



February 2012 Volume XXV, Number 1

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

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For more information, PLEASE contact the person indicated for each event!

February

Thur 2 - Special Program: Viewpoints with Hy Edelstein, 12:30–2:00 p.m., Highland Valley Elder Services, 320 Riverside Drive, Florence. **Contact:** Hy Edelstein **No need to register!**

Thur 2 - Curriculum Committee meeting, 2:15–4:15 p.m., Five Colleges HQ, Amherst

Fri 3, 10, 17, 24 - Special Program: French conversation, 1:30–3:30 p.m., Applewood at Amherst. **Contact:** Judith Pool

Thur 9 - Council meeting, 2:15–4:15 p.m., Five Colleges HQ, 97 Spring St, Amherst.

Fri 10 Special Program: Opera Prep with Peggy Bedell - Wagner: Gotterdammerung, 1:30–2:30 p.m., the Community Room, Northampton Lathrop. **See the Special Programs catalog for more details. Contact:** Peggy Bedell **No need to register!**

Mon 13 - FIRST DAY OF SPRING SEMESTER SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Thur 16 - Special Program: Arts Interest Group - Mt Holyoke College Art Museum Highlights Tour with Ruth Kosiorek, 2:00–4:00 p.m. **Contacts:** Ann & John Martin **(See page 5)**

Thur 16 - Special Program: Science Roundtable - “Pesticides and Biopesticides: Fact and Fiction,” discussion led by Julius Menn, 2:00–3:30 p.m., The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop. **Contact:** Dottie Rosenthal **(See page 7)**

Fri 17, 24 - Special Program: Conversational Italian, 1:30–3:30 p.m., The Quigley Room at the Newman Catholic Center, UMass. **Contacts:** Dean Poli & Zina Tillona

Thur 23 - Special Program: Finding Family, 1:30–3:30 p.m., Dewey Common Room, Dewey Hall, Smith College. **Contact:** Bobbie Reitt

Thur 23 - Special Program: Travel Interest Group: Ellen Peck – Ethiopia: Land of Unusual Christian Festivals, followed by Paul Berman – Italy: The Cinque Terre, Lucca, Assisi & Montecatini, 2:00–4:00 p.m., The Community Room, Northampton Lathrop. **Contacts:** Marybeth Bridegam and Joan Wofford **No need to register! (See page 6)**

Fri 24 - Special Program: Opera Prep with Peggy Bedell - Verdi: Ernani, 1:30–2:30 p.m., the Community Room, Northampton Lathrop. **See the Special Programs catalog for more details. Contact:** Peggy Bedell **No need to register!**

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FEBRUARY CALENDAR

CONTINUED

Mid- to late February: Tickets for Great Decisions will be available on line or through the mail. You will be notified! (See page 4)

MARCH

Fri 2 - Special Program: Encore presentation: We will show Eric Foner's Keynote Address from the October Civil War Sesquicentennial Symposium, followed by a distinguished panel of 5CLIR members and invited guests, 10:00–12:00 noon, The Eric Carle Museum, 125 W. Bay Road, Amherst. DETAILS FORTHCOMING! We also expect to show David Blight's closing keynote in early March. Contact: Larry Ambs No need to register!

APRIL

Mon 2 - Deadline for submission of Fall 2012 seminar and workshop proposals! The proposal form is on our website...please use it and your proposal will automatically be delivered to the right recipients.



Example of punch-needle rug hooking (LIR workshop, Monday afternoons).

Letter from the President, Joan Wofford



One of the wonderful aspects of LIR is the incredible freedom it affords us: freedom to explore subject areas we never had opportunity for in the past; freedom to try out new sides of ourselves by making presentations, even moderating; freedom to experience new and exciting parts of the world through Special Programs; freedom to make new friends in an arena of shared interests, something that gets harder when we no longer have our work as a social draw.

There is a downside to this freedom, however, that we may not be aware of and which I want to spell out here. Acting freely to drop a seminar or not show up for a Special Program we signed up for has multiple consequences. This is not to say that there are never valid reasons due to health or weather for not attending an event. But the other day when the sun was shining, LIR members worked hard to invite a guest speaker to present on the Ralph Vaughan Williams' upcoming Mass, and only two-thirds of those who had signed up showed up. This is an embarrassment to LIR and a disappointment, even discourtesy, to the sponsors.

There is a related issue with seminars. One day after seminar assignments had gone out, Callie had 59 e-mails on her computer, nearly all of which contained either a query about a seminar or a request to drop or change at least one of the seminars originally requested. Each change that Callie makes then impacts others in the seminar, those on the waiting lists, the moderators, others members' chances for the next lottery, sometimes spaces in which to hold the seminar, and so on down a chain of consequences. Callie is marvelous at attempting to accommodate everyone, but the time and effort involved is considerable.

The point is that there is an organizational impact from our exercising another kind of freedom: the freedom to change our minds. Let's all attempt to be more sure ahead of time as to what is involved in each seminar, consider whether we truly want that seminar we have listed as our third choice, perhaps even call the moderator of a prospective seminar to clarify our understanding of what is required. And let's try to

be sure, when signing up for a Special Program, that we have every intention of participating.

Both of these problems exist only because LIR members are excited by and drawn to an appealing menu of seminars and Special Programs. Let's all work to make our enjoyment of this rich feast of offerings less likely to cause heartburn for others by carefully choosing what we intend to consume.

Joan

Great Decisions, 2012 Schedule

March 30, 2012	Middle East Realignment	Sohail Hashmi, Mt. Holyoke College
April, 6, 2012	Mexico	Velma Garcia, Smith College
April 13, 2012	Energy Geopolitics	Regine Spector, UMass, Smith College
April 20, 2012	Cybersecurity	Vinnie Ferraro, Mt. Holyoke College
April 27, 2012	State of the Oceans	Al Curran, Smith College

Tickets will be available on line or through the mail by mid- to late February.

Members: Series: \$35.00 , Single Event: \$10.00

Non-Members: Series: \$45.00, Single Event: \$12.00

Arts Interest Group

Mt Holyoke College Art Museum Highlights Tour

Thursday, February 16, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

We will be visiting the Mt. Holyoke College Art Museum in South Hadley. Ruth Kosiorek, a member of LIR, will give us a guided tour of highlights of the Museum's permanent collection.

Ruth is currently a docent/educator at the museum, where she has been for 11 years, giving tours focusing on Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as on the collection in general. In 2010 she was a co-curator of the exhibit: "Side by Side: Works on Paper." A former art teacher in Chicopee, Ruth also was the owner/manager of The Village Travel Center and then worked for Massachusetts Audubon at their wildlife sanctuary in Hampden.

Directions: For those who do not know where the Museum is, please call Ann or John Martin. Parking is close to the entrance.

Registration: There is plenty of room so registration is not necessary. In the event of bad weather, please call us the morning of the 16th for cancellation information.

Mark your calendars for our March session, on Thursday March 15, 2:00–4:00 p.m. This will be at the Hadley Studio of Louise Currin. She will show us her award-winning watercolors and will give us a demonstration.

Details will appear in the next newsletter.

Any questions, call either Ann or John Martin

Travel Interest Group

Time to put the LIR Travel Interest Group On your Second Semester Calendar

Marybeth Bridegam and Joan Wofford, facilitators

Come join us! We meet the fourth Thursday of each month, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the Community Room at Lathrop Northampton. Many of us are well traveled, and all of us know of places we would love to go but will never have the time (and/or money) necessary. The Travel Interest Group provides an opportunity for travelers to share their knowledge, experience, and pleasure with other LIR members who would like to vicariously enjoy their visits. Joan will provide technical assistance, if necessary, to put the pictures in the format appropriate for projection. The atmosphere is quite informal, and there is no other obligation (well, unless you are one of the speakers!) than to come and enjoy the beautiful photos and interesting presentations.

Thursday, February 23

Ellen Peck – *Ethiopia: Land of Unusual Christian Festivals*

Paul Berman – *Italy: The Cinque Terre, Lucca, Assisi & Montecatini*

Thursday, March 22

Honoré David – *66 Locks & The Treasures Behind Them: The Danube & Main Rivers*

Naomi Yanis – *Bhutan: Where Gross National Happiness Replaces GNP*

Thursday, April 26

John & Gail Gaustad – *A New University in Ghana*

Marybeth Bridegam – *Another View of Patagonia: Penguins, Rheas & Armadillos*

Contact Marybeth or Joan for more information.

Science Roundtable to Pesticides, Citizen Science and Neutrinos

“Pesticides and Biopesticides: Fact and Fiction” will be the topic of the first Science Roundtable of the spring semester on Thursday, February 16. Julius Menn, a member of 5CLIR, will introduce the subject and lead a discussion about pesticides and biopesticides based on his long career in the field. In addition, to conducting toxicological and biochemical research on pesticides for chemical and biotech companies, Julius has worked for the US Department of Agriculture and served as a consultant to many international agencies and governments.

John Armstrong and Dottie Rosenthal, leaders of the Science Roundtable, have also scheduled a session on March 15, at which Lise Armstrong will make a presentation and answer questions about citizen science projects. These are research projects in which non-scientists assist in research of professional scientists. Recently, *Scientific American* instituted such a project in collaboration with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to encourage students and adults to participate in the study of whale songs. There are many other long-standing similar projects, including the annual Christmas bird counts, which have been conducted by volunteers for over 100 years.

On April 19, Leo Sartori will discuss the question of whether neutrinos can travel faster than light, as some recent experiments seem to indicate. This presentation may be very timely, as critical experiments to answer this question should be taking place around that time. John and Dottie have not yet announced the topic for the last session of the semester on May 17.

All Roundtable sessions will be held in the Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop, on Bridge Road from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Members of 5CLIR are welcome to attend even if they have not been to any previous sessions. Suggestions for background reading are emailed to those on the mailing list prior to each session. If you wish to be added to the email list, please contact Dottie.

The *5CLIR Reporter* is published by Five College Learning in Retirement, Room 9, Mason Hall, Smith College, MA 01063. www.5clir.org tel: 585-3756. email: 5clir@smith.edu
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THE LOTTERY SYSTEM

One of the things that I have tried to do as vice president is to learn more about how LIR works behind the scenes. Most recently I sat in on the lottery process to determine who takes what seminars. Over the years I have heard a few complaints about the lottery, since inevitably some people don't get every seminar they want. Part of the problem is that the process is somewhat mysterious and thus may seem arbitrary or unfair. So I thought I would try to describe the process for all the members who haven't been a part of it.

This spring there will be 25 seminars, of which 9 had more applicants than openings. Those 9 are the "lotteried" seminars. As everyone knows each member prioritizes the seminars they want. The attempt is to get everyone into as many high priority seminars as possible. Not easy to do, I found. Here is how it is done.

First moderators are placed in their first choice of seminars. That's one of the incentives that encourage people to be moderators who are vital to having a rich variety of seminars. Next new members are given their first choice. That's to encourage people to join LIR. The third group given preference is made up of those who didn't get their first choice in the previous semester.

Then it gets hard. A list of random numbers is obtained off the computer. Then those people who made a seminar their first choice, but who were not already in (moderator or new member or lotteried out the previous semester) were assigned the next number on the random number list. That "scrambles" the order on the sheet of applicants. Then the number of vacancies is filled, starting with the lowest random number. If there are still vacancies then those people who made that seminar their 2nd choice are randomized and assigned vacancies according to their random number, and so on until all vacancies are filled. Of course the lottery from one seminar may affect other seminars. Finally, the seminar rosters are checked to find any errors, such as someone being double-booked – being expected to turn up for two seminars at the same time- and to make sure that everyone gets the number of seminars they wanted!

This is a somewhat over-simplified description of the lottery process. There are always things that complicate matters. It isn't easy!! Nonetheless, I was impressed at how hard Callie and her helpers work to be fair. Though not everyone will get everything they want, it is important to know that every effort is made to make sure that over time everyone gets the same treatment.

--Jim Harvey

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5CLIR REPORTER

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