for the 2025-2027 term:

President	Mary Ann White (2025-2026)
Vice President	Kent Hayward (2025-2026)
Secretary	Kim Carew
Social-Community Outreach Manager	Mary Maiers
Technology Manager	Bill Doeden
Curriculum Council (4 open positions): Susan Foody, Jerry King, Evelyn Porter, Amy Stewart	

Thank you to the committee and to all who responded positively to their recruiting calls! And I am pleased that I can continue to contribute in the role of Member Communications Manager for the remainder of the 2024-2026 term.

Sincerely,
Andi Danis, LLI Board President



Curriculum Council Corner



Looking to become more comfortable with technology and computers this year? Try these many resources that offer both in-person and online education. Most are free or low-cost.

Most local libraries offer computer and tech classes as adult programs. Some have a day set aside weekly for drop-in help. For example, Sugar Grove Public Library has their Tech Tuesday program weekly from 1-3 p.m. Patrons can drop in and bring their mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or general computer issue to a librarian and receive one-on-one assistance in resolving problems. You do not need to live in Sugar Grove or even have a library card to take advantage of this service. Classes may be offered as well. Check with your local library for services offered.

AARP offers an abundance of online classes on Zoom designed for seniors. These range from arts and crafts, new apps, exercise, video chats, virtual tours, emojis, and so much more: <https://seniorplanet.org/classes/>

Senior Centers can also be a valuable resource. Oswego Senior Center schedules one-on-one appointments on Tuesday mornings for questions about your laptop, smartphone, etc. Just call (630) 554-5602 to make an appointment. You do not need to be an Oswego resident. While the first appointment is complimentary, membership may be required for additional help. Membership is currently available for \$20 for the remainder of the year.

Generations Online provides free, simple step-by-step instruction designed specifically for seniors to overcome the barriers of learning skills. It can guide someone who has never touched a computer to learn to use the internet, email, texting, photos, apps, video chats, and all the basic tools on any tablet or smartphone. Learn how to use telehealth, a QR code, and read digital newspapers: <https://generationsonline.com>

Curious about Podcasts? Check out this article and listen to your first podcast: <https://ageguide.org/podcast-101/>

Interested in Facebook? This link can answer your questions: <https://www.facebook.com/help/>

Apple offers support for their products both in-person and online. You can learn about their free classes or set up in-store appointments by calling (630) 536-5400.

Learn how to use Microsoft 365 programs, such as Excel, Word, and PowerPoint through their online classes at: <https://support.microsoft.com/>

Hopefully, you will be more confident with your devices as a result of these many opportunities!



Someone You Should Know

Written by Diana Fischer-Woods

Joe Dvorak is definitely “someone you should know!” He is a relatively “new” facilitator who has done courses in both Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Alternate Realities. Joe is a software engineer who currently works for a company that makes educational software. He has a master’s degree in electrical engineering and a Ph.D. in computer science.

Joe first became interested in acting as a facilitator through individuals he met who are members of LLI and encouraged him to become a facilitator. As Joe had been an adjunct professor at one time and enjoyed teaching, he decided to try his hand as an LLI facilitator. We are very lucky that Joe made this decision, as he is an excellent facilitator, one who constantly encourages questions from class participants and who shares his knowledge in an easy, well organized and comprehensible manner. Those who have taken his classes have benefited and been enriched through his presentation of this technology that is the future.

Joe has been using AI daily for three years but, as he made clear in his classes, he is not an expert in the field. He pointed out to class participants that many of them are also already using AI through Siri or Alexa. Do you believe Artificial Intelligence is beneficial or do you fear that it will relieve us of all thinking and creativity? If you have taken either of Joe Dvorak’s AI classes, you will know that the first belief is true and the second is false.

Quoting LLI member Sue Foody, “Before I took Joe’s class, I only thought of Alternate Reality as something my grandsons engaged in as a video game, but his many wonderful demonstrations changed that. He also made me understand that Augmented Reality is something I’m already using when I use the feature on many retail websites that allows you to ‘see this item in your home.’ Overall, instead of being afraid of these new realities, I’m seeing the positive side of them.”



Understanding

What Joe enjoys most about facilitating is being able to explain this technology to participants and answering their many questions. He hopes that, in turn, they will have a better understanding of its many applications and will be stimulated to learn and apply those into their daily lives! Now that’s an inspiring goal!

Partnered Events With Waubonsee Community College

We are thrilled to share our ongoing partnered events with Waubonsee Community College. Continue to monitor our website: www.waubonsee.edu/lli for upcoming activities!

Crafting Conversations



The second in this series was held on April 30, the focus being on engaging youth and adults in meaningful conversation. LLI members were joined by college faculty, students and community members to discuss all aspects of wellness. Pictured at left is Counselor Christian Locke and his Peer Support Leaders who addressed the topic of mental health awareness. These leaders are trained in mental health support techniques and assist students in anything from setting academic goals to navigating emotional challenges.

Faculty member Emily Heller, Ed.D., led a discussion on physical wellness, followed by speakers from Mutual Ground who addressed the topic of sexual violence prevention. There were many engaging discussion questions posed to the participants (pictured at right). How exciting to see a free exchange of perspectives and ideas shared by this multi-generational group of people!



Banned Book to Movie Club

A mixed audience of students, Waubonsee Community College staff, LLI and community members recently gathered to view the 1985 film **The Color Purple**. Following the showing of the movie, a panel led by Emily Rollins engaged in a very lively discussion of the movie and novel. Panelists (L-R) are Dan Jeremy Brooks of the Aurora Film Society and college staff Joshua Mattern, Toni Ford and Dr. Danielle Hardesty.

The movie, directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, Margaret Avery and Oprah Winfrey, was well received. Whoopi Goldberg won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress; Alice Walker's novel by the same name won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983. It is also frequently challenged, and in some places banned, for its explicit depictions of violence and sex.



Save the Date!

Sugar Grove Corn Boil—
July 24, 2025, 7-9 p.m. at
Volunteer Park. Check the college
website for more information:
www.waubonsee.edu



Travel Tips from Two Amateur Travelers!

Written by Margie & Guy Groot

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime." Mark Twain

One of the many benefits of “maturing unto ourselves” is an opportunity for travel! First off, we are not travel agents or travel professionals. However, we are a curious and mildly adventuresome couple who strive to discover more and more about this wonderful world we live in! Travel is a fun, rewarding adventure that offers opportunities to visit new places, enrich your life experiences, encourage personal growth and stimulation, and meet other people! For what it's worth, we wish to share some tidbits we have learned through the years.

Know Thyself. First things first. Take a discerning personal inventory as it relates to your interests, level of physical activity, medical considerations, destinations and travel options. Perhaps yourself grab a refreshing drink, and jot down some notes. Here are a few questions that may be helpful to consider:

- 1) What are the places on my wish list? International or Domestic? How do they align with my interests?
- 2) What is my preference for transportation and traveling? Airplane, bus, cruises, or land tours? How long do I want to travel to get to the destination?
- 3) Do I want to plan and book my trip? Or work with a reputable travel professional?
- 4) What is my budget for travel? How long do I want to be gone?
- 5) What's my level of physical activity? Can I keep pace hiking, walking or doing other activities? How is my stamina and mobility?
- 6) What do I want to see and experience? Museums? Scenery? Hands on activities?
- 7) What is my travel style? Relaxing? Adventurous? Educational or Hands on Experiences? Small-group travel? Large-group travel? 60+ age range? Moving from place to place? Do I prefer staying in one place during the trip?
- 8) What's my level of adventure in visiting other countries and experiencing other cultures and languages?
- 9) Who/whom am I comfortable traveling with? Solo? Group travel? Friends? Family?
- 10) How do I respond to unexpected events such as itinerary changes, delays, cancellations or situations that require flexibility?
- 11) In the past when I traveled, what did I really like? What would I do differently next time?
- 12) Do I have any medical conditions or constraints?

More to come. Stay tuned to our upcoming newsletters...



From the Material to the Ethereal, and Back Again

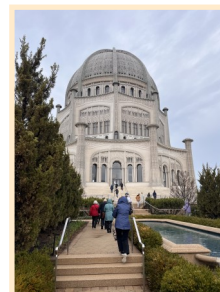
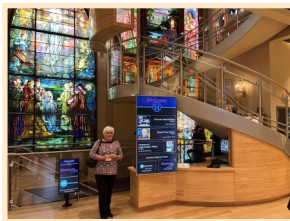
Written by Karen Christensen

What do you get when you mix one of our intrepid trip enthusiasts; a penchant for collectibles; and a religion whose key belief is that “we all belong to one human race, that all religions share a common source and aim, and that the long-awaited era of peace promised by God in the world’s sacred scriptures is now within reach”? Just combine these ingredients, add 30 LLI adventurers, sprinkle in a rainy day that failed to dampen our spirits – and you get the April 2 “Time and Temple Trip,” organized by Kim Carew and co-managed by Betty Williams.

We embarked from the Aurora Home Depot parking lot, where we were swiftly conveyed by bus to Evanston for a tour of the Halim Time and Glass Museum. This astonishing space was discovered by Kim in a serendipitous conversation on a Rhine River cruise with an LLI member from Wisconsin. The museum houses a private collection of decorative art masterpieces including American and European stained glass, cut glass, pottery, jewelry, bronzes, statuary, furniture, and textiles. In addition, we wandered through an array of galleries and display cases filled with time pieces that represented hundreds of years of history and cultures from all over the planet: pocket watches, longcase clocks, mantel clocks, chronometers, planetarium clocks, observatory clocks, pendulum clocks, and more.

We LLI folks love to eat – and so we continued on to enjoy a delightful private lunch at the Ten Mile Restaurant in Evanston, seasoned with lively conversation and an opportunity to get to know new chapter members.

Our next stop was the Baha’i House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois which serves the entire North American continent. It acts as a central gathering place for followers of a tradition that was born in the 19th century in Iran. Its adherents teach the idea of “Progressive Revelation,” believing that God’s teachings have been revealed over time by Divine Messengers, including Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad, and Baha’u’llah. We were greeted with an introduction to the Baha’i faith and then were able to tour the magnificent Temple, with its inspiring and soaring architecture. We glimpsed the luxurious gardens from the vantage point of windows inside the building. Due to the inclement weather, we’ll have to view this spectacular landscape at a leisurely pace on another visit!

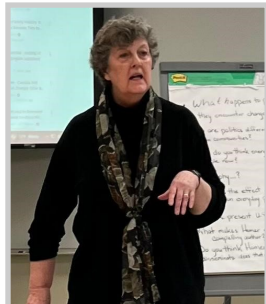


Rocket Boys/October Sky

*Co-facilitated by Donna Sue Blankenship
& Karen Christensen*



Spring Courses



Rocket Boys is based on Homer H. Hickam's memoir of growing up in the small coal mining town of Coalwood, WV. Inspired by the launch of Sputnik I in 1957, he decided to dabble in rocket design, with help from his friends and the Coalwood community. They launched more than thirty of their own home-made rockets and sent Homer on to win the National Science Fair Gold & Silver Award in 1960. Homer went on to become a NASA engineer and a prolific author.

To further our study of rural West Virginia, Donna Sue (prefers "Sue" and pictured at left) shared what it was like to grow up in nearby Rhodell, another small mining town. When Sue was growing up, the coal mining company owned everything from the company store with its inflated prices to the churches to the school, where Sue taught the younger students if a teacher was sick.

Karen Christensen provided videos of conversations with Homer Hickman, documentaries about the southwestern corner of West Virginia, and links to many other documentaries and movies. Karen also shared poetry relating to coal mining, and one was her own! Through the sharing of personal stories and numerous resources, this class truly came alive!

History of Blues Music

Facilitated by Evelyn Porter

And they called it the birth of the blues! What a class—masterfully created by Evelyn Porter who loves music, but admittingly is not an expert on the blues. Blues has such a rich history, born from the slaves who told their personal stories, and the many "babies born from this genre." Not just rock and roll, but jazz and country music.

This course came alive not only through Evelyn's unending enthusiasm, but through the outside speakers. From L-R: Steve Jones shared the Chicago connection to Maxwell Street through a documentary he created and viewed by the class. Blues musician Billy Flynn, who not only performed for us, but shared his lifelong love of music and experiences of playing with many of the "greats." Steve Warrenfelz, owner of Kiss the Sky, highlighted the blues connection with Aurora. In 1937, recordings were made in Leland Tower's Sky Club under the Bluebird label.



Steve created a tribute album to these recorded songs, using local artists and some more "famous" performers. The tradition carried on in Aurora through Blues Fests held there for several years. What's next? Perhaps search out a blues venue and just kick back and enjoy this soulful music!

My Travels in the Ukraine

Organized by Sue Foody



One person can truly make a difference, as demonstrated by Guest Presenter Jim Ganache. In 2023 Jim met a Ukrainian-American who connected him with key contacts, resources, and accommodations in Ukraine. Since that time, Jim has traveled to Ukraine four times, spending six weeks there each time. During his first visit, Jim volunteered at five different locations doing various tasks, including chopping vegetables at a front line kitchen, packing first aid kits, and delivering supplies to soldiers.

Jim recounted that every time he volunteers the Ukrainian people thank him and that his response is always, “I will try to do more.” To that extent one very important thing Jim has done is to help launch Defendica Systems, Inc., a defense-based technology dedicated to developing a wide range of drones. In appreciation for helping develop this technology, Jim was enrolled in The Honorable Guardian of the Order of Drones.

Although the Ukrainian people are very resilient, Jim stressed that they need much assistance in their war with Russia. Jim provided information on how class participants could provide assistance and stay informed.

Introduction to Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Power Plants

Co-facilitated by Ruth Harmon & Cindy Pederson

This class incorporated the use of the Zoom platform for two sessions, as well as an in-person meeting for the last session. Cindy Pederson (pictured at right) is an LLI member and retired Region III Administrator for the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). She gave an overview of the development of nuclear power, how nuclear power plants work, and what safety measures are employed in the United States. At the last session, Ruth Harmon led a discussion of the feasibility of nuclear energy; the emergence of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMRs); and fuel alternatives, including coal, oil, wind and solar.



Cindy, a chemical engineer by training, began her NRC career as an inspector at the Dresden Nuclear Plant in Morris, IL. Her career spanned over three decades and she was the first woman to serve as NRC administrator. Cindy encouraged many young people, especially girls, to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Ruth is a retired high school science teacher and continues to share her love of science with us through the many courses she has facilitated through the years.

This was a great opportunity to learn some basics about nuclear power plants and to thoughtfully consider nuclear fuels and alternative fuels. Best of all, the class was designed for the average person—you did not need a physics or engineering degree to attend!



Volunteer Brunch



L-R: Ceil Carey greeting members at sign-in, Laura King and Andi Danis welcoming volunteers and sharing the true meaning of volunteerism.

Oh, how we love our volunteers! For this current membership year, sixty of our members volunteered in some capacity, ranging from serving as facilitators, on the Board or Curriculum Council, various committees, greeters at social functions and so much more! We held our yearly Volunteer Brunch on April 9 on the Waubonsee Community College Sugar Grove Campus, with almost forty volunteers attending.

We started with a delicious brunch catered by Reuland's in Aurora, then to sharing our own volunteer experiences. To better get to know each other, we had a "My Top 2" activity, sharing our favorite books, TV shows or movies, hobbies, travel destinations and procrastinations. To end this event, the Social-Community Outreach Committee performed a "Saturday Night Live" skit, modeled on a Special Board Meeting to discuss if members should be required to wear uniforms to class. Needless to say, there were many laughs involved!

Thank you, volunteers, for all you do to make our LLI organization thrive. We couldn't do it without you!



Pictured above: volunteers sharing experiences and Social-Community Outreach SNL skit

Roundtable

Written by Jerry King



I have been present at several Roundtables in the past. This Spring Roundtable was an opportunity for current facilitators and members contemplating facilitating to informally share and explore the mechanics of facilitating. This event was hosted on Friday, March 21, on the Waubonsee campus.

I noted the comfortable vibe in the room and that a majority of the seats were filled. I am relatively new to LLI and it is a good feeling when I see familiar faces and my instincts tell me that in due time, I will become friends with some. It is hard to imagine an organization comparable to LLI that attracts and cultivates individuals with an appetite for continued learning.

To speak personally, the Roundtable impresses me as a celebration of the “nuts and bolts” of indulging one’s passion. How do I select a topic and prepare to introduce, to open that up to my peers? Where do I begin to learn the tools that I need on CourseStorm? Where do I go to find a submission form for an LLI course proposal? How do I print out a roster of members registered for my course? What about taking attendance? How do I export a list of class participants to Excel and create an attendance sheet? What about sending out an email reminder?

It is reassuring to know there is more than one way to take care of these essential elements. There is no one “right” answer. And there is a monthly checklist and script for opening a class. Everyone will agree that “getting started” with a class session is the critical part.

I am a newly minted member, so I was happy to receive a copy of the 25th Commemorative Newsletter that highlights the history of LLI. How delightful to see images of those who nurtured the organization from the beginning. Also, sponsorship by Waubonsee Community College is recognized with much gratitude.

The Spring Roundtable reminds me of an ample belly-cup of fresh, hot coffee. The warmth of conviviality, as well as assimilation of useful insight adds up to an experience I always look forward to. Thank you to everyone present for our Spring Roundtable.



In Memoriam

With our sincere condolences...

Richard (Dick) Offhaus

June 16, 1935—April 24, 2025



Dick was an active member of LLI through 2022 and a past facilitator. Many remember the class he facilitated on Herbert Hoover. To quote another member, "Dick was always ready to give his view on a topic. As always, his comments enriched the class discussion."

Born in Buffalo, NY, Dick graduated from East Aurora High School (NY) and Purdue University. In West Lafayette, he met and married Priscilla Shoup, the love of his life, and together raised four children.

Dick worked for 32 years for IBM as a Systems Engineer and was a longtime member of St. John Lutheran in Wheaton and St. Mark's Lutheran in Aurora. Godspeed, Dick. Thank you for sharing your love of learning and friendship!

Gail Tattersfield

August 9, 1940—April 29, 2025

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of our dear friend, Gail Tattersfield. The best way to describe her is, "She lit up a room!" Gail loved life and treasured family and friends. She was an active member of LLI, always sharing her love of our organization and recruiting so many new members over the years. Gail served on the Curriculum Council and many committees. She always had so much to contribute in class discussions, sharing her insights and practicality.



Gail grew up in New York and lived in many different locations across the country, wherever her husband George's career in the floor covering business took them. Gail and George were a true team and had three loving children, two sons and a daughter, and four grandchildren. They were both active in the Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva. We will miss you, Gail, but will forever remember your love of life and caring of others!


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ROAD SCHOLAR
Institute Network

Lifelong Learning Institute at Waubonsee Community College

Waubonsee Community College
Lifelong Learning Institute Office
Collins Hall, Room 174
Sugar Grove, IL 60554

(630) 466-2593 www.waubonsee.edu/lli

Our **Values** include continued learning, intellectual inquiry, social interaction, and active member participation in lifelong learning.

Our **Mission** is to provide our membership with a defined and member-generated framework for life-enriching, dynamic educational experiences through lifelong learning programs.

Our **Vision** is to be a self-sustaining and self-governing community of active mature adults offering a diverse and intellectually stimulating array of noncredit educational offerings in a wide variety of academic disciplines.

Waubonsee Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, veteran's status, marital status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law in its programs and activities. For more information on the college's nondiscrimination policies, contact the Executive Director of Human Resources at (630) 466-7900, ext. 2367; Waubonsee Community College, Route 47 at Waubonsee Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9454.

If You Need to Reach an LLI Board or Curriculum Council Member:

Board Members:

President:

Andi Danis
danishouse@sbcglobal.net

Vice President:

Kent Hayward
kent.hayward@yahoo.com

Secretary:

Kim Carew
buttonskc@aol.com

Treasurer:

Ann Hastert
a_hastert@yahoo.com

Member Communications Manager:

Andi Danis
danishouse@sbcglobal.net

Social and Community Outreach Manager:

Mary Maiers
marymaiers@att.net

Technology Manager:

Bill Doeden
wgdoeden@comcast.net

Curriculum Council:

Bobbie Brown
bobbiebrowntartist@hotmail.com

*Karen Christensen
kfc16@sbcglobal.net

Sue Foody
sfoody2017@gmail.com

Mary Hauge
maryehauge@gmail.com

Carolyn Hopkins
cjhopkins60@yahoo.com

Beth Johnson
bethmjohnson@comcast.net

Jerry King
jwking4149@gmail.com

*Evelyn Porter
e.strauss.porter@gmail.com

*Mary Ann White
mawhite466@aol.com

LLI Liaisons:

Jessica Guglielmi
Administrative
jguglielmi@waubonsee.edu

Emily Rollins
Marketing
erollins@waubonsee.edu

Newsletter Committee:

Mary Maiers, Editor
marymaiers@att.net
(630) 937-4133

Members:
Roger Breisch
Diana Fischer-Woods
Margie Groot
Jean Langlais

* Curriculum Council Representatives on the Board

