

# B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning  
Fall 2000 • Volume 9 • Number 1

## Winter 2001 Semester in the Works

The Curriculum Committee is putting together exciting and stimulating courses for the winter semester. Courses begin on January 8 through February 17 at the Quality Inn on Route 7 in Lenox. The following is a preview to whet your appetite:

### MOCK TRIALS • Judge Rudolph Sacco

Participate in the proceedings of a court in session.

### MUSIC AND THE UNCONSCIOUS • Barbara Bliss

Learn how music affects you through listening and reacting.

### JAZZ: Its Sounds, Evolution and Artists • Karl Easton

Explore jazz—its beginnings, development, and present status.

### HUMANITY: The Next Generation • Marsha Altschuler

Focus on recent progress in human genetics, reproductive, and developmental technologies.

### BRUSH UP ON YOUR SHAKESPEARE • Dot Rowe, Facilitator

Read Shakespeare aloud in this round-table experience with other participants.

### POETRY OF ROBERT FROST • Diane Hitter

Enhance your knowledge of Robert Frost—homespun farmer, cerebral loner, the epitome of Yankee grit and grace.

### TODAY'S HEADLINES • James Cotter, Moderator

Voice your opinion about current events.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY • Phil Knowles, Moderator

Explore current prospects for solar, hydro, wind, and photo-voltaic alternatives to imported oil.

### RICHARD WAGNER • Lou Steigler

Listen to and discuss parts of the four-opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*.



Judge Sacco



Dot Rowe

## Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem

B.I.L.L.'s **Book Discussion Group** is ready for the fall semester. Books have been selected, discussion leaders are in place, and dates have been set.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 20 | Group reading of a <b>chilling</b> script led by Rosanne Berkowitz        |
| October 25   | <b>The James Joyce Murder</b> by Amanda Cross (Phyllis Jaffe, leader)     |
| November 15  | <b>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</b> by Charles Dickens (Paul Stein, leader) |
| December 20  | <b>The Nine Tailors</b> by Dorothy Sayers (Joan Olshansky, leader)        |
| January 17   | <b>Trent's Last Case</b> by E. C. Bentley (Carole Owens, leader)          |
| February 21  | <b>Stick</b> by Elmore Leonard (Carol Sabot, leader)                      |

A flyer was sent to you with specifics about time and costs. If you have questions, call Carol Sabot at (413) 447-8216 or e-mail at [ruggele@berkshire.net](mailto:ruggele@berkshire.net).

## WAMC Media Project

On Friday, December 8, before an audience of B.I.L.L. members, Alan Chartock will moderate the WAMC Media Project, a roundtable discussion with guests from radio, TV, and the press at the Country Club of Pittsfield.

The audience will be invited to ask questions at the conclusion of the broadcast. Brunch will follow the discussion.

Watch your mail for the flyer.

## Very Special Events Hold These Dates

- **Hartford, Connecticut – October 31**  
Visit the home of Mark Twain (with an optional visit to the home of Harriet Beecher Stowe). View Monet, Renoir, and the Impressionists at Argenteuil at the Wadsworth Atheneum.
- **New Year's Brunch at the Country Club of Pittsfield – January 7, 2001**

## And There's More...

The **Winter Film Club** will again present a series of classic films starting in December and ending in March.

Each film for the series includes an introduction followed by viewing and a discussion led by a moderator.

Information with dates, time, and location will be mailed to you.

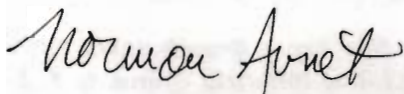
## President's Message

B.I.L.L.'s membership is over 835. As B.I.L.L. gets larger, questions arise. Where should we hold popular lectures which attract a large audience? What courses should be offered to appeal to our broad and varied membership? Should we consider developing "How to" courses? What happens when the buses for special events fill up so fast that we can't accommodate all the members who want to attend? Is this large membership making it difficult to develop interpersonal relationships? These are some of the questions the Board is addressing.

Art Sherman, first vice-president, has outlined the present status and infrastructure issues, and the Executive Committee of B.I.L.L. is meeting to discuss how to present this to the membership for comments, recommendations, and action to be taken over the next five years.

Many of you in the general membership have opinions about B.I.L.L. Please make your thoughts known to me, to the Executive Committee, and to the members of the Board.

B.I.L.L. wants to be your channel for education and socialization. Remember it's YOUR organization. Let us hear from you.



## Keep Us Posted

Are you leaving the Berkshires for the winter? The Postmaster has informed us that bulk mail, which B.I.L.L. uses for its Berkshire County mailings, is not forwarded but **discarded**. Let the office know your temporary forwarding address (with dates) whenever you are away from Berkshire County so that we can send mail directly to you. Otherwise, you will not receive your catalog, issues of B.I.L.L.BOARD, or Special Events announcements. Call Sharon Mack at 499-4660 Extension 456 and give her the information.

## New President of Williams College



NICHOLAS WHITMAN

On July 1, Morton Owen Schapiro became the 16th president of Williams College. Dr. Schapiro began his career at Williams in 1980 as an Assistant Professor of Economics. He became an Associate Professor in 1987, full Professor in 1990, and served for three years as Assistant Provost. Since 1991 he was at the University of Southern California where he was Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, and Vice President for Planning.

Dr. Schapiro is considered one of the nation's leading authorities on the economics of higher education, with particular expertise in the area of college financing and affordability as well as trends in educational costs and student aid. He has written numerous articles and books and has earned many academic awards.

Dr. Schapiro is married and has three children. B.I.L.L. is looking forward to working with Dr. Schapiro and to continuing the fine relationship we have had in the past with Williams College.

## Hail Britannia!

B.I.L.L. members enjoyed a culturally rich day in New Haven, Connecticut, on May 23. The first stop was the Yale Center for British Art, a museum designed by American architect Louis Kahn, containing works by leading British artists from the 16th century to the present. To enhance their appreciation, B.I.L.L. members had heard a talk at BCC by Malcolm Warner, Senior Curator of the Yale Center, two weeks prior to the trip. At the Center itself, four docents highlighted memorable works by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Constable, Turner, and others. We saw fine examples of landscapes and portraits.

After a relaxing lunch at a nearby restaurant, participants toured a special exhibit, "The Art of Bloomsbury," featuring paintings by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Roger Fry, along with original manuscripts and first editions by Bloomsbury writers such as Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and E.M. Forster. The next day at BCC with Phyllis Jaffe's talk, the Bloomsbury Group came even more fully alive—a fitting coda to the trip.

An optional and highly worthwhile stop was the Yale University Art Gallery. Their superb collection includes Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and Asian art, as well as especially impressive masterpieces of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly works by Van Gogh, Monet, Manet, Picasso, and Pollack.

— Lenore Rubin

## NO PARKING!!!

The parking area at BCC, which is located on the right as you enter the campus, is **not** for B.I.L.L. use. You will be ticketed if you park there.

## B.I.L.L.BOARD

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## Art in the Mohawk River

On Tuesday, June 20, our bus picked us up, and took us to Utica and the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. Maureen Hickey gave us an introduction to the museum collection.

Museum director, Paul Schweizer, greeted us on our arrival. After a gallery talk by the curator of the American 20th Century Watercolors exhibit, we lunched in the Fountain Elms Café. After lunch, some of us toured the Fountain Elms, once home to the Proctor and Munson families and now a teaching facility for Pratt Institute, where we viewed the Proctor family's collection of thimbles and watches; others went on an escorted tour through the museum.

Next, on the bus to Canajoharie, we viewed a video on Winslow Homer. At Canajoharie, the home of the Beechnut Corporation, we visited the Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery. Their enthusiastic curator, Jim Crawford, spoke to us about their 19th and 20th century collection of important pieces from the Beechnut Foods collection. We viewed Winslow Homer watercolors that were brought out especially for B.I.L.L.

What a glorious day!

— Reported by Carol Sabot

## Getting to Know You

### ALEXANDRA WARSHAW

The phenomenal growth of B.I.L.L. is the result of many people investing a great deal of their time and talents to the development and nurturing of exceptional educational and social activities. Alexandra is one of those people who works diligently, creatively, and effectively to foster these ends.

Alexandra is a remarkable individual. For the past 21 years at Berkshire Community College, she has forged a plethora of impressive and wonderful courses and workshops. In her role as Director of LifeLong Learning, she serves as liaison between BCC and B.I.L.L. She is a problem solver. She is a clarifier. The energy and intense involvement she brings fosters confidence in and reliance on her ideas and suggestions. When Alexandra speaks, people listen!



Prior to her position at BBC, she functioned as Ombudsman at Temple University where, again, she worked at solving problems among faculty, staff, and student body. Developing community programs and seeing them in effective action satisfies a deep need in her to create. Witness the creation of her present BCC course "A Day with Noted Chore-

ographer Merce Cunningham" co-sponsored with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and MASS MoCA.

Alexandra is a third generation native Californian. Interestingly, her great grandfather was a Wells Fargo agent. With a twinkle in her eyes, she remarked that she is the product of a "frontier family."

Clearly B.I.L.L., BCC, and the entire Berkshire community are enriched by her presence.

— Karl Easton

## A Wonderful World of Ideas

Most people do not have an accurate picture of what mathematics truly is. For many, mathematics is the torture of tests, homework, problems, problems, problems. The very word "problems" suggests unpleasantness and anxiety. But mathematics is not "problems." Mathematics is a network of intriguing ideas. It is a living, breathing, changing organism with many facets to its personality. Discovering those facets is both a creative and even artistic process.

Mathematics is also powerful. Mathematics requires penetrating techniques of thought that we can all use to analyze situations, and sharpen the way we look at our world. These

strategies have their greatest value to us in dealing with real life decisions that are completely outside of mathematics. These *life lessons*, inspired by mathematical thinking, empower us to better grapple with and conquer the problems and issues that we all face in our lives from love to business, from art to politics. If you can conquer infinity and the fourth dimension, then what can't you do?

Part of the power of mathematics lies in its inexorable quest for elegance, symmetry, order, and grace. Seeking pattern, order, and understanding is a transforming concept that mathematics can help us develop. Mathematical thought is human thought. The realm

of mathematics contains some of the greatest ideas of humankind — ideas comparable to the works of Shakespeare, Plato, and Michelangelo. These mathematical ideas helped shape history, and can add texture, beauty, and wonder to our lives.

This article was written by Edward Burger, a professor of mathematics at Williams College. He is known for making mathematics come to life for general audiences through his trademark exuberance and humor. This fall semester Professor Burger, is a B.I.L.L. lecturer. He is the author of the entertaining and enlightening book, *The Heart of Mathematics: An Invitation to Effective Thinking*.

## Croquet at The Lenox Croquet Club ■ May 20



Michael Feltzer, Event Leader



## Faculty Appreciation Dinner ■ May 24 Country Club of Pittsfield



Ileen Cohen, Chair



## A Trip Through New York History

What Ed and I jokingly referred to as “scenic Schenectady” when our son attended Union College proved to be that and more. On June 10, over 100 B.I.L.L. members were greeted at the Schenectady Historical Society by our guides. Jo (in period dress) gave us a short talk on the city and its history; then she and Chris guided us through the society’s period house, which is filled with interesting art and artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Then Wayne led us through the historic Stockade district, its streets lined with beautifully maintained and restored homes. The area is a gem hidden away in an industrial town.

Our last stop in the Stockade district was the Van Dyke Tavern, where we enjoyed a buffet lunch. Some of us toured the Van Dyke’s glass-enclosed microbrewery and sampled suds.

The Broadway musical, “Ragtime” at Proctor’s was the main event of the

day. What a marvelous production — the orchestra, sets, costumes, voices, and music created an all-American epic of the ragtime era. We laughed and cried and gave the show a standing ovation.

Kudos to Bobbie Liebert for the brownies we enjoyed on the trip home. It was a day filled with “those events that illuminate our times” and we were there.

— Ruth Levin

## Trip Tips for the Traveler

Readers of B.I.L.L.BOARD are on the move and traveling with great frequency! Comfort while traveling can help to smooth the way for a relaxed, stress-free experience. After a two-month trip to Australia and New Zealand, I feel qualified to give advice. Consider the following suggestions when preparing for your next adventure away from home:

- ✓ Pack wash and wear clothes that can dry hanging in the shower overnight or during a two-night stay. Buy some nylon shorts or sport pants with the stripe down the sides (yes, the ones your grandchildren wear). They're also very slenderizing.
- ✓ One dress outfit is all you need. Ladies can take some scarfs to add a new look. Take a minimum of jewelry, and consider costume jewelry. Carry your valuables in your daily never-without-it bag.
- ✓ Pack an extra soft piece of luggage. You will surely acquire new things as you go along—gifts for those at home and items you MUST have. If you are on an extended trip and take short detours, returning to your departure point, pack a few things in a small carrier and check the rest of your luggage at the hotel.
- ✓ Try to return items to where they were originally. If your daily pills were in the front zippered compartment, putting them back there will simplify your life. Also, carry a small container to put your change or your jewelry in this place every night. No hunting around in the morning.
- ✓ Always carry some packaged goodies such as granola bars, raisins, and nuts, and a bottle of water. If you are driving in unfamiliar territory, you never know when the next acceptable eating place will appear.
- ✓ If breakfast is not included with your accommodations, pick up bananas and yogurt, or cheese and crackers, or instant oatmeal packets, and with the coffee that is usually in every room, you can have a pleasant relaxed breakfast while you watch the news. It's a fun experience to visit a supermarket in a new locale.
- ✓ After many days on the road, you might notice that your clothes are shrinking in your suitcase. Try ordering a salad at dinner and an appetizer when your companions have their main course. Of course, it goes without saying that desserts are a no-no (a taste doesn't count).
- ✓ If you are away for an extended time, you can keep in frequent contact with your loved ones at home through e-mail. Most hotels have a business center where you can use a computer, or can direct you to a cyber cafe where you can send and receive messages for a small charge. You will be surprised at how accessible they are in even the smallest towns.
- ✓ For a mutual feeling of security, leave a copy of your itinerary with key people at home. Include essential information such as names of hotels, phone numbers, as well as your travel agent's name and phone number.
- ✓ When the trip of a lifetime is over, the memories are relived each time you look through your photo album. Take along the plastic inserts, not the hard cover, and develop film as you travel. There are many one-day or one-hour service photo shops throughout the world. It's fun to enjoy the photos while the sights are fresh in your mind, cull through and discard the many poor shots, cut labels from brochures and then throw them away, and arrange your albums as you travel. When you get home, you can bore your friends and family immediately.

— Marilyn Flaum

## Off and Running to Saratoga!

On July 13, for the fourth year, B.I.L.L. members (110 of us) went to Saratoga Performing Arts Center to see the New York City Ballet. We lucked out with the gorgeous weather — a particular blessing since the venue for the Ballet is outdoors.

This year we visited the National Dance Museum (also in Saratoga) to learn the history of the New York City Ballet and to view some of their exquisite costumes. A highlight of the Museum visit was observing classes given by principal dancers of the company. Exhausted just watching the high energy expended, we were then ready for refueling at the Hall of Springs — an elegant dining facility that is part of the original complex.



The varied ballet program, which included Donizetti Variations, Prism, Valse Triste, and Western Symphony, left us breathless. It was danced with the remarkable clarity of line, extreme endurance, beautiful musicality, and outstanding choreography that marks this great dance company.

Happy faces boarded the buses for the trip back to Pittsfield. This event was so well received!

— Arline Gilbert

## Editor's Comments

Your input is very important to us. Send comments, articles of educational interest or travel experience to:

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## The Melvilles Abroad

In November 1865, Allan Melville, a New York attorney and the younger brother of Herman Melville, embarked on an extensive tour of Europe and the Middle East with his second wife, Jane. The two brothers exchanged (sold) properties in 1863. Allan took possession of Arrowhead as his country residence, a summer home that would remain in his family until 1927, and Herman moved his family from Pittsfield to Allan's 26th Street house in New York.

Leaving his four young daughters (ages 9-16) in the care of family members, Allan and Jane wrote accounts of their travels to their children until they returned in early July of 1866. These letters, saved by the family, were among the family papers discovered by author Paul Metcalf (Herman Melville's great-grandson) when he and his wife were in the process of moving in 1998.



COURTESY OF THE BERKSHIRE ATHENAEUM

The following passages are excerpted from these letters, providing a glimpse of 19th century travel and customs.

On January 25, 1866, Jane Melville wrote:

*I write you from the top of Mount Vesuvius. Papa and I had come up — and walked up too. . . . I am the **only** lady who **walked up all the way** today. . . . In descending the Mount, there were about twenty persons on horses and donkeys, and as they go one after the other it made quite a long string of people, horses and donkeys, winding down this circuitous road. It was quite a handsome sight . . . . My feet sank in the sand about a foot deep, perhaps more, at every step. I had to lean on two men. . . . I think we were only twenty-five minutes descending and every step was forced to be quick as it was difficult to stop. . . . My shoes were destroyed. . . . I took off my crinoline . . . at the foot of the mount. . . . Some of the*

*ladies had worn their crinolines . . . think of riding on a donkey or a pony with a crinoline and then going up and down such a steep and high mount.*

Allan wrote from Jerusalem on March 23:

*In Jaffa I was taken ill of fever and kept a week, part of the time in the Latin Convent and part of the time in the house of a nice German*

*family. . . . On Monday the nineteenth we left the house of our kind friends. . . . On the 20th in the afternoon we went up the Mount of Olives [Jane sent the children leaves from the trees on the Mount]. . . and I saw the sunset over the "Beautiful City" as it is called. On our return however we found the gates of the city closed against us. We tried first the Gate of St. Stephen and second the Damascus Gate . . . we had our dragoman with us but still there was danger of our being carried off by some of the prowling Arabs and held for ransom. . . . We arrived at our hotel to a late dinner.*

Allan Melville returned to his law practice in New York, and died shortly before his 49th birthday in February of 1872. Of his four daughters, only Milie married. She and her husband, William B. Morewood had eight children, and the family continued to summer at Arrowhead, until the property was sold in 1927.

Gifts of family portraits, furniture, papers, and memorabilia from Herman and Allan Melville's grandchildren form the core of the collection in the Herman Melville Memorial Room at the Berkshire Athenaeum. The letters found by Paul and Nancy Metcalf are the latest additions to this collection.

— Ruth Degenhardt

B.I.L.L.

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*" . . . Education is a Lifetime Experience."*

B.I.L.L. adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination towards its members and students and will admit all those who apply regardless of race, religion, color or national origin.