

BILLBOARD

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NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKSHIRE INSTITUTE FOR LIFETIME LEARNING

Fall 2001 Semester at a Glance

The Curriculum Committee has put together a stimulating variety of courses and lecturers for the fall 2001 semester. Twenty courses will be offered at several locations: BCC Pittsfield Campus, BCC Great Barrington Campus, Canyon Ranch in Lenox, the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Simon's Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington, and the Faculty House at Williams College.

You have already received the catalog and registration information. Courses start September 10 and run through October 31. Refer to the catalog for exact times and dates. The courses and locations are:

MONDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

Today's Headlines: News of the Week – J.W. Cotter

Medical Journal Review:

A Discussion Group – Drs. S. Wax and R. McInerney

Issues for the 21st Century –

J.D. Gorham, R. Gorham, S. Keator, E. Lahey, P. Jaffe, E. Smith

MONDAYS (Simon's Rock College)

The Process of Interior Design – W. Caligari

Exploring the Art of Collecting – M.J. Hickey, Moderator

TUESDAYS (Faculty House, Williams College)

The Autobiography of the Theatre – J.A. Rosenberg

Health, Illness and the Human Psyche – E. Friedman, M. Sandstrom, K. Savitsky

TUESDAYS (Simon's Rock College)

Remembering Lenny – S. Wainrib

WEDNESDAYS (Williams College)

Virtual Archaeology – D.H. Sanders

WEDNESDAYS (Clark Art Institute)

Economics – H. Bruton

Leadership Studies – S. Dunn, G. Goethals, G. Kennedy, C. Reeves, B. Viniar

WEDNESDAYS (Canyon Ranch, Lenox)

Optimum Aging –

E. Lawlor, K. Huffman, R. Goodnoff, K. Swift, C. Pratt

THURSDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

Beowulf – P. Jaffe

Also-Rans – M. Sussman

Nature of Prejudice – R.N. Kerbel

Great Books/Great Films – E. Vines, Moderator (Evening Course)

FRIDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

America Becomes a World Power – P. Flaum

Thomas Mann: An Introduction – P. Stein

A Tanglewood Tale – J. Glantz, S. Glantz, M. Hammond, D. McCleary

FRIDAYS (BCC South Campus, Great Barrington)

Your Short Stories – J. Michelman, Moderator



J.W. Cotter, Moderator



J. Michelman, Moderator



Eileen Lawlor, Lecturer

Special Events in the Works!

Watch your mail for flyers for exact dates and details.

September 16: *They All Laughed* – Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam, Connecticut

October 12–14: Asian Studies Conference – Williams College

October 20: *Mama Mia* – Colonial Theater, Boston

January 6, 2002: New Year's Brunch Country Club of Pittsfield

President's Message

Thanks to the efforts of so many of you, we have gotten off to a fast start. The fall and winter semesters are very rich indeed, and the special events calendar is full of wonderful opportunities for the membership. The semesters and events for 2002 are being developed. The new format for *B.I.L.L.BOARD* is both attractive and in keeping with the quality image we seek to project.

Our 920 plus members are a diversified group with broad interests and capabilities, and our programs and activities need to expand to accommodate them. Major efforts are underway to offer *B.I.L.L.* members increased opportunities for social interaction as well as new educational, special events, and related travel programs. We are also seeking to assist our sponsor schools, BCC and Williams College, by supporting their special programs.

We are exploring the development of a mentoring program in conjunction with BCC and, as we learn from it, perhaps we can consider extending it beyond BCC. The power to do this is clearly within *B.I.L.L.*; whether the will to do this exists remains to be seen. It is a challenge I hope to put before you.

The results of these efforts are and will continue to be evident in the announcements coming from the various committees working so diligently to bring their programs to fruition. These programs and activities need your support, both now, when they are being formulated, and later, when they are announced.

There is something very exciting going on right now in *B.I.L.L.*, and there never was a better time to become involved. Jump in — the water is fine!



Millbrook Vineyards and Winery Trip



This time Arline Breskin really outdid herself! The occasion was a trip to Millbrook Vineyards and Winery in Millbrook, New York, on a lovely day in late May.

The Millbrook vintners have devised unique ways to cultivate grapes in the harsh winter climate of the Hudson River Valley. The winery, founded in 1981, utilizes buildings that were formerly dairy barns.

Our group of 32 began with a tour of the winery's fermentation rooms where grapes are aged in oak barrels for 6 to 9 months for white wines and 12 to 14 months for red wines. We tasted two chardonnays and one rosé wine.

Then came a truly sumptuous lunch prepared by Arline and several helpers and set in a beautiful landscape featuring the vineyard's 130 acres — 50 of which are devoted to the vines. Fresh flower arrangements complemented a meal that included chicken liver pate, baked ham, wild rice salad, carrots with shallots and walnuts, and finally, brownies, assorted cookies, and lemon mousse. Samplings of three red wines accompanied the picnic.

The Special Event trip to Millbrook Vineyards and Winery was an outgrowth of a five-class course entitled *All About Wine* offered during the spring 2001 semester. We learned a great deal about the winemaker's complex art of vinification on this trip.

— Lenore Rubin

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) 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.

WAMC Media Project

In December, 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. This will be the fourth year for this popular event.

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.

B.I.L.L.BOARD

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Long-Range Planning Effort

B.I.L.L. is functioning very well, and this is an excellent time to look seriously at long-range goals. To progress successfully, we need to study the continued expansion of membership, curriculum and special events, tax-exempt corporate status, growing infrastructure needs, issues relative to facilities and finances, and our relationship with sponsors and other organizations in the community.

Several committees are reviewing these issues and the ways in which other large ILRs (Institutes for Learning in Retirement) have dealt with them. Reports will be prepared by the committees. When they are compiled and accepted by the Board of Directors, a summary of the recommendations will be forwarded to the membership.

— Art Sherman

THE B.I.L.L. OFFICE HAS MOVED

On July 28 the B.I.L.L. office was moved to new permanent quarters. It is located on the second floor of the Field Administration Building in the Academic Advising offices. The room numbers are F233 and F234.

Getting To Know You

PAUL FLAUM

All intelligent individuals are not necessarily good teachers. People attending Paul's lectures, however, are quickly aware of both his intellect and his ability to teach such subjects as mythology, the history of the 20th century, and the history of presidential elections. This fall he will teach *America Becomes A World Power*.

Paul loves to teach; it has been his passion ever since he can remember. Indeed, he originally became attracted to B.I.L.L. because it afforded the opportunity to teach courses in subjects of great interest to him. Once our membership became aware of Paul's ability to convey subject matter in a creative, fascinating, and instructive fashion, his courses have been oversubscribed. His teaching effectiveness is enhanced by his pleasant manner.

Entering Columbia University as a pre-law student, Paul studied the classics, the humanities and, in particular, the historical roots of myths. He then notified his family that becoming a lawyer no longer interested him. His father, who had introduced him to



literature and classical music when Paul was young, supported his decision to become a history teacher. Paul's father was, and still is, an inspiration to him.

Paul was involved in public education for 34 years. Originally he taught high school history. After holding positions on several levels, he became

Superintendent of Schools for the Smithtown School District.

After he retired in 1992, he and his wife Marilyn, also a retired educator, became full-time residents of the Berkshires. They met in high school, have been married for 44 years, and have five grandchildren whom they see often. Both Paul and Marilyn are active in B.I.L.L. and volunteer at the Norman Rockwell Museum and at Tanglewood.

Paul, B.I.L.L.'s current first vice president, loves to travel. He and Marilyn have visited numerous European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and most recently China; their next trip is to Eastern Europe and Italy.

— Karl Easton

Curriculum Committee Update

Want to do something creative, stimulating, exciting, interesting, educational and oh yes, valuable? Join the Curriculum Committee!

Who are we and what do we do?

Approximately 65 Curriculum Committee volunteers work together in 4 academic subcommittees: Social Sciences, Arts, Literature, and the Sciences. The chairs are Phil Kaminstein, Maureen Hickey, Paul Stein and Elske Smith. They share thoughts and concepts about courses and educational programs that would be of interest to B.I.L.L. members. They contact potential lecturers and meet with them to develop courses

and complementary special events.

Frequently, the subcommittees work 12 to 18 months in advance, generally developing over 50 courses through the spring, fall, and winter semesters. Stand-alone lectures, one-day symposia of special interest, and the exploration of innovative educational experiences are included in the planning.

While the semesters are being finalized, the intensive work of catalog preparation under the direction of Ilse Browner and class scheduling under the direction of Dorothy Rowe gets started. If you like to write creatively (or do the Sunday *New York Times* crossword puzzle), then the catalog or class

scheduling are for you.

Fran Dichter, Class Manager Chair, is in charge of the logistics, the audio-visual equipment, and the general well being of our instructors. If you are interested in working on this very important aspect of the professional presentation of our programs, you are welcome.

Meet a vital group of people; make new friends and stimulate your thought processes. We welcome new ideas and concepts, so please join us. For more information call Mona Sherman, Curriculum Committee Chair at (413) 274-6578.

Faculty Appreciation Dinner

Country Club of Pittsfield
May 24, 2001



Ileen Cohen, Chair

Poetry as a Social Activity

Thinking of poetry as a social activity would strike most of us as strange. We are more accustomed to thinking of the poet as a brooding loner with only his or her feelings and the dictionary for company.

As for reading poetry, most of us consider it a solitary pastime. We picture a reader curled up in a corner of the sofa by the fire, a glass of wine at hand, and monks chanting plain-song on the stereo. Or we may go so far as to picture lovers in a canoe drawn up to the bank of a secluded cove of the Housatonic reading Browning or Eliot aloud to each other, a relationship that can survive that can survive anything.

Last spring B.I.L.L. offered a course which sampled five different American poets: William Stafford, Richard Hugo, William Bronk, Amy Clampitt, and Stephen Sandy. It was that

course which brought home to me that poetry is ideally a social rather than a solitary activity.

When a poem is read by a group, it "happens"—it doesn't sit there static on the page. It sets up a circuit through which juice flows in a rather remarkable way.

In this course, each poem was read through aloud without comment two or three times so that each person, without making up his or her mind about anything in it, became acquainted with what the poem offered to the mind and the imagination's eye. Participants began to appreciate the subtlety, complexity, and precision of the poems.

Then people began to share what they noticed about the poem, what charmed them or set off their chimes of recognition or recollection. Sometimes people saw the same details in

different ways, and the ensuing discussion often brought what had been fuzzy into sharper focus and the surprise of suddenly revealed clarity. Often the class found that what was initially perplexing or difficult turned out to be the key to illumination and full understanding.

After twenty minutes or so of discussion, the poem was read aloud once more — and how different it appeared from the first reading! When the group read six or eight poems by the same writer, a distinct personality was revealed. And those with whom we shared the reading became friends.

So, yes, reading poetry is a social activity, one that enlarges and deepens our experience of life.

— Richard Nunley

Richard Nunley, a retired Professor of English at BCC, is a regular contributor to *The Berkshire Eagle*, and a lecturer in poetry for B.I.L.L.

American Aristocracy on the Hudson River

Early in the morning on May 15, 2001, two buses left the Berkshires for Hyde Park, New York, to visit Val-Kill, the Vanderbilt Mansion, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's home and presidential library.

The trip was planned to enhance the B.I.L.L. course entitled: *Biography II: They Changed Our Lives*. The course included discussion of a book by James MacGregor Burns and Susan Dunn, *The Three Roosevelts: Patrician Leaders Who Transformed America*, and a lecture by June Sprigg about Eleanor Roosevelt.

The ride, on a very pleasant sunny day, was made even more enjoyable by our knowledgeable event leaders, Barbara Nelick and Carole Schwimmer. Carol Sabot's delicious pound cake added to our wonderful day.

At Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt's modest retreat, the National Park Service docents provided us with many historical facts as we were escorted through the building. We also had time to roam around the grounds.

The home of the Roosevelts at Hyde Park was also of great interest as was the presidential library, which



included a fascinating temporary exhibit called *Oddities, Etc., A Display of Affection*. Showcased were over 200 gifts selected from the many thousands given to President and Mrs. Roosevelt by friends and admirers from around the world.

The Vanderbilt Mansion, one of the homes of Frederick Vanderbilt, was also on our itinerary. Designed by Charles Follen McKim to look like the ancestral home of a noble European family, it is set on beautiful grounds above the Hudson River.

Lunch was at the Eveready Diner. Everyone seemed pleased with the

food, the 1950's décor, and the chance to rest for a while.

We left for home having had a very enjoyable, educational time.

—Joyce Boschen

DID YOU KNOW . . .

B.I.L.L. is a not-for-profit educational organization. Contributions made to B.I.L.L., a 501(c)3 organization, are tax-deductible by the donor. Contributions can be made through the B.I.L.L. office.

Out-of-Step

I have been a member of B.I.L.L. for about two years. The courses I have taken have been interesting and informative. One in particular, *Today's Headlines*, has had a special attraction for me.

One of the worst misfortunes that can plague a discussion course is a situation where everyone is expounding the same opinions. Happily, that has not been the case in the classes I have attended and for one very good reason. I can be fairly confident that few, if any, of my fellow classmates will share my opinion on anything because I am an original intent, free market, tenth amendment, conservative Republican. It appears fairly obvious that anyone of my ideological persuasion, at least in the B.I.L.L. courses I

have taken so far, is a *rara avis* indeed. A vast left wing conspiracy? The more logical conclusion is less dramatic. We are, after all, located in Massachusetts, the only state George McGovern swept.

I have been asked, "How does it feel to be, quite often, the lone conservative?" Well, there is a certain exhilaration that comes from advocating a minority view that is vehemently opposed by the majority. Sometimes the exhilaration of being in the minority can be overcome by other emotions, similar to the unfortunate incident involving George Armstrong Custer's defeat and death at the Little Big Horn. In my own case, the situation doesn't seem to be life threatening. Nevertheless, on occasion several of my classmates have appeared to be having

difficulty exercising restraint.

I consider my presence as a kind of voluntary, self-actuated, affirmative action plan. I am not suggesting B.I.L.L. set quotas and recruit conservatives, but diversity can be beneficial in an academic setting. So, while having the gratification of expressing my own usually unsolicited thoughts, I feel I am also providing a less-often-heard viewpoint to the B.I.L.L. community.

B.I.L.L. has enabled me to become acquainted and interact with numerous involved, congenial, articulate, and intelligent (if often misguided) people. I look forward to more of the same and fervently hope no future B.I.L.L. historian ever has cause to refer to an incident known as "Cotter's Last Stand."

— Jim Cotter

A Berkshire Connection



It is interesting to trace the Berkshire connections to Shays' Rebellion. In 1786 and 1787, just three years after the end of the American Revolution, most New Englanders lived at a subsistence level on their own farms. They bartered their excess crops for the items they could not produce themselves. In bad years, many farmers owed small amounts of money to storekeepers for necessities.

There was very little money in circulation after the Revolution. Massachusetts raised tax assessments radically and insisted they be paid in cash. Inevitably, creditors and tax collectors began taking farmers' livestock and farms, and farmers were hauled into debtors court or thrown into debtors prison.

The farmers responded by organizing town and county conventions. One such gathering was held in Pittsfield, where the farmers proposed tax reforms and legal tender laws that would allow some debts to be paid in goods rather than cash.

When their petitions brought no results, farmers began to stop the sittings in the district courts. With Daniel Shays, as their leader, 800 Berkshire men managed to close the court in Great Barrington. When the state sent its militia against the Shaysites, the majority of the militiamen left ranks and joined the farmers.

In 1787 the state raised an army to put down the rebellion. Many Berkshire farmers, including Daniel Shays, fled to New York or Vermont with all their movable property. Others went west to the Ohio territory.

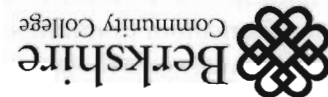
With its leaders gone, the movement deteriorated into a series of raids on inland towns. In Stockbridge and Great Barrington, the insurgents took prisoners and released all the debtors from the county jail. The Shaysites were finally beaten as they tried to capture a federal arsenal outside of Sheffield. Today a marker on Egremont Road commemorates this last battle of Shays' Rebellion. — Dot Rowe

B.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.

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