

B.I.L.L. BOARD

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NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKSHIRE INSTITUTE FOR LIFETIME LEARNING

B.I.L.L.'s Fall 2005 Semester—You Really Don't Want to Miss It!

Twenty-three courses in the arts, science, music, social sciences and literature will be given all over the county for ease of access. Varying in length from four to six weeks, they will be presented in both our usual lecture format as well as several seminar study group programs. See the Fall 2005 Semester Catalog for more detailed information.

Mark your calendars and clear your schedules for this fabulous semester. Here's how the week shapes up:

MONDAY at BCC and Canyon Ranch • Phyllis Jaffe

kicks off a wonderful mix of courses with a program about apartheid and its impact on *South African Writers* followed by Stan Applebaum with a fascinating look at *Uncle Joe Stalin: Not Your Average Joe, Not Your Average Uncle*. Six professionals in *Pharmaceuticals, Science and Policy* will discuss the many issues involving drugs. Canyon Ranch is back again with *Health From Inside Out* discussing foods, brain power, diabetes, genes, drug and food interactions, skin cancer and premature aging.

TUESDAY in South County at Simon's Rock • This is the richest program ever offered at Simon's Rock.

Simon Wainrib gets the morning started with *Dr. Faust in Music*. Susan Dworkin will conduct a limited enrollment seminar dealing with *Creative Autobiographical Writing*. Walter Cadette and Walker Todd in *Show Me the Money* will examine six critical

issues each of which affects us as tax-paying citizens: social security, health care financing, fiscal and monetary policy, the value of the dollar and tax reform. In *The 20th Century: Great Men, Challenging Times*, Paul Flaum explores whether men like Napoleon, Hitler and King would have made history at other times. Tuesday ends with *Instrumentally Yours* where four authorities explore the history of their musical instruments.

talking about their musical instruments. Jim Cotter and Norman Avnet will moderate another session of *Headlines*, providing the popular forum for voicing opinions about current events. Those who have been intrigued by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's hero will revel in Sally Sugarman's course, *Adventuring With Sherlock Holmes*, followed by a fascinating program by Robert Sugarman entitled *The Circus: the Mirror of American Life*. Only 25 fortunate members get to enroll in the seminar presented by Professor George Carey entitled *Mayan Culture: 1500 to Now*. Professor Paul Stein will present *The Sea in Prose and Poetry* and at the Lenox Library, Dr. Walker Todd will once again preside over an evening course, *The Great Triumverate and the Civil War: Calhoun, Clay and Webster*.

FRIDAY at BCC • The day starts with a retrospective of

Berkshire County From the 17th Century to Now. In *Seeing the Forest From the Trees*, a remarkable range of experts will explore government policies, concerns of environmentalists and foresters, the effects of logging and the techniques used in fighting forest fires. Finally, end your week on a high note with Berkshire Opera Company's *Voices of Opera*. Join soprano Sari Gruber, baritone John Cheek and Trudy Weaver Miller (Executive Director of Berkshire Choral Festival) as they discuss how they prepare and perform their favorite roles in opera.

— Art Sherman, Curriculum Chair



ARNE SVENSON



FRED HARIWOOD

Susan Dworkin and Walker Todd, Lecturers

WEDNESDAY at Williams College and the Clark Art Institute • If you are interested in

Early Christian History; Ideas That Changed the World; art from the perspectives of Collecting, Conserving and Conniving; and Celebrating the Genius of Einstein, then spend the day amidst beautiful surroundings with 14 extraordinary lecturers from Williams College, Bennington College and the Clark.

THURSDAY at Berkshire Music School, BCC and the Lenox Library • A very full day begins with

Let's Make Music featuring Tracy Wilson and members of the BMS staff conducting, performing and

President's Message

I am truly energized by the thought of leading this organization into the next decade. B.I.L.L. has a wonderful reputation for providing challenging and informative courses and events which clearly increase the joy and richness of our lives.

We live in an area blessed with an abundance of cultural and educational opportunities that we are able to maximize by forming partnerships with many organizations.

In the years ahead, we will do our best to push forward a strong agenda to ensure that the efforts of those who have preceded us will be enhanced. There will be more opportunities for education and social interaction as B.I.L.L. continues to grow.

Your new Board will focus on team goals and hope to celebrate individual and team successes. We are going to undertake a series of initiatives to accomplish these five major objectives:

1. To expand the scope of our current lecture-based curriculum offerings with the gradual addition of seminar and study group courses. In this, our Learning Exchange Consortium members, notably Harvard, will help us.
2. To offer members wider geographic choices of class locations and to make classes available over a broader time span so that more members can participate. We have already initiated evening classes very successfully and plan to continue this in the upcoming fall semester.
3. To explore the application of some of the more advanced technology capabilities to our programming.
4. To survey our existing membership to help understand their interests and needs, to reach out to broaden the membership and to deepen the participation of the current membership.
5. To investigate ways to improve the short- and long-term financial stability of B.I.L.L. through various means of capital development.

Each of these is a major task involving heavy participation by the Officers, the Board and the principal committees of B.I.L.L. and may require the formation of new committees or modifications of existing ones. But, no matter how hard we all work, our success depends almost entirely on the membership.

Nothing happens in B.I.L.L. without membership participation. We have many capable people as members and over 200 volunteers who have contributed to the past success of the organization and who will help B.I.L.L. achieve its potential in the future.

I need you. I need your time. I need your commitment. I need your ideas. I need you to be willing to look broadly at new, exciting concepts and come explore with me. Please join me on an exciting adventure. Let's have fun!



Dr. Mary Marcy, Convocation Speaker

Convocation 2005

B.I.L.L. members "model what I believe is the true notion of education," Mary B. Marcy told over 100 people who gathered for the annual meeting and convocation June 1 at Berkshire Community College.

Dr. Marcy, vice president and provost of Simon's Rock College of Bard, said that while "in the United States, we are approaching universal access to higher education," many Americans seem to be losing track of its true purpose.

"Higher education has been positioned too often in the national debate as a means to achieving the financial benefits of a degree," she stated, instead of as a tool for informed citizenship, a requisite for building a better society and an engine of personal fulfillment. "Education invites us to approach life through understanding, through wisdom and compassion." She said that while famed educational philosopher John Dewey argued that education is fundamental to life, "I would argue that education is fundamental to meaningful life."

Marcy, who earned a Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy in politics from Oxford University, then provided a cameo lesson from her own field. She described the recipe for a "just society" posited by John Rawls of Harvard in his *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls suggested that if people could reason but were kept ignorant of what their life identity would be—male or female, of color or not, skilled or unskilled, straight or gay—"they would create a society that was just to all citizens regardless of accidents of birth," a society "that allowed for both difference and excellence."

Dr. Marcy concluded her address by congratulating B.I.L.L. members for their commitment to education and their undimmed curiosity. "What moves me in working with Berkshire Institute for Lifetime Learning," she said, "is that age does not matter."

— Judy Katz

B.I.L.L. BOARD

Bonnie Desrosiers, *Editor*

Home: 413-442-5490

e-mail: bdesros1@berkshire.rr.com

Helen-Mary Shaffer, *Co-Editor*

Peri Caverly, *Editorial Assistant*

Marge Lewis and Wilma Michaels,

Proofreading Assistants

Ruth Degenhardt, *General Assistant*

Dates to Save

August 6: *The Challenge of China* — Adam Segal, BCC

August 10: *Moving Pictures* — Nancy Mowl Mathews, Williams College Museum of Art

August 18: Float Trip on Deerfield River, Charlemont, MA

August 29 and 31: Berkshire Opera — *L'elisir d'Amore*, BCC

September 6: *Salem Revisited* — Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES at Simon's Rock

HOT SPOTS AROUND THE WORLD

September 12: *China* — Steven Leibo

September 26: *Africa* — Emmanuel Dongala

October 15: MusicWorks — *French Impressions*, Trinity Church, Lenox

November 17: BSO Open Rehearsal — James Levine, Boston
Ansel Adams Retrospect, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Winter Reminder

If you are leaving the Berkshires for the winter, please let the B.I.L.L. office know your temporary forwarding address (with dates). Call the B.I.L.L. office at 499-4660, Ext. 456, or send an e-mail to smack@berkshirecc.edu.

Contrasts



Sunny, very hot and humid at the Tallix Foundry on June 8. The heat didn't prevent the enjoyment of sculptures like Spirit of Dance by Greg Wyatt.



Enduring the cold, wind and rain at Halibut Point on May 21. The At the Sea's Edge field trip to Cape Ann was still a success.

From Concept to Stage: Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Part 2)

Artistic merit is the unwavering criteria for choosing whom to present at the Festival. Is the artist working in a style, tradition or form in a way that is unique, distinguished, provocative and technically and conceptually proficient, if not brilliant? If "yes," pass "go" and move on to the many other variables of putting together the Festival.

- There must be an interesting mix of many different forms and styles of dance representing countries from around the world.
- Artists should be supported at any and all stages of their creative lives.
- Practical realities, such as space, are a nuisance but must be dealt with head-on.
- The Festival must have rhythm or "swing"—week for week and for the entire season.
- Due to the intimate size of our theaters and the cost of presenting, we must raise funds nonstop to make budget each fiscal year.
- Presenters (the performing arts industry term for curators) should have a fundamental sharing impulse.

I am excited about the artists I choose to bring to the Pillow and want to share my enthusiasm with audiences. I prefer of course that they like what they see, but above all, I want them to have an informed and alert experience of art. Pillow audiences are engaged and responsive—the best audiences in the world.

—Ella Baff

Ella Baff is the Executive Director of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Part 1 of her article appeared in the Summer 2005 issue of B.I.L.L.BOARD

Feeling Adventurous?

If you want to feel like a kid again, here is an offer you cannot refuse. On August 18, B.I.L.L. has scheduled a float trip on the Deerfield River in Charlemont, MA.

Imagine yourself rafting eight miles on easy class I-II rapids sighting wildlife along the Deerfield River. The rapids are so benign that the rafting company will allow children as young as five to participate (fortunately for us there is no "maximum age"). Each guided raft accommodates six people, and paddling is optional. The trip runs rain or shine; wet suits will be worn in the event of inclement weather.

Rafting is great fun. Please come and join us! — Myrna Schneiderman



Westinghouse Lights Lenox

When William Stanley demonstrated the first practical alternating current electric lighting system in Great Barrington in 1886, he was employed by George Westinghouse. One of the reasons that Stanley chose to come to the Berkshires to conduct his experimental work was that his health had been suffering while working at the Westinghouse Company in Pittsburgh. In that era, Pittsburgh was developing a reputation for less than desirable air quality due to the increasing number of coke ovens and blast furnaces operating there.

Ironically, George Westinghouse's wife, the former Marguerite Erskine, was also being advised by her doctors to spend more time in "mountain air." In the year following Stanley's demonstration, Westinghouse purchased the former Schenk farm adjoining Laurel Lake in Lenox. The farm was renovated and vastly enlarged to become Erskine Park, one of the most impressive of all the Lenox "cottages."

The Westinghouse Company was responsible for the lighting by electricity of the 1893 Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago, which featured

a large grouping of buildings known as the "White City." It was said that Marguerite was somewhat fanatical about the use of white. Consequently, the exterior of Erskine Park was all white, and the extensive carriageways on the grounds were all paved with white marble chips.

While the interior of the mansion was rather dark in its décor in keeping with the Victorian style, an innovation in electric lighting was employed which created a "sunlike" effect throughout the rooms. This involved the installation of a total of 1,500 electric lamps in the moldings which ran around the peripheries of the ceilings in each major room. This arrangement was said to be the first use of what would later be known as "indirect" lighting.

In order to power this extensive electrical installation, Westinghouse built his own power station on the shore of Laurel Lake. Erskine Park was the first private residence in the country to be lighted exclusively by the use of alternating current—Edison's earlier systems all used direct current. Under-



Erskine Park from Pride of Palaces

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ground cables, operating at 2200 volts, were used to distribute this A.C. power around the grounds of the estate. The excess electricity was sold to the Lenox Electric Company for street lighting for a fee of 20 cents per kilowatt-hour, a luxury price in that era.

Both George and Marguerite Westinghouse died in 1914. Erskine Park was sold and soon demolished to make way for a Vanderbilt estate known as "Holmwood." It is now the site of a condominium complex.

Thomas J. Blalock [Abridgement of an original paper]

Thomas Blalock will be a lecturer in the Fall 2005 semester course Berkshire County From the 17th Century to Now.

E-mail: whubbard@berkshires.edu

E-mail: smack@berkshires.edu

B.L.L.L. adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination and welcomes all people as members of our organization.

Website: www.berkshires.edu/life/long/bill.html

Phone: 413-499-4660, Ext. 496

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