

Lifelong Learning Institute at Waubonsee Community College

President's Corner

Dear LLI Members,

Adapting to change has become a standard for all Lifelong Learning members. During the past year our Board has made changes in the best interest of our members' safety and well-being, moving from distance learning to in-person courses following Waubonsee Community College's safety protocols. To the relief of all LLI members, the Spring 2022 courses were able to convene on the Waubonsee Sugar Grove campus. As community venues reopen, hopefully more courses will be offered at off-campus locations.

A positive change for LLI members has been online registration. The online registration for the spring courses was both efficient and successful. Your willingness to adapt to this new format displays everyone's love of lifelong learning.

Sincere thanks to each Lifelong Learning member for their support of our wonderful organization. May the future bring positive change and continued learning experiences and growth.

Mary Ann White
President

Be the change that you wish to see in the world.
— Mahatma Gandhi



Save the Date!

October 12, 2022— **Volunteer Luncheon:** this has been long in the planning, a time to honor our valued volunteers. Delayed by COVID-19 concerns, we are hopeful to finally celebrate!



Curriculum Council Corner

Happy spring, LLI! And summer is not far behind...which means...LLI Summer Sampler courses!

We have twelve varied and interesting courses for you to peruse. Remember also, that membership is not required to register for the one-day summer courses, so invite your friends and family to take a look as well. The price for each is holding steady at \$5, and registration is easy on our new CourseStorm online platform.

Just to highlight the variety that is offered:

We have two courses that will especially appeal to science buffs and are interesting for the rest of us. "Amazing Women Astronomers and Physicists" features Co-facilitators Paul Mantsch and Michael Albrow. Dr. Albrow came to Fermilab in 1991 and has a lifelong passion for astronomy as well as physics. This course will be offered on Zoom.

The other science-related course, "Looking at the Universe: SDSS, Webb and Planck," features the builder of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey himself, Larry Bartoszek, brought to us by LLI member Gail Tattersfield.

We also have two courses featuring magnificent local properties: You can take a virtual tour of Graceland Cemetery, located in Chicago, IL, with JoAnn Hofer, and learn about the designs and horticulture of The Chicago Botanic Garden with Helen Snyder. It will be interesting to be able to learn about these local gems, which may inspire you to take a short road trip!

Neighborhood venues are opening up for classes, and we are taking advantage of them: "A Brief History of Theatrical Conventions," offered by Tryna Zeedyk, will be held at the Montgomery Village Hall. Three courses will be offered in the Batavia/Geneva area: two courses facilitated by Olive Poliks: "A Multi-Cultural, Multi-Religious View of Forgiveness" and "Livers, Givers & Quivers: Variations on Encountering Life" and one facilitated by Gail Tattersfield: "Keeping Connected in Challenging Times."

We round out our program with three courses co-facilitated by Carl Hays and Jay Labelle that will have us thinking about current issues and pondering the ways of the world: "Can Memory Problems Be Solved?" "Are Baby Boomers Hurting Millennials?" and "Being You: The Science of Consciousness," which will feature Outside Speaker Dr. Michael Maniacci. One more course, organized by Carl Hays, features presenter and author, Roger Breisch, who will lead a discussion on his new book, *Humanity's Journey Home: Surrendering to the Wholeness of Gaia*. It will be such a wonderful opportunity to hear the author himself talk about this very interesting and thought-provoking book!

Member Survey

Attention LLI Members!



You will be receiving a Member Survey in May from Survey Monkey with questions developed to better understand our membership, level of participation and overall satisfaction with our program. We encourage you to take the time to complete the survey by the stated deadline. Only by your participation can we have a true representation of your voices.

Our last comprehensive survey was taken in April 2015. The Board had planned to conduct a survey about two years ago, but deferred it because of the pandemic.

Major areas of questions to be included:

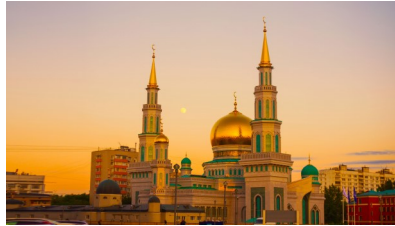
- ⇒ Demographics
- ⇒ Length of membership
- ⇒ Level of participation in and satisfaction with Spring 2022 offerings
- ⇒ Recommendations for course topics
- ⇒ Evaluation of online registration
- ⇒ Effectiveness of member communication
- ⇒ Interest in facilitating courses
- ⇒ Membership and course fees

Results of the survey will be summarized and shared with our members. We value you and are grateful for your ongoing participation and support.



Russia: Past, Present and Future

Facilitated by Ellen Neupert



Ellen Neupert is a dynamo when it comes to inspiring LLI members in her courses! Most recent is the four-part series entitled “Russia: Past, Present and Future.” Beginning in Fall 2021, the year-long series took participants on a journey through the geographic, historical, economic, political and cultural foundations of Russia’s past to the current day. Parts 1 and 2 covered Russia’s famous and infamous leaders, policies and international relations from its beginnings to the 1917 Revolution. Part 3 focused on the rise of the Bolsheviks up to the dictatorship of Stalin and the expanse of the Soviet Union during and following World War II. Part 4 examined post-Stalin Russia including the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Vladimir Putin. The topic was timely and a springboard for vigorous classroom discussions.

Unexpectedly, with Russia’s invasion of the Ukraine, the scope of the classes broadened into discussing weekly current events. Ellen shared, “What has been really neat is participants that attended past classes could see the connections between Putin, Stalin and Peter the Great and what is taking place now.” The way she sees it, Putin emulates these past leaders and wants to build and restore Russia to its former glory—to build an empire of size and prestige that brings him respect from the international community and re-establishes Russia’s previous spheres of influence. One word to describe Putin’s leadership is “control” of all aspects of life, especially politically, economically and in the media. The war tactics employed in the Ukraine invasion parallel Hitler’s approach during World War II, with the attack on civilians, the intentional separation of families, and deportation of certain groups of people to more remote areas.

When asked about the effectiveness of sanctioning Russia, Ellen thinks it’s hard to know. “It will be interesting to see the impact of European nations stopping the purchase of natural gas, oil and coal on her economy.” The sanctioning of banks and the effect of that on Russian oligarchs could weaken the economy. Also, the role of social media, used extensively by dissenters to get to the truth over propaganda, plus Putin’s paranoia concerning the re-affirmed unity of NATO poses a real threat to his leadership.

Looking to the future, Ellen has submitted two proposals for the Fall 2022 term, entitled “Eastern Europe: Putin’s Playground—Gaming or Gambling? Parts 1 and 2.” Be on the lookout out for these upcoming fall courses—you may want to sign up!

Critical National Issues Discussion Series

Co-facilitated by Priscilla Gruber and Mary Maiers



Having attended each other's courses over the years, Mary and Priscilla found they share many common interests. Mary approached Priscilla about partnering to create a discussion series. They agreed that national issues would be both relevant and exhilarating.

After some brainstorming, the co-facilitators identified eight potential topics for the course proposal, then selected the four most relevant closer to the series start date: Voting Rights, Gun Violence, Health Care and Media Impacts. Mary and Priscilla both agreed that although resources would be provided to the participants as background material, the focus would be on discussion.

Delivered over Zoom, this media provided the opportunity for both general and small group discussion (conducted in breakout rooms). Specific questions were posed to the participants for reflection and discussion. Mary and Priscilla were thrilled at the level of participation and shared insights. When asked if they would like to see discussion groups continue, the members answered with an enthusiastic "yes!"

Traveling By Book, A Study of International Travel Experiences

Co-facilitated by Ceil Carey and JoAnn Gryder

Ceil and JoAnn have been friends for 40 years, always having fun with whatever projects they work on together! This course was JoAnn's idea, imagined by having read many travel books. Who better to partner with than Ceil?! Both friends love to travel, their enthusiasm obvious to those in the class.



JoAnn studied in France during college and developed a love for the country. Ceil's travel has followed family and she plans to go to England this year with her daughter.

Insights from JoAnn: "Travel expands your world, looking forward while building memories to look back upon." and Ceil: "You realize that people all over the world are the same while different. It is important to immerse yourself in their culture to get to know them."

Those in the class shared their travel experiences and reported on travel memoir books, taking us to Ireland, England, France and beyond. From this sharing, members felt they got to know each other better, a true LLI gift.

From our co-facilitators: "You're never too old to dream; act on those dreams!"

Coming to America

Co-facilitated by Kim Carew and Karin Gissel



Karin Gissel very effectively chose to share her curiosity, knowledge and personal history in a class that was highly dependent on class participation and discussion. Karin herself came to America when she was 14 years old, emigrating from Germany with her parents.

The participants in the class eagerly shared their own stories. All had knowledge of their ancestors, mostly from personal family stories that had been handed down through the generations.

Stories from South Africa, Brazil, Ireland and many other countries were extremely interesting and fun, often leading to a lot of laughter.

Karin also wanted to teach people what it takes for immigrants to come here with discussions about green cards, visas and the U.S. quota system. Experiences from her own extended family of world travelers gave her information to share about registering children as Americans born overseas, giving them dual citizenship.

High credit is given to her co-facilitator, Kim Carew, as Karin states that she couldn't have done the class "Coming to America" without her.

Volunteerism: Success, Sinkholes and Solutions

Facilitated by Olive Poliks

Olive Poliks is no stranger to LLI members having—as she puts it—“info-trained” us for many years through her many classes. This past term she examined the topic of “volunteerism” utilizing the classic children’s story, *The Little Red Hen*, to illustrate and discuss the difficulties and solutions for recruiting volunteers. Discussion centered around how we can light the passion of volunteerism in others and how new life and energy can be infused into volunteer programs.



Olive knows from her own experiences the “sinkholes” of enlisting volunteers. While a counselor at Waldo Middle School, her award-winning student ambassador program was wildly successful; but when she left, it all fell apart. From this and other experiences, Olive learned that it was essential to have a group of volunteers who enthusiastically support the program. She further learned that it was equally important that volunteers feel ownership of the program and are allowed to develop their own ideas for it. “A one-man show is doomed to fail and is also exhausting!”

Olive expressed, “I love being part of LLI and preparing for classes that I’m interested in, knowing that I can engage with others with our same passion for learning.”

Collecting and Preserving Lincoln

Organized by Richard Larson

Guest Presenter Dan Hoefler is the President of the Batavia Historical Society and a lover of history. He retired in 2010 after a history and government teaching career in the Oswego School District. Dan also held various administrative positions, including department chair, assistant principal and principal. As testimony to his community involvement, Dan was voted Batavia Citizen of the Year in 2021!



Dan displayed and spoke about his personal collection of Lincoln artifacts, generally acquired in his travels and "hunts." He was always searching for that rare find and shared learning about collecting and authenticating.

Pictured above is Dan with a replica of Lincoln's childhood chair. Also displayed were replicas of casts of Lincoln's head and his pocket knife (used to sharpen pencils) as well as various sketches and photos. Many artifacts related to important political figures serving in Lincoln's era were also displayed. Lincoln originals are kept in the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield and the National Archives Museum in Washington DC.

Dan started his collection of Lincoln objects in the 1980s, always working with students and others to connect them to history. According to Dan, "Artifacts help tell the story. History is not always depicted accurately."

Guest Presenter/Outside Speaker Policy

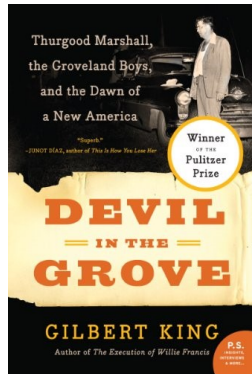
The Board is excited to share with you a new adopted policy, to be effective in the Fall 2022 semester: to offer an honorarium of \$100 to Outside Speakers and \$200 to Guest Presenters. (Outside Speakers contribute to a course developed by a Facilitator; Guest Presenters are speakers who present the entire course under the direction of an Organizer.)

Our hope is that this will offer more opportunities in securing speakers who can share topics of interest with our members. We have already obtained speakers for the fall with this new policy!

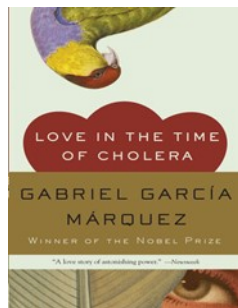
If you have an idea for a future speaker or questions related to this honorarium, please contact Paul Mantsch or Richard Larson (contact information listed on page 12).



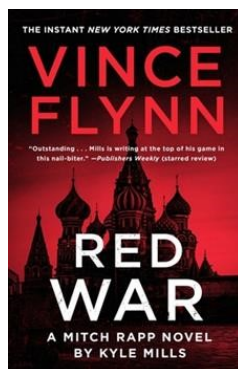
Book Nook



Devil in the Grove by Gilbert King is a Pulitzer Prize-winner novel which painstakingly chronicles the account of Thurgood Marshall, then an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, in leading a team in defense of four young black men in Lake County, Florida. Known as the Groveland Four (or the Groveland Boys), they were accused in 1949 of raping a white woman. The complex and riveting narrative moves from the police stations and courtrooms of the South to the NAACP headquarters in New York, identifying the numerous personalities involved in this strenuous battle for human rights, justice and dignity. This important, but relatively little-known legal case, paved the way for advances of the civil rights era. This tragic saga is heart-breaking and a tough read, while also providing insight into Thurgood Marshall's personal life and work. Sadly, it took seven decades before the State of Florida formally recognized these young men were failed by the criminal justice system.



Love in the Time of Cholera, by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Gabriel García Márquez, is a powerful story of human experiences and emotions. In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. However, a combination of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances prevents them from getting married. When Fermina chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his business career, he whiles away the years in a series of affairs, yet reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. Over fifty years after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again. Márquez's novel spans most of Florentino and Fermina's long lives, and skillfully preserves the main characters' core identities amid the many changes of heart, belief, appearance and social standing.



The Book, *Red War*, is the seventeenth in the series started by author Vince Flynn who died several years ago and is continued by author Kyle Mills. The series focuses on the continuing saga of black-ops CIA assassin Mitch Rapp. While the series itself is not particularly exceptional in that it is similar to numerous others of the Robert Ludlum-sequel genre, what made this book stand out was the prescience of the Russian Invasion into Eastern Europe. Though published in 2018, in many ways, the U.S. and NATO might be following its script in 2022. They certainly face the same challenging decisions. The book touches on what happens when a Russian President who is a thinly veiled Vladimir Putin goes rogue.

Art As a Kind of Social Practice

Written by *Bobbie Brown*

In these trying times, much has been said about reasons to feel frustrated, angry or depressed. Lives have been upended by loss, isolation, division and global conflict. Despite all we've been through, can we creatively reach out and touch someone's life with a spark of joy?

In Healdsburg, CA, two art teachers, Jessica Martin and Asherah Weiss, were inspired by their students' positive attitudes, despite all they have been through—the pandemic, wildfires in the region and just the everyday challenges of being a kid. Empathy was encouraged through classroom discussions of art as a kind of social practice. As a result, a local art project began by students aged 5 to 12 at West Side School making inspirational posters with encouraging messages and tear-off tabs posted around the community.

Creating the free PepToc hotline was the second step in the art project, featuring pre-recorded life advice and words of encouragement by the students. Teachers Martin and Weiss thought the project could bring some joy to everybody, and that the kids could see that they could put their positive messages out in the world and be received.

PepToc launched on February 26, and with people sharing the hotline phone number on social media, the call volume quickly exploded. There are now two phone numbers: (707) 998-8410 and (707) 873-7862. After dialing PepToc, callers are instructed to press “1” if they are feeling mad, frustrated or nervous, and “2” if it's encouragement and life advice they're seeking. For a pep talk from kindergartners, press “3,” and to hear kids “laughing with delight,” press “4.” Encouragement in Spanish is available by pressing “5.”

For nearly a minute, the kids will offer both profound and whimsical advice, each in their own voice. Who could not smile while listening to “kids laughing with delight?” Some of the pre-recorded advice for stressed callers includes: Punch your pillow and cry on it. Be grateful for yourself. Go get your wallet and spend it on ice cream and shoes. Be you. It's okay to be different. Go get a cookie. If you're feeling up high and unbalanced, think of groundhogs.

The PepToc hotline has become a small salve at a time of restlessness and frustration, a brief break to listen to innocent young voices earnestly sharing what makes them happy. Jessica Martin, talking about her students, states, “Their creativity and resourcefulness is something that we need to emulate, because that level of joy and love and imagination is what's going to save us in the end.”

A Sense of Wonder, painting by Artist Bobbie Brown



Insights From Our Members

Our members were asked:

What life changes are you making based on your COVID-19 experiences? Changing priorities? Redefining yourself in some way? Doing things you have put off? Lessons learned? Let's "listen" to their responses:

I started making crafts when the pandemic arrived. Instead of going shopping or out to eat that first year, I set up an area in my basement and fully stocked it with enough supplies to keep me busy for several pandemics. My getaway in the basement made time pass so quickly.

Paula Hill-Emery

The pandemic has certainly altered my life pretty dramatically. I found myself re-examining commitments to several volunteer activities, and have dropped some, leaving more time and energy for me to spend on reading, writing, crafting and practicing the piano. I am grateful for the technology (Zoom and FaceTime) that has allowed me to stay in touch with several study and discussion groups—and to “visit” with my daughter in the United Kingdom. Zoom also brought me the “pleasure” of hosting my 2nd grade granddaughter while her school migrated to online classes when it closed due to COVID. Though we had to cancel several planned trips, we have a newly heightened sense of appreciation for the gift of travel—and are ready to launch ourselves again out into the world.

Karen Christensen

I did pretty well during the pandemic. My son sent me an afghan kit from Annie's Craft. They sent me three colors of yarn with directions and a video to watch (if needed) every month for 10 months. I finished that in the 10 months. I joined a Zoom book club at the library. Reading was what I did most. I also did a diamond painting. My dog was my companion during that time. I don't want to do it again, but made it through. Thank God!

Joan Zbinden

I went through thousands of family photographs and eliminated everything and anything my children would not be interested in keeping. I kept about 20% and even that is probably too much. I will have to be brutal and do it all over again.

Karin Gissel

I learned that I had way too many items on my agenda! When the "shut-down" hit and I had to stay home most days, it began to remind me of my childhood on the farm. I am an only child and in the summer, there were many weeks in which we went shopping on Saturday and to church on Sunday. On the other days it was just me, my parents and God. My imagination would run wild as I created my own enjoyment during the long days. Of course, I had chores with time limits on them, but other than that, I was free to do whatever I could imagine. After I was 10 or 12 years old, my dad had me driving the tractor for certain projects. That was my favorite time. Then I was really isolated. I would talk to God, I would "write" the words and music to songs, I would "write" short stories—all in my head, of course. Our town library was small, so I didn't have many books to read. Now that has changed. But, the child in me still enjoys using my imagination to create my entertainment!

Sharon Keutzer

Loving Zoom. Making 3D prints, creating ornaments, drawings and stained glass.

Kris Renier

I found how grateful I was to connections—family, friends, work buddies, church. They really were what kept me going and most importantly kept me sane. I try to connect more now with people who I know more often just to check in and say hi.

Sue Foody

I spend more time with watercolor painting and playing the piano. Am forced to spend more time alone. Since I no longer drive, shopping is rare. Must use catalogs for necessities.

Joyce Moore

I was determined to keep connected to friends as best I could. Once COVID started closing down many of the activities I enjoyed (movies, my church, LLI classes, etc.), I was more than willing to learn Zoom if just to see the faces of those I care about. Some friends did not seem as affected by the isolation; they were happy to stay home and read, watch TV or use their computer—but it was not long before I felt I wanted to do something. In Spring 2019 I asked some girlfriends to meet in my driveway on Sunday afternoons for Driveway Discussions. Once we had been vaccinated, we also came inside for chats. Some days they stayed and stayed, as it was so good to be together. We have been doing that many Sundays and just last Sunday a smaller group gathered and then several of us went out to dinner together. The other thing I started to do was to write a weekly memoir that followed the COVID story. Sending out stories has brought stories back to me, keeping me connected to family, old friends, my former exchange student, cousins in England, friends in New Zealand. Again, it is the connections I treasure.

Gail Tattersfield

Thank you, friends, for sharing your stories...




WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ROAD SCHOLAR
Institute Network

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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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