

B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning
Spring '98 • Volume 6 • Number 6

'98 Spring Semester off To Great Start

As we go to press, spring semester enrollment is already larger than it was last year, and still growing. As of the end of March, the total number of registrations was 546. Many members took advantage of the policy of offering a free course to people who signed up for two courses, and two free courses for those who signed up for three.

The "Ethics" course attracted the greatest number of registrants. By balancing course locations it has been possible to accommodate all of the students who wished to attend. The auditorium at the Berkshire Museum was used for the first Ethics class and the Boland Auditorium at BCC for the remainder of the course.



Former Governor Michael S. Dukakis to speak at May 15th Ethics Class.

Save These Spring and Summer Dates

- May 4th, 10am at BCC (K111) — Michael Conforti, Director of the Clark Institute lectures on "A Grand View, The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum", exhibited at Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
- May 12th — Visit this fine exhibition and have free time for touring through Boston. Chairpersons are Elaine Andersen and Eileen Knowles.
- June 11th, 10am to 3pm — "A Day at Interlaken School of Art" with demonstrations by the artists. Chairpersons are Ruth and Ed Levin.
- July 16th — Trip to the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (New York City Ballet). Chairpersons are Arline Gilbert and Judie Korostoff.
- July 29th, 10am at BCC (K111) — Renowned physicist, Robert Resnick speaks on "Misconceptions of Einstein" at this special educational event.

Watch for announcements of Special Events Committee availability of limited blocks of tickets including "A Little Night Music" at Barrington Stage Company (June 28th), Shakespeare and Company's "Glimpses of the Moon" (September 25th), and Berkshire Opera Company's special concert by world famous Denyce Graves at Ozawa Hall (October 1st).

Backstage at the Williamstown Theatre

Watch for an announcement about another day behind the scenes at the Williamstown Theatre on Monday, June 22nd. Because of the success of this kind of day last year, once again the theatre staff is offering a backstage tour. This will include meeting the administrative and technical staff people. Last year Jenny Gersten, the Associate Producer, gave an overview of the theatre and brought in the directors of staging and lighting to talk on the technical aspects of mounting a production. The forty participants also saw a rehearsal of the production starring Olympia Dukakis. This year they will again see scenes from the production that will be opening the following week.

The forty B.I.L.L. members who applied but were unable to attend because of space restrictions last year will receive first priority to attend this year's field trip.

Class Trip to the Sea

B.I.L.L. members who attended "At the Edge of the Sea" at Williams College during last Fall's semester will be guided by Professor Fox on a field trip to Horseneck Beach Reservation State Park and Halibut Point State Park. The trip on May 26th is timed to coincide with low, low tides to allow the students to experience first-hand some of the very fascinating subjects discussed during the course.

President's Letter

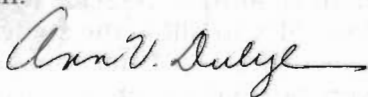
Spring 1998 unfolds with excitement and changes for B.I.L.L. Our record enrollment in all classes at BCC, Williams College and BCC South County campuses are a testimony to the Curriculum Committee for another job well done. Coming up are a number of exciting trips and special events planned by the Special Events Committee.

Please welcome Margaret "Lee" Neff, B.I.L.L.'s new full time Administrative Assistant. Beginning May 1st, Lee will be working in the new B.I.L.L. office located in the Student Lounge area at BCC. She has impressive experience and skills that will enable B.I.L.L. to move forward with our expanded programs and assist our Board, Chairpersons and B.I.L.L. members.

Special recognition goes to Sharon Mack, whose secretarial services we have shared with BCC Community Services the past three years. Sharon, your efforts and dedication through this tenure are deeply appreciated.

B.I.L.L.'s extremely important Annual Meeting takes place in Boland Auditorium on Friday, May 29th. At that time, we will present the results of our planning efforts to allow us to better meet our growing needs. Modifications to our by-laws are involved in these efforts which are of the utmost importance to B.I.L.L. It is with a determined emphasis that I request your attendance at this meeting to participate in a "Town Hall" forum; to review, and discuss the membership's acceptance of the proposed changes to the bylaws and procedures of our organization. The various proposals will be mailed to you before the meeting.

In the meantime, enjoy a dynamic zestful six weeks of learning and fun.



"As Good As It Gets!"



Nobody plans better field trips than B.I.L.L. We even get the weather right. On a bright sunny 40+ day in late March, forty-one of us spent the day in Northampton. Our Spring Fling centered on the Smith College Museum of Art and the Lyman Plant House and Arboretum with a delightful lunch at the Smith Alumnae House in between.

The "Bulb Show" at the Lyman House was a breathtaking profusion of color and glorious floral scents. The countless tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, and the primroses that were in every shade of red, pink, yellow and purple dazzled us. Also impressive were the other 12 interconnecting greenhouse rooms, each devoted to particular groupings of tropical plants and varieties of succulents and cacti. This marvelous set of buildings is part of the Smith Botanical Gardens which were established in 1895, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead who also designed the entire campus as a kind of arboretum. Smith students use the greenhouses as part of their six-course curriculum in Botany.

The Smith Museum of Art is a treasure trove of 18th and 19th century art which, considering its small size, contains an impressive selection of well known artists such as Monet, Matisse, Picasso, and the landscape painters Thomas Cole and Frederick Church. The curators are continually adding women artists and presently have a lovely Georgia O'Keefe painting and another by Berthe Morisot. The artist now featured is Sandy

Skoglund, a Smith alumna, who is an installation artist and photographer noted for dreamlike tableaux environments incorporating animals, food, furniture, and life-size human figures. One of the most dramatic of the four installations displayed was "The Cocktail Party," in which human figures covered from head to toe in cheese doodles look past each other and occasionally move mechanically like lifeless mannequins. Several B.I.L.L. members speculated that the work might be a commentary on our fast food, disposable culture.

Another installation was entitled "Walking on Eggshells." Here coiling snakes and rabbits are placed on a huge floor covered in countless brown eggshells. In "Revenge of the Goldfish" huge ceramic fish "swim" through a turquoise blue bedroom. Other works in the exhibition include selections from her early "Food Still Life" photographic series that parodies commercial advertisements with patterns of brightly colored foods. Skoglund's works intrigued some of the B.I.L.L. members; others were repelled. All agreed that the work was unique and unforgettable.

Thanks to Arline Breskin for wonderful homemade muffins and coffee in the Stop and Shop parking lot before we boarded the bus and for her informative talk on the botanical buildings. Also thanks to Susan Orenstein and Joyce Boschen for the masterly organization and planning of the day.

Letters to the Editor

To B.I.L.L. Board Editor

The winter course on Emily Dickinson's poetry, conducted by David Pierce was a truly exciting experience. A rigorous analysis, line by line of the poetry participated in by all members led by a knowledgeable, sensitive teacher whetted our appetite for more. It was so tantalizing we want to continue this exploration, and certainly the wonderful poetry of Emily Dickinson deserves additional time as we really just got started.

— Janet P. Cook

To B.I.L.L. Board Editor

It has been a rewarding and unique experience participating in B.I.L.L.'s Winter Book Club. Each of the books read provided insights to us as well as to the characters depicted. But, most important was the give and take of ideas of the dozen or so group members, all with different backgrounds and knowledge. I'm looking forward to joining another such book club next winter. Congratulations to B.I.L.L.

— Jacquie Easton

Getting To Know You

DAVID CITRIN

A little over 40 years ago Dave and his wife Roz spent some time in the Berkshires while Roz worked on a graduate degree. They liked what they saw. "We believed the Berkshires would be a good place to bring up children." They settled in Pittsfield, and Dave went to work for General Electric, having acquired an engineering degree at CCNY in New York City.

For the past nine years, after retiring from General Electric, he has been on the Adjunct Faculty at Berkshire Community College in the Engineering Technology Department where he teaches Computer Technology. He loves teaching, and the information from the grapevine is that his students find his "patience" and teaching methods "wonderful".

Dave has been very helpful to B.I.L.L. in many ways, most recently



working on our new office at BCC. His sports include handball, racquetball and tennis and he's thinking about golf as well.

He and Roz have a son and a daughter who have given them five granddaughters. Their son, a successful executive at IBM, settled in Michigan and their daughter, also a successful executive working at AT&T, settled

in New Jersey. They are extremely proud of their family and wish they could see them and the grandchildren more often.

Dave, who is modest, engaging and likeable, is the President of Temple Anshe Amunim ("People of Faith") where he finds the responsibility time consuming but very gratifying. There is no doubt that the Berkshire community was indeed fortunate that Dave and Roz decided to settle here.

Through Eastern Europe With Elderhostel

Like so many others who always winged it on our own, we questioned our commitment to a 3-week Elderhostel Eastern Europe trip. But, as we joined 35 hostlers at Prague's Petr Hotel we immediately felt comfortable with our decision. We found people from all over the United States eager to absorb what our general tour director, Hans, a retired history teacher from Amsterdam, and our Czech Republic guide, Vladka, had to tell us.

It was the same in Vienna with Bridgette and in Budapest with Anna. In each of the three cities we journeyed to, we had four 3-hour lectures with qualified people covering the history, economics, social problems and culture of the country.

Tomas Brychta, our program coordinator in Prague, gave us a fasci-

nating history of the Petr Hotel, built by his grandparents in 1910 with eight elegant apartments. During the Communist occupation, the family was forced out, as it became a workers dormitory, later abandoned and occupied by gypsies. It was returned after 1989 and required six years to return it to the present status as our fine hotel.

Music, so much a part of these countries was explored in depth. Included was a private concert and supper at Bertramka where Mozart lived and composed, "The Magic Flute" at the National Theatre in Prague and a period costume performance in Vienna at the Lobkowitz Palace where Beethoven conducted. We attended the magnificent Hungarian State Opera House and the Bartok String Quartet at the Academy of

Music in Budapest.

We traveled by bus but found the cobblestone streets of these old cities, town and villages provided picturesque walking tours with many dazzling spots for camera buffs.

We returned to the Berkshires with wonderful memories of our first but not our last Elderhostel trip.

— Arline Breskin

Join Us for Lunch

All B.I.L.L. members attending classes on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at BCC are invited to lunch in the cafeteria at BCC. It's a great opportunity to meet and exchange ideas.

On The Inca Trail

During a trip around South America, my sister and I joined a Rhodes Scholar program in La Paz, Bolivia. Accompanied by local guides and professors of archeology we visited several sites including Tiahuanaco on the altiplano in Bolivia and viewed the work of the Incas at Macchu Pichu. We crossed Lake Titicaca in small boats. This slightly salty lake at an elevation of 12,000 feet, is 150 miles long and about 50 miles wide, and was sacred to the Incas. Many archeological sites border it and we visited some of the Uros people who live on reed islands and get about in reed boats.

Cuzco was the capital of the Inca Empire, dating back to 1100 AD; an empire in full flower when the Spaniards came in 1532. The Incas primarily were highland people who dominated all of the tribes from Quito in Ecuador down to Chile; from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic slope of the Andes. Their genius was political organization, despite having no written language and no knowledge of the wheel. They had an extensive trail system, some parts of which are still used as footpaths. Typically the trail is about four feet wide, paved in flagstones. It is cut into the side of a mountain, tunneled through an overhang, or shored up by a stone wall along the face of a cliff. At 10-mile



In the clouds at Macchu Pichu.

intervals provisions and water were stored at way stations, where runners could rest. Communication was frequent and efficient from one end of the Empire to the other.

They worshipped the mountains, had organized agriculture and were tuned into astronomical and celestial phenomena. You can face one of the niches in a small room, and make a sound that is amplified and resonates all across the hilltop! We saw remnants of the irrigation system that channeled streams through the agricultural terraces.

Macchu Pichu is located high on a mountainous saddle, northeast of Cuzco. The Conquistadors never reached it; the Incas removed sections

of the Trail when their murderous intentions were grasped.

We reached it by train and up the mountainside by bus along a series of switchbacks on the Hiram Bingham Highway. Mr. Bingham re-discovered Macchu Pichu in 1911 while looking for another site. The ruins truly defy description. In the early morning, those of us fortunate enough to stay at the Hotel Ruinas at the entrance of the park could watch the mists swirling up from the valleys below. It was awesome to be almost alone up there before the train brought the tourists.

— Anna Pollock

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