

# Lifelong Learning Institute at Waubonsee Community College

## President's Corner

Dear LLI Members,

Hopefully, the freezing weather streak is ending, and we can begin looking forward to the warmth of spring. Fortunately, the cold has not interfered with our members' enthusiasm for Lifelong Learning as indicated by the registration and attendance in many of LLI's spring course offerings.

This year, 2026, the Lifelong Learning Institute is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Waubonsee Community College. The growth of our organization and partnership with WCC are definite reasons to celebrate. Waubonsee has made a strong commitment to providing joint activities and assistance with course development. The current LLI and WCC cooperative partnership indicates a bright future for the continued development of LLI. Our website announces the upcoming joint activities. In order to stay informed please check the website on a regular basis.

As we move into the future our organization needs positive engagement from all of our members. We need volunteers who are willing to strengthen LLI by accepting leadership positions and helping to organize or facilitate courses. With more volunteers we can possibly expand our offerings. Thank you to those of you who are already working "behind the scenes." Being actively involved can be quite rewarding. I encourage everyone to consider what they can do to support Lifelong Learning.

Warmest wishes for a delightful spring!

Sincerely,

Mary Ann White

LLI President



### *Hold the dates!*

**April 7—Volunteer Brunch** (10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) in Bodie Hall, Room 150. Invitations will be emailed to all members who volunteered during the 2025-2026 membership year.

**May 19—Spring Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting** to be held at Stonebridge Country Club in Aurora. Details will be emailed to all members in late March. Open to members and guests.

## Adult Education: What is it Worth?

Written by Jerry King



I've been a "student" as long as I can remember. The lessons began with my first boss, at the Winn-Dixie Foods in Durham, NC. Mr. Winn was the assistant manager. He had a presence of quiet confidence about him that I still remember. I am certain in retrospect that he carried a lion's share of the responsibility for store operations which would have included hiring, supervising, and sometimes dismissing someone. Well before the days of computerized systems that integrate sales and inventory tracking, ordering was a matter of pushing paper and working long hours. To my eye he operated the store efficiently, exuding good will, always conversing with measured professionalism.

I also remember the store manager, Mr. O'Brien. I did my best to avoid him, due to the aura of negativity his dour countenance conveyed. He was a short, bald individual likely in his late 50s. As far as my teenage bag boy self was concerned, O'Brien was a version of the Scroogley-boss. If he could not be seen in the store office, he would stand or pace back and forth in front of the checkout registers keeping a gimlet eye on things.

What does this segment of my introduction to the work-world say about adult learning? Adult learning is a long journey which begins in adolescence. The process is cumulative.

- Adults understand the importance of **timeliness**. One learns to fulfill one's duty as a team member. That is, to be present at the agreed upon date and time, ready for work.
- Duty is a matter of **ethical responsibility** to yourself, to fellow employees, and to the customer. Above all—the customer is the recipient of your efforts and in turn, funds your paycheck.
- Leadership is as much a matter of **style** as anything else. Style, demeanor, comportment, non-verbal behavior accrues to respect, earned soft-authority that is non-coercive. Others feel inclined to "do the right thing" in response to mindful, mature leadership.

A lookback at my life as a clueless teenager (a true confession), reminds me that adult learning is never a simple matter.

Adults learn new skills and acquire additional insights to make their lives richer, desiring to have more to share with their circle of influence.

And that is what adult education is worth.

*People think of education as something that they can finish. —Isaac Asimov*



## Someone You Should Know

Written by *Diana Fischer-Woods*

Do you know which LLI member has facilitated or organized 75 classes, trips, and outings, served five years on the Curriculum Council, three terms on LLI's Board, three years on the Nominating and Recruiting Committee and worked on Registration from 2011 until the present time? If you answered **Kim Carew**, you are correct.

Kim joined LLI in 2008 and has been a dynamic force in the organization since that time. When Kim retired from her job at UPS, she was involved in several outside activities and organizations. However, she was interested in doing something educational. A friend told her about LLI. She checked out LLI and, according to Kim, joining it changed her life and became like a second career which she loves.

One of the many things that Kim loves about LLI is facilitating classes. Every semester she offers one or more classes. She has offered classes about the origin of jigsaw puzzles, the history of aprons, Christmas in Norway, Girl Scout cookies, and the very popular LLI Literary and Treats Society to name just a few. Kim gets her ideas for her classes from the newspaper, libraries or a folder of topics that she has kept for many years. She loves creating classes, especially those which allow for discussions, because she learns more from class members than what she has researched.

Kim believes that LLI plays an important role in continued learning, but also in creating friendships through the many social opportunities we offer. What does Kim love about LLI? EVERYTHING! That love is apparent in everything she does for LLI—from facilitating classes, organizing trips, serving on the Board and various committees and sharing her welcoming smile with everyone around her! LLI is truly fortunate that nearly 18 years ago Kim discovered LLI and, as a result, became instrumental in helping us grow into the organization it has become.



# Holiday Luncheon



Oh, how our members love to socialize. This was evident at our annual Holiday Luncheon held on December 2, 2025 at the Stonebridge County Club in Aurora. We set a record for attendance (about 125 members and guests). Shown above are Gary Krueger welcoming everyone, Vice President Kent Hayward speaking about volunteerism and our upcoming election, and Roger Breisch delivering the invocation.



Generosity abounds! Bill Doeden and Karen Christensen shown at left collecting gift wrap and Christmas stockings for Mutual Ground. Also shown are the many donations to the Waubonsee Community College Giving Tree.

The luncheon provided an opportunity to speak with facilitators about their upcoming spring classes (shown at right). Displays were created with such professionalism and creativity!



David Fraccaro provided our entertainment with a wide array of Elvis songs. That even sparked the urge to get up and dance! Fun was in the air!



## Distinguished Contributor Award

LLI has been able to thrive through a strong partnership with Waubonsee Community College (WCC). Many of our members have commented, “I have never seen anything like it!” The college provides IT support and is instrumental in creating an appealing and interactive website. Emily Rollins assists us with our marketing strategy and helps to identify community events which are a source of new member recruitment. WCC professors have also given well-received and relevant presentations to our members. The list goes on and on...

LLI was honored with receiving the Distinguished Contributor Award. College President Dr. Brian Knetl is shown at right presenting the award to LLI President Mary Ann White at the November 19, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting.



We can see that our partnership is one of mutual appreciation and trust. WCC views LLI as offering valuable resources to our community and recognizes the generous donation of our \$25,000 endowment to the WCC College Foundation.

Cheers to an ongoing and productive partnership!

## Thank you, Dr. Tejada!

Under the leadership of Dr. Melinda Tejada, VP of Community Engagement, for the past two years LLI has thrived in unimaginable ways. “Melinda,” as she likes to be called, strongly believed in the value of LLI and supported us with her passion and enthusiasm. She attended Board meetings and regional LLI conferences and was instrumental in providing needed college resources.

Dr. Tejada, retired this January. To say that we will miss her, does not capture our sentiment. In gratitude, we presented her with a floral bouquet at our Holiday Luncheon on behalf of our membership.

Melinda’s note to us:

*Dear LLI members,*

*Thank you for the most beautiful floral arrangement  
I’ve ever seen in my life.*

*Thank you for your kind words  
throughout our pairing together.  
I will truly miss our time together.*

*In the heart,*

*Melinda*

God speed, Melinda!





## What Are You Waiting For? Your LLI Learning Journey Lies Just Ahead...

Written by Roger Breisch

Your path to enlightenment just might be found in any one of the many offerings this spring.

Perhaps your journey is through **Art and Music**. Don't let anyone tell you to go pound dirt when you can learn *Tataki Zome*, the art of pounding flowers with Ann Hastert and Kim Carew. Then, get messy with Bobbie Brown as she helps you explore *Mixed-Media Experimental Nature Art*. Thinking of adding arsenic to your diet? Join the readers' theater version of "Arsenic and Old Lace" with Ceil Carey and JoAnn Gryder. Finally, consider taking a walking tour of Aurora University Campus art.

Maybe you prefer a path to **Personal Development**. Feeling a bit too tame? Then *Awaken the Wild Woman* with Rebecca Wolverton. *Mah Jongg* is a staple at our family game nights! If you can play Rummy, you can learn this ancient Chinese game.

In this day and age, **Current Events** can get you enlightened...or angry! Learn the Economic History of Tariffs with Guest Presenter Elier Iseli. If those get you enraged, enroll in *Free Speech in An Age of Rage* with Carl Hays and Carolyn Hopkins! It turns out ET may not have gone home after all. You can learn more with Joe Dvorak as he explores *The Folklore, Conspiracies, and Science of Extraterrestrials*. (Be sure to ask Joe about Klingons!)

An author I know said, because of bias, we don't know any more about history than we do about the future! It's time to learn more **History and Geography**. Speaking of biases, join Jerre Henriksen and Priscilla Gruber as they explore historical misinformation in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Then continue your travels with guided tours of the Ford House and a museum tour of the exhibit, "*Mapping Territories: The Art of Exile in Pilsen – Chicago*."

Let's not forget **Literature & Philosophy**! Jerry King is one of the most philosophical people I know. You'll learn a great deal about the *Tao Te Ching* and the wisdom of Lao-Tsu. (I'll bet he knew how to play *Mah Jongg*!) Why Shakespeare? (Beats me, but then I was a math and science geek!) All kidding aside, Phyllis Deerinck will have that answer in spades. She is amazing!

If your path is **Science (Natural and Social)** you have a cornucopia, a profusion, an abundance of offerings. Yeah...a lot! Explore the *Journey and Impact of Seeds* with Kim Carew and Lori McMahon. Seeing red? Feeling blue? Green with envy? Learn about the *Physics and Psychology of Color* with Guest Presenter Dr. Roger G. Johnston. Since poverty and homelessness make me very sad, maybe Evelyn Porter, Karen Christensen and Donna Sue Blankenship can help us understand. Finally, let me just add that there is a plethora (I think that also means a lot) of amazing outings to SciTech...everything from Luminescence and Matter to Storms!

*There's so much more, so get that journey underway today!*

## LLI Members Tour the WCC Technical Education Center

*Written by Jerry King*



We arrived at the Waubonsee Technical Education Center building on a blustery, very cold Monday afternoon. Having admired the architecture of the Technical Education Center over the months of construction I was pleased to have the opportunity for a guided tour of the interior of the building.

A visually striking exterior with contrasting bold colors is a statement by WCC administration about the future of industrial arts: Automotive Service Technology, Automotive Collision and Refinishing Technology, Computer Aided Design and Drafting, and Welding Technology. These programs are housed in the spacious, purposely designed areas, which provide the student a full complement of tools and state of the art equipment supporting instruction, along with mentorship by professors with years of experience.

Attention to detail is shown by the lighting of spaces in the building, receiving natural and LED illumination. Precision work that depends upon acuity of sight and delicacy of touch warrants a well lit workspace. Lockers were also in good supply. We were shown those designed specially for students in the welding program who need an enlarged space to store the protective headgear used for welding. There's ample open space with attractive seating for relaxing, reading and contemplation in the central hallway. Also I took note of a very large carpeted room, empty except for a lectern. I am certain this would be used as an exhibit space, or even for a industrial arts related trade show.

Our tour guide was delighted to introduce us to professors who happened to be on hand. Though our LLI group was unannounced, they were gracious to describe for us an overview, how skills are demonstrated, then students supervised as they work independently.

It is an understatement to say I was impressed by everything that I observed and heard during the LLI tour of the Waubonsee TEC facility. I am glad to be a resident of the Fox Valley area, and proud that Waubonsee Community College is a sponsor of LLI.



*L-R: Dr. Jeanine McMillen with Beth Johnson, LLI facilitator; Professor Dennis Head, Welding Instructor*

## Crafting Conversations

Crafting Conversations is a bi-annual event coordinated by Waubonsee Community College in partnership with LLI and open to students and faculty. It is an intergenerational experience where students and adults converse while working on a craft. It is amazing what we learn from our youth! We celebrated *World Kindness Day* on November 13 and decorated rocks for the Kindness Rock Garden.

Imelda Koehler, Counseling and Support Manager, spoke about the mental health services provided by the college. Carolina Gutierrez led a guided meditation exercise; discussion was prompted throughout the afternoon by such questions as, “What’s a hobby of interest you’re glad you discovered later in life?” Our next event will be on April 21. More information to follow.



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## An Artful Life

The college offers many opportunities to view art. In fact, LLI member Susan Foody leads a Special Interest Group (SIG) called WCC Art Gallery Talks, where members can view exhibitions and attend Artist Talks at the Arrowhead Gallery on the WCC Sugar Grove campus. SIG members are invited to have lunch together prior to the art events. There is more information on our website: [waubonsee.edu/lli/Special Interest Groups](http://waubonsee.edu/lli/Special%20Interest%20Groups)

Shown at right is Marie Von Ohlen’s daughter Ellen offering insight into her mother’s water color paintings. Marie Von Ohlen led a very interesting life, and was married to Dale Von Ohlen, who was the founding Board of Trustees President (and a campus building in his name).

Ellen shared fun stories of how her mother balanced her roles as mother, wife and artist with family support. Truly a remarkable woman, a scholarship is dedicated in her name at the College Foundation.





## Travel Tips from Two Amateur Travelers!

*Written by Margie and Guy Groot*

Hello...It's us again! Two Amateur Travelers, a curious and mildly adventuresome couple who strive to discover more about this wonderful world we live in! We are not travel agents or travel professionals. Just lifelong learners that recognize if you want to travel, do it while you have the time, health and mobility!

In our two previous articles, we first outlined some trek-searching questions to spark self-examination and define the scope and type of travel that works for you. In the second, we offered suggestions on the value of working with reputable touring companies and travel professionals and pertinent documentation when traveling. This time we will review insurance and “ready-set-go’s” as you embark on your travel adventure.

### **Insurance**

**Medical Coverage Policy(ies) and Credit Cards** – Dust off your health insurance policy and review the in/out of network and out of country coverage. Going out on a limb here - for most of us that's Medicare and all/some of its Parts. Often medical services outside of the United States are not covered. Also, if you are using your credit card to purchase the trip/flights, review the fine print materials to learn what may be covered while traveling.

**Travel Insurance** - Let's be honest; it's not cheap. We now purchase it after witnessing situations whereby insurance was a godsend. We make sure evacuation is included. Most travel insurance only covers the duration of the trip and comes with a few different packages. There are policies that can be purchased to cover longer periods of time or services. There are several avenues to purchase travel insurance: your travel agent, the touring company, home/auto insurance agent, or independently. Here are some reasons to buy it:

- ⇒ *Life can be unpredictable and sometimes you must cancel your trip.*
- ⇒ *Coverage can cover if your bags are lost or stolen.*
- ⇒ *People get ill... Yourself included.*
- ⇒ *Travel insurance often provides concierge services to help you through those most difficult times.*

During our years of travel, we have seen some rare, but necessary, uses of insurance. Our travel companion on a European river cruise fell, ended up hospitalized for 21 days, and required a nurse-escorted trip back to the USA. She had minimal personal cost because of insurance. Once we had to spend three extra days in Cusco, Peru due to flight cancellations because of fog. Lodging and meals were covered because we had insurance!

In the future, we will share tips about cruising, packing and currency. We will also share some of the twists and turns we have faced. Happy Traveling!

## Travel Opportunities



LLI is committed to offering our members expanded social opportunities, including travel. This spring we are offering an eight-day Route 66 coach tour through Mayflower Cruises & Tours (registration is closed).

We are excited to share the news of an upcoming trip to Northern Italy. This is our second Collette-sponsored international tour. Last year’s trip to Iceland received rave reviews! What better way to get to know our fellow LLI travelers.

**Join us on a nine-day tour of Northern Italy, featuring Venice, the surrounding area, and The Dolomites!** Your home base for the entire trip is the Hotel Carlton in Treviso; daily excursions and experiences include:

- ⇒ The lively center of hilltop Asolo, awarded the title of Italy’s Most Beautiful Village
- ⇒ A demonstration of skill by the glassblowing artists in Venice
- ⇒ The local life in Bassano, the hometown of Italy’s renowned schnapps – known as grappa
- ⇒ A walking tour of the romantic city of Romeo & Juliet – Verona.
- ⇒ The incomparable Dolomites, named one of the world’s most beautiful mountain chains by UNESCO.

**Seats are limited. See LLI website for more information, including how to register.**  
[waubonsee.edu/lli](http://waubonsee.edu/lli)

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## Special Interest Groups

As part of our goal to expand social opportunities, we have introduced Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Under the leadership of committee chair Karen Christesen and our enthusiastic SIG leaders, members are able to come together to share their common interests. The formation guidelines are posted on our LLI website, as well as a list of open SIGs. We hope you will consider forming or joining one!

Dr. Knetl seems to be involved in all things LLI! At right, he is expressing his support and enthusiasm with the *Eat Smart, Live Strong* SIG, led by Ann Butcher, Kim Carew and Lori McMahon.



**In Memoriam**

*With our sincere condolences...*

**Ken Cameron**

**May 17, 1936—December 7, 2025**



For those of us who had the privilege of knowing Ken, we will remember his dry sense of humor, humility and engaging conversation. Ken was an active member of LLI for many years and served as Secretary of the Board. He had a true commitment to our success and growth.

Born in Rockford, Ken attended a one-room schoolhouse which he typically brought up in conversation. Earning degrees from Northern Illinois University and Northwestern University, he spent most of his career as a builder/developer in the Aurora area. Dedicated to service, Ken served on many boards, believing in supporting his community.

Ken was a loving husband, father and grandfather, leaving his devoted wife Penny who was his partner for 66 years. His pride was always his family, leaving a legacy of the love he gave so freely and the lives he shaped with his warmth and grace.

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***In My Heart***

***By Karen Christensen***



*I closed my eyes briefly and you slipped away  
 So now I am left with a hole in my heart  
 That I'm trying to fill  
 By remembering stories and happier times  
 By savoring smells and telling worn jokes  
 By paging through albums and faded old cards  
 By repeating your sayings and wearing your scarf  
 By seeing your smile when I look in the mirror  
 By familiar inflections when I try to speak  
 By saying I love you without striking bargains  
 I do all these things, knowing full well  
 My heart will mend slowly, holding you near*



## Lifelong Learning Institute at Waubonsee Community College

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

(630) 466-2593 [www.waubonsee.edu/lli](http://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.

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