



November 2011 Volume XXIV, Number 9

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

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

November

Thur 3 - Special Program: Viewpoints with Hy Edelstein, 12:30–2:00 p.m., Highland Valley Elder Services, 320 Riverside Drive, Florence. **Contact:** Hy Edelstein

Thur 3 - Curriculum Committee meeting, 2:15–4:15 p.m., Five Colleges HQ, Amherst

Fri 4 - Special Program: Opera Prep with Peggy Bedell - Wagner: Siegfried, 1:30–2:30 p.m., The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop. **See page 10 and the Special Programs catalog for more details and listings.** **Contact:** Peggy Bedell

Fri 4, 11, 18, 25 - Special Program: French conversation, 1:30–3:30, Chez Le Roi Burger, 344 rue Roi, Northampton. **Contact:** Judith Pool

Fri 4, 11, 18 - Special Program: Conversational Italian, 1:30–3:30, Quigley Room, Newman Catholic Center, 472 North Pleasant Street, Amherst **Contact:** Dean Poli & Zina Tillona

Fri 4 - Moderators' Meeting, 10:00–12:00 noon, Amherst Woman's Club, 35 Triangle Street

Thur 10 - Council meeting, 2:15–4:15 p.m., Five Colleges HQ, 97 Spring St, Amherst.

Thur 17 - Special Program: Finding Family, 1:30–3:30 p.m., Room 308, Lilly Hall, Smith College. **Contact:** Bobbie Reitt

Thur 17 - Special Program: Arts Interest Group: A Look at the Art of English Gardens, by John Martin, 2:00–4:00 p.m., 517 Pine Street, Amherst **See page 7 for details.**

Thur 17 - Special Program: Science Roundtable: "Microbes Shake the Tree of Life and Alter our Understanding of Genome Evolution" by Professor Laura Katz, 2:00–3:30 p.m. The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop **Contact:** John Armstrong **See page for details.**

Fri 18 - Special Program: Encore presentation: Tyll Van Geel presents "Justice Scalia," 10:0 a.m.–12:00 noon, Hadley Senior Community Center, 46 Middle Street (Rte 47), Hadley. **Contact:** Larry Ambs **No need to register!**

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

CONTINUED

Fri 18 - Special Program: Opera Prep with Peggy Bedell - Glass: *Satyagraha*, 1:30–2:30 p.m., The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop. See page 10 and the Special Programs catalog for more details and listings. **Contact:** Peggy Bedell No need to register!

SUNDAY, 20 NOVEMBER
PREVIEW OF
SPRING SEMINARS!
Lewis–Sebring Lounge, Valentine Hall,
Amherst College
2:00–4:00 p.m.

WED 23

THURS 24 OFFICE CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING

FRI 25

December

Fri 2 - Special Program: Encore presentation: Sandy Muspratt presents “Haiti: images and cogitations on the burdens of Haiti, petty good works, and foreign aid,”
10:0 a.m.–12:00 noon, Hadley Senior Community Center, 46 Middle Street (Rte 47), Hadley.
Contact: Larry Ambs No need to register!

Fri 2 - Special Program: Opera Prep with Peggy Bedell - Handel: *Rodelinda*, 1:30–2:30 p.m., The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop. See page 10 and the Special Programs catalog for more details and listings. **Contact:** Peggy Bedell No need to register!

Chuck Gillies with Cherlynn, a middle school history and geography teacher in Springfield. Chuck (Project Coordinator), along with a few other 5CLIR members, attended the Springfield TAH session for Eric Foner the night before the symposium began.



Letter from the President, Joan Wofford



The Civil War Symposium was an absolutely smashing event. I can't imagine there was any LIR member present who was not immensely proud to be part of an organization that could put on such an impeccably organized conference in which each speaker surpassed the previous one in quality and eloquence. A longer description of the conference can be found on pages 5 and 6.

What I want to focus on in this message is the work that LIR is doing to seek out additional spaces in which to hold seminars. While the original intent was to hold seminars on the college campuses, we have grown so much and the colleges have cut back so much that we are now in the position of needing to locate suitable spaces in other places: churches, community buildings, retirement communities, and other venues. This is a task that we would like every member to undertake.

There is a task force working on the space issue, but we urge everyone to be actively engaged and critically examining the areas they know well for possible seminar locations. Should you find something, please let Sara Wright know. And if you really want to earn kudos, please find out as much as you can regarding:

- Address
- Size of the room
- Parking availability
- A contact person
- Cost, if any
- Handicap accessibility
- Audio-visual capabilities
- Other amenities or attractions.

Remember: we are a volunteer organization. If you have not moderated a seminar, then here is your chance to contribute to LIR by becoming a SPACE LOCATOR.

Joan

Summary of the October 13, 2011 Council Meeting

Ellen Peck, Secretary

Jim Harvey and Janet Price of the Tech Committee announced the donation of a slightly used laptop computer to LIR by Five Colleges, Inc.—our parent organization. This laptop can be used for seminar presentations by anyone who does not have a machine. The Council has thanked the Five Colleges for this useful donation.

Most of our meeting was devoted to the Space Task Force, headed by Sara Wright. Since LIR's membership is growing but the number of spaces available for our seminars is shrinking, we must look further afield for other suitable places to hold meetings and seminars. There are probably many available places around the Valley, but we need to know about them. The task force is now gathering information and evaluating suggestions for accessibility, parking, facilities, and of course cost. The space task force now consists of Sara Wright, Jono Hanke, Arnold Friedman, Joice Gare, Evelyn Cheskey, and Gordon Wyse.

We are beginning to have some “snowbird” seminars, which start several weeks later than usual, and run for six or seven weeks. Proposals were due by October 29.

The Council also discussed the problem of “seminar hopping.” Inevitably, people sometimes have to drop out of seminars for various reasons, but dropping a seminar after it has been going for two weeks or more can be a big headache for the moderator, particularly when a presentation schedule is affected. There is a long-standing rule that no one can sign up for a seminar if they know they will miss the first two weeks. Adding more snowbird seminars may help with this difficulty.

Thoughts on the Recent Civil War Symposium by the Project Director, Chuck Gillies



I have received numerous (embarrassingly many) positive comments about our recent 5CLIR Sesquicentennial Symposium: Civil War Causes and Consequences. These cover both content and organization. All are thanks to the hard and consistent work over at least thirteen months of our fourteen-person Steering Committee plus on-the-day help of at least 21 other LIR folks who served as hosts, scribes and doorkeepers. Of course, we all knew when Bobbie Reitt took charge of the organizational details that things would work smoothly. I think we all did LIR proud and my personal public thanks to everyone, including those of you who came.

Just one example: In a note I received from Charles Dew on Sunday morning he said, "I want to personally thank you for the best run event of this kind I have ever attended. You and your team did an absolutely superb job – every 'i' was dotted, every 't' was crossed."

We estimated that there were 400–450 people present Friday night for Eric Foner's Keynote and roughly 250 present Saturday, of whom most attended David Blight's keynote. The "evaluations" submitted almost unanimously agree with Dew's comment, with only relatively minor quibbles here and there and I don't think there were any about organization.

Comments about content have been almost equally favorable, though as we might expect, there is always room for argument. I did say in my introduction on Friday night that "we were arguing about history," so it is probably no surprise that we could not reach unanimity.

So, given that nothing is perfect, I ask myself, what – if anything – have we missed for a "fair and balanced view" of the Civil War era? In 1860–1865 our nation was sundered over slavery, as all our speakers attested. For 75–100 years a so-called "reconciliation" ignored the cause of the war and the victims of 200 years of American slavery (did you know that in 1913 on the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Gettysburg, to which none of the 200,000 Black soldiers who had fought in the Civil War had been invited, that Woodrow Wilson spoke without mentioning the matter of slavery – and went back to Washington to sign orders segregating the federal government?). Since the Civil Rights revolution this failure has been corrected in part, but new divisions appear – either because the old ones were not really healed or a new exclusion of a modern South seems to exist in the North with a "lumping" of all Southerners with the rednecks we all despise. This kind of cultural division may be impossible to bridge, but one keeps hoping.

In the summer of 2008 I first visited the new Civil War Center at Tredegar in Richmond, Virginia, a museum that claims to be the first in the nation to look at the Civil War from three perspectives – white Northerners, African Americans, and white Southerners. Granted this is an over simplification, but is this possible: to find a reconciliation that allows space for all Americans to respect their past?

The Tredegar Museum seems to be making that effort more effectively than we are able to do here in the North. When I learned that an African-American woman was Director of the museum in the heart of the Confederacy I realized that there in Richmond, VA an effort was underway to find a new kind of healing. This does not minimize my strong belief that slavery caused the Civil War, that it was an evil too long permitted to survive, and that secession and making war on “the last best hope of the earth” was also perhaps a more unforgiveable sin. (For you Civil War buffs, if you ever visit the Tredegar Museum take a [long] side trip to see the Monitor-Merrimac Museum [the Mariners Museum] in Newport News and see the actual Monitor!)

Another regret, and not a new one for 5CLIR, was the relatively poor turnout of people of color. One of my dreams is that Abraham Lincoln should serve as a unifying figure in this frequently divided nation. I want my grandchildren – who are interracial (white mother, South Asian father) – to respect and admire him as generations have before. Lincoln has come to bridge somewhat the North/South divide referred to above, at least better than secessionist and slaveholder Robert E. Lee, who often used to be paired with Lincoln as we “reconciled” after the war. Lincoln, after the war, was a hero to the former enslaved, but this connection has slipped in recent years. Eric Foner addressed many of the reasons why Lincoln has lost his iconic status in the Black community. The hope is that his high quality historical analysis, placing Lincoln in context, might begin to reverse this slippage. I hope so.

Finally, and I have said this before, my thanks to Five College Learning in Retirement for allowing me to nurture this interest of mine in my retirement years and to share something of value with all of you.

– Chuck Gillies

(pictures on pages 13–15)

Editor's note: This symposium would not have been possible without the hard work of the 5CLIR Steering Committee: Larry Ambs, Peg Bedell, Evelyn Chesky, Hy Edelstein, Mary Franks, Carol Jolly, Charlie Klem, Howard Parad, Bobbie Reitt, Tyll van Geel, Norm Winston, and Sara Wright. In addition, 5CLIR President Joan Wofford attended a number of the later meetings. Chuck Gillies was the Project Director; Robert Romer the Assistant Project Director. Well done all!

Arts Interest Group

A look at the Art of English Gardens

Presenter: John Martin

Thursday, November 17, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Our original program was to have been at the Mead Museum of Art, Amherst College. Sadly, our scheduled speaker cancelled at very short notice; so short was the notice that we were unable to secure a public room that was suitably light-tight in which to show slides. Instead, we will hold this program at the Martin home, at 517 Pine Street, Amherst.

John has professional registrations in architecture and landscape architecture. He studied at Brighton and London, Harvard and Cornell Universities. He taught design, historic preservation and environmental history for 34 years at the University of Massachusetts. He has traveled extensively in Britain and throughout Europe, gathering a large library of landscape and architectural images.

Directions: Make your way up Pine Street to the Cushman General Store on the Cushman Common in North Amherst. There is plenty of parking opposite the store alongside the railway track. Walk across the track and two minutes up the slight rise; we are the second house on the right. If in doubt, call us.

Make sure to register in advance for this event by email. (Members who do not have email may ring the Martins.) Space is limited to 12 people.

Reservations will be taken on a first-come basis.

If you are

...a current moderator...

...a past moderator...

...someone who enjoys taking seminars

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE...

MODERATORS' MEETING

**Friday, November 4,
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

**The Amherst Woman's Club
35 Triangle Street
Amherst, MA**

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 10 a.m. | Socializing and refreshments |
| 10:15 a.m. | Experienced moderators Wil Hastings and Jim Harvey will speak for about 5 – 10 minutes each, followed by questions and answers |
| 11:00 a.m. | Small discussion groups divided by areas of interest – literature&poetry/history/science/arts |
| 11:30 a.m. | Summary of each group's topic and highlights of the discussion |

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

5CLIR/ MET Live in HD 2011-2012 Series
The Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop, 1:30 to 2:30 (prep)
Cinemark, Hadley (opera live)

<u>PREP DATE</u>	<u>COMPOSER: OPERA</u>	<u>LIVE DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>
November 4	Wagner: SIEGFRIED	November 5	12:00
November 18	Glass: SATYAGRAHA	November 19	12:55
December 2	Handel: RODELINDA	December 3	12:30
December 9	Gounod: FAUST	December 10	12:55

For the full schedule of opera preps, live opera dates and times, and encore dates and times, see the Special Programs catalog for Fall 2011 - included in your packet at the last preview or available on our website www.5clir.org.

Encore Special Programs

November 18, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

Hadley Senior Community Center, 46 Middle Street (Rte 47)

Justice Scalia:
Leader of a Constitutional Counter-Reformation
Tyll Van Geel

Justice Scalia has been both the most articulate and most visible leader of a conservative counter-reformation in the interpretation of the Constitution. While some of his interpretations have made the headlines, many have not been widely reported on. Yet it is only when one comprehends the full sweep of his views that one grasps the profound transformation posed by the conservative effort to return to the "original understanding" of the Constitution.

On December 2nd, Sandy Muspratt brings us HAITI
10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
Hadley Senior Community Center, 46 Middle Street (Rte 47)

Great Decisions Discussion Series for 2012

The Great Decisions Committee has collected and analyzed the results of the survey that many of you so thoughtfully filled out and we're pleased to announce the topics for next year's program based on your strong responses. Out of the eight topics provided by the Foreign Policy Association, we have chosen the following, which we think all speak to the compelling, current interests of the United States, and indeed, the world.

Middle East Realignment
Energy Geopolitics
Mexico
Cybersecurity
State of the Oceans

We are now at work recruiting our speakers and matching them with dates in March, April, and May. We will send out the program as soon as we've completed this work.

5CLIR Laptop for Presentations

Thanks to the generosity of Five Colleges Inc., Learning in Retirement now has a small laptop that can be used for PowerPoint presentations by members who have a desktop computer but no laptop. Please contact Jim Perot (jperot@yahoo.com) if you wish to reserve it for use.

The Science Roundtable Report on October 20 Meeting Radiation Sources in Everyday Life

The topic of the October Science Roundtable was "Radiation Sources in Everyday Life." We had short, ten-minute presentations by members on the following sources: microwaves, ultraviolet sunlight, X-rays, CAT scans, lightning, radon, nuclear particles, cosmic rays, and cell phones. Each presentation was followed by a short, but vigorous discussion.

The November Roundtable will feature a presentation by Prof. Laura Katz of the Department of Biological Sciences at Smith College. Her topic will be "Microbes shake the tree of life and alter our understanding of genome evolution."

Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

Over the years I have been to many academic and professional symposia and conferences. I don't think that I have ever been to one as well organized, as full of first-rate speakers, and as exciting as our own 5CLIR Civil War Symposium. I know that Chuck Gillies and his committee will be showered with praise, but I really want to voice my thanks and my admiration for what Chuck has done.

Thank you for a great learning experience and a most interesting conference.

Coincidentally, I just came from a Pioneer Valley Symphony concert themed "Peace and War," which in many respects fitted right into our symposium. Too bad that there were only a few 5CLIR members.

Cheers to Chuck.

---Arnold Friedmann

A Learning in Retirement Arts and Humanities Roundtable?

I proposed such an enterprise at Council because the Science Roundtable has been a great success but lacks a logical counterpart.

There are the Arts (music, architecture, painting, dance, theater, sculpture, film) and the Humanities (philosophy, literature, history, ancient and modern languages, law, religion). We come across many of these in school or college. Some of us continue to work with them; many encounter them as leisure activities.

My expectation is that some of us might like to have a more formal engagement with one or more of the above, or even with all of them, as an experience that would be both pleasurable and useful (*dulce et utile* -Horace, Roman poet).

I should be quite willing to explore the idea with a couple of others who might be interested. I'm going to be away in March and won't be taking any seminars next semester, so there would be plenty of time for exploration, with a view to something informal over the summer or something formal next fall.

I'd be glad to hear from anyone interested being one of an initial committee.

Michael Wolff

Seminar Photographs

Pete Reitt and Joan Wofford

Swing and Sway with Pete Reitt and his seminar participants. Sheila Klem gives her presentation.



Mary Franks and Sofie Ellsberg accompanied their Edith Wharton seminar to The Mount.



Civil War Sesquicentennial Photographs

courtesy of Pete Reitt







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