

B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning
Spring '99 • Volume 7 • Number 4

Spring '99 Semester

Once again, the Curriculum Committee has put together a stimulating array of courses and instructors for the spring '99 semester. Thirteen courses will be offered at several locations: BCC Pittsfield and Great Barrington campuses, Williams College, and the Clark Museum. These course offerings range from small study groups to large survey courses — something for everyone.

Since you have already received the catalog and registration information, register now if you have not yet done so. Refer to the catalog for exact times and dates. The courses for the semester include:

MONDAYS (BCC Pittsfield)

Contemporary Poetry – Irene Willis, Ph.D. Limited to 25.
Sex, Sacred and Profane: A Biblical View – Prof. Paul Stein

TUESDAYS (BCC Pittsfield)

Today's Headlines – Michael Feltser and Dr. Jack Rubin, Moderators
Ethics: A Continuation
Criminal Justice System – Prof. R. Jackall; *Media and Politics* – Prof. Tim Cook; *Medical Care Distribution* – Dr. Charles Wohl; *Personal Relationships* – Dr. Carole Siegel; *Education* – Dr. Susan Engel; *Environment* – Dr. Elaine Panitz

WEDNESDAYS (Williamstown)

Reflections on History (Williams College Faculty House)
The American Revolution – Prof. Patricia Tracy; *Congressional Power* – Paul Flaum; *The French Revolution* – Pres. Harry Payne (Williams College); *Presidential Power* – Prof. Herbert Parmet; *Early African History* – Prof. Kenda Mutongi; *Technology and Culture* – Prof. Donald Beaver

Chamber Music – Prof. Douglas Moore (Williams College Faculty House)

The Clark Institute and Its Collections – John Brooks, Associate Director (Clark Museum)

THURSDAYS (BCC Pittsfield)

History of Garden Design – Arline Leven
Constitutional Law – Prof. James A. Gardner and Judge Robert Donelan

FRIDAYS (BCC Pittsfield)

Writing Memoirs – Leonard Bernstein. Limited to 25.
Egypt's First Golden Age – Lenore O. Keene Congdon, Ph.D.

FRIDAYS (BCC Great Barrington)

Shakespeare on the Page and in the Camera – Anne Beckwith Blake, Ph.D.
Vikings! – Julie Lowell

Peer Seminar in the Works

In response to many requests, a Peer Seminar is being planned for the fall. A Peer Seminar is taught by B.I.L.L. members, and it works this way.

B.I.L.L. members who volunteer to be Peer Leaders will select the main topic for the seminar. That topic will then be divided into six sub-topics—one for each week of the semester. A Peer Leader (lecturer) will select a sub-topic and will do the research to lead the class session devoted to that topic.

The class format will consist of a 30- to 45-minute lecture that will be followed by class discussion. Arline Leven, chair of the Peer Seminar Committee, or another member of the committee, will facilitate the class discussions.

Selecting the main topic, sub-topics, and teaching assignments will take place at an organizational meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 1999, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in Room G10 at BCC.

The Peer Seminar can only happen if enough people want to participate! We need at least six people to serve as lecturers for this innovative seminar to take place. If you are interested in getting involved, please call Sharon Mack at 499-4660, Extension 456.



Think Spring!

President's Letter

With the flourishing growth in membership, B.I.L.L.'s Board and Committees have been meeting extensively to expand the variety of academic courses, special events, and lecture programs that will require more classroom space and time slots. Because of the significant interest and attendance shown for the winter session, we are planning winter programs to include a full schedule of stimulating courses.

Subcommittees of the Curriculum Committee are meeting countless hours to provide programs for the future. These meetings, intense with dialogue, generate excitement from the explosion of ideas.

When you attend classes, speak to the chairpersons and/or members of the committees and let them know what you thought of the courses. Success, a two-way street, needs positive and negative input to improve the course offerings. In addition, take up the challenge and become a member of a committee and provide your insight, experience, and expertise. When we are all involved with achieving a goal, it is more meaningful and satisfying — come on board!

We want to express our appreciation to the management of the Quality Inn (Route 7 in Lenox), an ideal location for winter programs, for its welcoming hospitality, accessible parking, and comfortable warm classrooms. Thank you, Alexandra Warshaw, for your suggestion and continued interest in B.I.L.L.'s growth.

B.I.L.L. BOARD

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Very Special Events

Hold these dates — more information to follow.

- April 7 Worcester Art Museum and Higgins Armory Museum
- June 7 Lecture by Phyllis Jaffe on playwright Horton Foote
- June 10 Hartford Stage Company "Death of Papa" by Horton Foote
- Summer A wonderful array of events planned
- Oct. 20-21 Shelburne Museum, Burlington, Vermont
- Jan. 1, 2000 Y2K New Year's Day Generational Brunch

Meet Our Staff

B.I.L.L. has been fortunate that Sharon Mack was available at the very onset of its formation to work for us. Sharon came to BCC in 1993 to finish her degree and to work part time for Alexandra Warshaw, Director of Community Services.

Sharon, who was born in Planegg, Germany, where her father was in the military, lives in Pittsfield, has two teenage sons, two grown daughters, and three grandsons.



Shirley Tremblay, Sharon Mack, and Rena Asci

At first Sharon worked for B.I.L.L. from her home because the anticipated membership was to be about 130, but to everyone's surprise and delight, the membership exceeded 300 the first year. With a growing membership (now over 700), B.I.L.L. has had its own office at BCC since May 1998, and Sharon is working 30 hours a week as our Administrative Assistant.

Her many responsibilities include bulk mailings, answering telephone inquiries, maintaining a computer database to keep track of membership and class registrations, handling financial tasks, and preparing correspondence. Sharon especially appreciates President Ann Dulye's efforts to professionalize the office.

For the past five years, Sharon has been involved with the CASS (Cooperative Association of State for Scholarship) program at BCC, which is a joint educational venture between the U.S. and Central America. She has been a host parent to students who live with her for their first year while attending BCC. Sharon keeps in touch with all the students who have lived with her through e-mail.

Two volunteers ably assist Sharon four to eight hours a week. Rena Asci is a Pittsfield native who was a secretary at GE for 43 years and retired in 1984. She began taking B.I.L.L. classes two years ago and has been helping in the office for one year doing "a little of everything."

Shirley Tremblay is a North Adams native who now lives in Pittsfield. She spent 36 years in the Pittsfield school system, first as a K-9 teacher and later as a school adjustment counselor. Retired for 10 years, Shirley has been associated with B.I.L.L. from its inception.

Periodically, Dorcas Abell, Helen Linton, and Arlene Martin assist in the office.

— Lenore Rubin

Letters to the Editor

To B.I.L.L.BOARD Editor:

Taking stock at the conclusion of a year and the emergence of another new year, I feel we in Berkshire County are truly blessed. One of the blessings is B.I.L.L. The joy this congregate of intelligent, experienced, and varied outlooks brings to the whole population is an energy uncommon in these otherwise bland days of television or horror-filled world affairs. That energy is life sustaining, challenging, and pleasurable. B.I.L.L. definitely is radiant. Cheers! — Janet Cook

To B.I.L.L.BOARD Editor:

As a member of the Special Events Committee, I have found it a treat working with Arline Breskin. The excitement and enthusiasm she generates has a positive effect on the members of the Committee and carries over to B.I.L.L. members attending events.

We in B.I.L.L. continue to enjoy all the wonderful trips and lectures planned by Arline and her committee. Thank you Arline — you are a B.I.L.L. "treasure."

— Dolly Harte

Getting To Know You

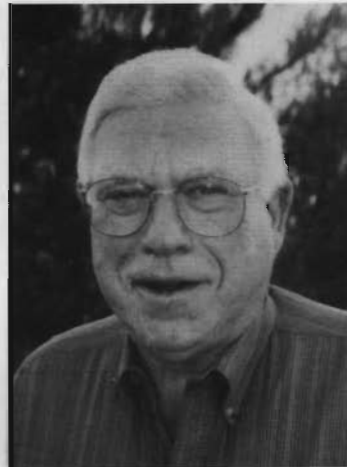
ART SHERMAN

After retiring to their home in West Stockbridge two years ago, Art and his wife Mona, followed the advice Art gave to his research staff many years ago, "When you find gold, keep digging."

They have been "digging" into B.I.L.L.'s courses, committees, and special events. Art, the previous editor of B.I.L.L.BOARD, served

on the Board of Trustees, and is currently Second Vice President of B.I.L.L. Mona is coordinator of The Berkshire Museum Volunteers. This field of gold is enriched by their six (soon to be seven) grandchildren and families in New York City and New Jersey.

Art and Mona have traveled to Antarctica, remote western China, Africa, and have taken a "sedate" Elderhostel to New Zealand and Australia. The Metropolitan Opera, the



football Giants, the cultural and educational opportunities in the Berkshires and continued interest in history, astronomy, and the sciences round out a very active "retirement."

Art has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in industrial management. His career began at the Reaction Motors Division

of Thiokol Chemical Corporation where over a 20-year span as Director of Research and Engineering was involved in rocket engine research and development programs, strategic planning, and congressional space budget testimony. Art retired after 17 years from Sharp Electronics Corporation as Group Vice President.

Art and Mona are still digging for gold, but the treasure is new friends and challenges.

Curriculum Committee Update

The Curriculum Committee, charged with the task of designing and developing more than 30 new and different courses each year, faces a continuing challenge. For the first few years, we were feeling our way, finding out what needed to be done, and how best to do it. As a result of the experience, the Committee has now put into place a more formal structure for developing courses — without, we hope, diminishing the creativity which has resulted in the kind of curriculum so appreciated by B.I.L.L. members in past semesters.

Five academic subcommittees were formed which cover various subject areas and create a balanced semester's curriculum.

Academic Subcommittees

Humanities – Sue Gorham/Susan Orenstein; *Literature* – Paul Stein/Carol Sabot; *Arts* – Judy Easton/Margo Krupp; *Science* – Elske Smith/Art Sherman; *Peer Seminars* – Arline Leven/Harriet Vines

Administrative Subcommittees

Class Management – Fran Dichter; *Catalog* – Libby Watterson; *Scheduling* – Dorothy Rowe

Subcommittee members who enjoy working with lecturers to develop courses can sign up for subcommittees of their choice; they can switch from one to the other as their interests change or leave the subcommittees to become members-at-large again. The

Committee meets once a month where ideas for possible courses are discussed (sometimes passionately!) Past courses are evaluated, and subcommittees report on their progress.

To lighten the burden on the curriculum chair who guides and coordinates all aspects of the curriculum, others will take over the writing of the catalog and the scheduling of courses.

We expect the curriculum to grow and change as B.I.L.L. itself grows and changes. The committee welcomes new members and their fresh ideas and original concepts, the foundation on which each semester is built. The responsibility is daunting but that's what makes the task so rewarding.

— Ilse Browner

New Year's Day Brunch

The year 1999 was off to a great start as B.I.L.L. members and guests got together for a delightful brunch at the Berkshire Crowne Plaza Hotel.



Photos by Mona Sherman

Friends!



Fun!

Entertainment!



Food!



Bob Chandler says, "It's wonderful to be among good friends on New Year's Day."



Spring '98 Lecturers Have Their Say . . .

From Lenore O. Keene Congdon, Ph.D. (Eighteenth Dynasty Egypt):

"I've taught about Egypt to Elderhostel, college, and (the best) fourth grade students; but the interest, enthusiasm, experience, and questions of my B.I.L.L. class topped them all. Further, begin able to focus in on a specific period gave me a rare opportunity to study and learn at least as much as they did. It's marvelous teaching and learning for the sheer pleasure of it and with NO TESTS!"

From Phyllis Curtin (Opera From the Inside Out):

"Speaking about opera to a group of genuine opera aficionados, most if not all longtime opera goers, was somewhat intimidating to me. However, I found bringing fresh (I hope!) ideas, information and opinions very interesting and exhilarating for me. Questions from the class were clearly grounded in knowledge and appreciation of the subject. I enjoyed our six sessions enormously."

David Park, Ph.D. (Einstein's Theory of Relativity):

"What I like best about the B.I.L.L. experience is the uninhibited questioning that (if the class is not too large) so often stops a lecture until the speaker has managed to state clearly what he or she is trying to say. I think this is very healthy for everyone involved."

Bravo in Boston

Enlightened and informed by Arline Leven's lecture about "Monet in the 20th Century," two busloads of B.I.L.L. members headed for Boston and a daylong music and art experience.

First on the agenda was the glorious rehearsal of the BSO under the direction of Leonard Slatkin. This was followed by a delicious lunch in a private dining room that Arline Breskin and her husband John orchestrated with a panache that matched Slatkin's own.

Next it was off to the Museum of Fine Arts. With Arline Leven's lecture in our minds, and the audio recording thoughtfully provided by our Special Events Committee, we covered the exhibit with intensity and intelligence. At 4:30 p.m., exhausted but exhilarated B.I.L.L. members headed back home to the Berkshires invigorated by brown-bag snacks, good conversation, and the wonderful day.

The Special Events Committee is once again to be congratulated for the well-organized and imaginative event. Bravo to the lecturer, Arline Leven; to the event leaders, Audrey Schlanger and Mona Sherman; and to Arline Breskin and her crew of choppers, shredders, and spreaders.

— Marge Lewis

Course Catalog

The Curriculum Committee reports that starting in the fall 1999 semester catalogs describing course offerings will be in the capable hands of Libby Watterson and her committee, Edith Marks, Walter Bemak, and Marge Lewis.

Bouquets to Ilse Browner for her tireless work in writing, editing, and organizing the previous wonderfully prepared catalogs. Thanks go to Marge Lewis and Sue Phillips for their editorial help and to Ann Dulye for her technical assistance.

What a Great Day!

Oh, I can kick myself. Missed background lecture on Adams and Kennedy by my favorite lecturer, Paul Flaum. Do I really want to be at Dan Fox Drive at 7 a.m.? Hope I don't forget my lunch! Breakfast on Arline Breskin's yummy muffins (which Aleve Henderson and yours truly helped to make) and Fran Dichter's great coffee.

It's a long ride to Adams National Historic Site in Quincy, but there's a toilet on the bus. Would I have taken this route? Why worry! Leave the driving to the pro. No chance to doze. Conversation is so stimulating. Remember next time to sit near Julie Weiss who always brings wine.



Adams Homestead

The morning guided tour of the Adams Homestead and Mansion was enlightening. After lunch, off to the Kennedy Library for an interesting lecture and tour. The day ended with a delightful dinner at the Publick House in Sturbridge.

Thanks go to the Special Events Committee. — Carol Sabot

Class Managers Needed

Fran Dichter, class management chair, has revised the duties of the daily class managers. This position—one of responsibility—is a vital component to all our courses. To learn more about how you can help, call Fran at 637-2875.

Emily Dickinson Visited

The fall course on Emily Dickinson that was presented by David Peirce focused on Dickinson's poetry and life and times. The stimulating lecture brought with it the desire to see Emily's home. On December 9, 1998, eight class members arrived in Amherst at the Dickinson homestead.

We were prepared to see Dickinson's home and surroundings, but we were surprised to feel as though we were back in the nineteenth century with the spirit of the poet drifting through the air. The guides responded to our comments and questions recalling the time of Emily's life. 'Incidentally, the guides we met participate in a Lifetime Learning program similar to B.I.L.L.'s in the five-college area.

The homestead in Amherst is about an hour from Pittsfield and is open from March to the middle of December. Regular tours are scheduled or tours can be arranged by telephone. If you would like more information, call me at 637-2875.

— Fran Dichter

Keep in Touch With B.I.L.L.

Won't you share your glad and sad tidings with your B.I.L.L. friends. Let us know when you celebrate a special event (birthday, anniversary, grandchild's birth or graduation), or when you are feeling "under the weather." We want to know how our members are doing. Call Sharon Mack at (413) 499-4660, Extension 456, and give her the information.

NO PARKING!!!

The new parking area at BCC (located on the right as you enter the campus) has been specifically designated for guests of the President and other executives of BCC. **It is not for B.I.L.L. use.** You will be ticketed if you park there.

B.I.L.L. Takes In/On the Media Project

Over 110 B.I.L.L. members witnessed the first broadcast from the Berkshires of WAMC's Media Project. Heard by its avid listeners on Monday, December 14, it was thoroughly enjoyed by the B.I.L.L. "studio" audience the previous Friday at the Berkshire Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Dr. Alan Chartock was joined in the panel discussion of up-to-the-minute news by two Berkshire media experts: Mr. David Scribner, editor, and Mr.

Clarence Fanto, managing editor of *The Berkshire Eagle*. Not only were all the participants Berkshirites, but the discussion and banter typical of the program was directed in large part to matters of special interest to the local area.

After the broadcast segment of the program, B.I.L.L. members asked questions about local politics as well as the political scene in Washington. There was a lot of interchange regarding the balancing act between responsible reporting and the hunt for "hot" news. As anyone who has previously attended a B.I.L.L. lecture knows, members are not bashful. Dr. Chartock and the guest editors seemed to enjoy the question period almost as much as the audience enjoyed the panel.

A hearty post-broadcast brunch followed.

— Sue Phillips



Back row: E. Vines, D. Scribner
Front row: C. Fanto, A. Chartock

Convocation Scheduled

The Annual Open Meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 26, 1999, at 1:30 p.m. in the Boland Theatre at Berkshire Community College.

Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, music director of the American Symphony Orchestra, and author will be the guest speaker.

Watch your mail for more information.

More Di\$count\$

B.I.L.L. members will receive a senior's rate for use of The Paterson Field House facilities at BCC. Paterson Field House maintains an Astroturf gymnasium, a basketball court, and a fitness center for indoor activities. The outdoor area includes a 2.6-mile cross-country course and an outdoor pool that is open in the summer.

Editor's Comments

You probably noticed that the last page of B.I.L.L.BOARD is devoted to articles written by members which contain educational or informational material. The article can be based on your profession, experience, travel, or other interests. We encourage you to share your knowledge with us. That's what B.I.L.L. is all about. Please send your comments and articles to Wilma Michaels, editor.

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

Inspired by Professor Johnson's B.I.L.L. course on architecture, I visited the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, in August 1998. When photos of the new museum appeared in the press in 1997, I thought the building was ugly. After seeing it, I changed my mind. The Guggenheim Bilbao is now regarded as one of the architectural marvels of our century. As Brendan Gill said in an article on architecture in *The New Yorker* over a year before the Guggenheim was opened, "It is not easy to judge architecture from a two-dimensional photograph." It is difficult to visualize buildings from photographs.

Frank Gehry, born Frank Goldberg in Canada in 1929, designed it. As a child, Gehry played on the floor for hours building cities out of wood scraps. He put himself through architectural school at the University of Southern California driving a truck

and graduated at the top of his class in 1954.

Gehry's Guggenheim looks like a beautiful chaotic sculpture, its image reflected in the river. The only discordant note to me is Jeff Koon's huge three-story-high puppy made of flowering plants that sits in front of this futuristic museum.

To design the building, Gehry drew many scribbly lines by hand and also rolled paper in three-dimensional forms that could not have been put into workable building plans without the use of a computer design program called *Catia*.

Covered in titanium, the building shimmers in sunlight and changes colors throughout the day; a fantastic sight as one approaches it on foot from the center of Bilbao on the Alameda de Mazar.

Herbert Muschamp recently wrote in an article in *The New York Times*



Magazine, "Frank Gehry's monumental eruption in titanium steel celebrates the remaking of the 19th-century city from industrial workshop to cultural center." — Joyce S. Boschen

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