

# B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning  
Spring 2001 • Volume 9 • Number 3

## Spring 2001 Semester at a Glance

The Curriculum Committee has put together an exciting variety of courses and lecturers for the spring semester. Twenty courses will be offered at several locations: BCC Pittsfield Campus, the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, and the Church Street Café in Lenox.

You have already received the catalog and registration information. Courses start April 10 and run through May 25. Refer to the catalog for exact times and dates. The courses and locations are:

### MONDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

*Today's Headlines* – Norman Avnet, Moderator  
*Witnesses to History: Six Spanish Cities* – Ellen S. Kanner  
*Conversations With . . .* – Barbara Greenbaum, Moderator

### MONDAYS (Simon's Rock College)

*From Trust to Wisdom: The Journey of Intimate Partners* – J. Lawry  
*Hot Topics in Education* – R. Chartock, S. Engel, A. Flaxman,  
E. Neale, R. Putnam

### TUESDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

*Magic of the Berkshires: VI* – P. Boudreau, W. Gehring, K. Goodrich,  
P. Hopkins, E. Michalenko, D. Rowe  
*An Invitation to Dance* – Ella Baff, Norton Owen  
*How Big is Small? The World of MEMS* – Robert Bayt

### WEDNESDAYS (Clark Art Institute)

*Impressionism Begins With an Eye: Seeing What It Was and Is* – John Brooks  
*Defining a Documentary Aesthetic* – Steven Satullo  
*Biography II: They Changed Our Lives* – J. M. Burns, M. Lynch, H. Parmet,  
A. Willingham

### WEDNESDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

*Reading and Writing Poetry* – Michelle Gillett

### THURSDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

*The Living Cell* – Richard Intres  
*History of Garden Design* – Arline Leven  
*Reaction and Counter Reaction in New Kingdom Egypt* – L. Congdon

### THURSDAYS (Hancock Shaker Village)

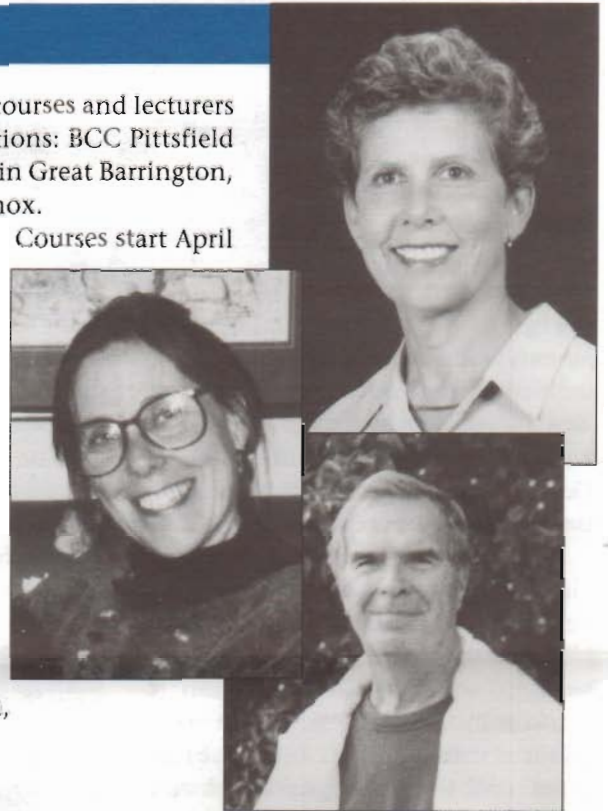
*Shaker Life, Work, and Art* – T. Burdick, S. Koomler, L. Yerdon

### THURSDAYS (Church Street Café, Lenox)

*All About Wines* – S. Dixon, M. England, B. Glick, J. Rubin, D. Williams

### FRIDAYS (BCC Main Campus, Pittsfield)

*Jane Austen* – To Be Announced  
*Reinventing the Berkshire Opera Company* – Sanford Fisher, Joel Revzen  
*Lives in Music/Music in Lives* – Stuart Feder, Charlotte Kaufman



Lecturers clockwise from top:  
Michelle Gillett, Jack Rubin,  
and Roselle Chartock

## Special Events in the Works!

Watch your mail for flyers for exact dates and details.

**April 3:** Musical adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – BCC

**May 15:** Hyde Park and Val-kill – Roosevelt Homesteads

**May 31:** Millbrook Winery and Vineyards – New York

**June 3:** "Lowell: The Industrial Revelations" – Massachusetts

**June 20:** Jacob's Pillow – Limon Dance Company

**July 12:** SPAC – New York City Ballet

**August 13:** Berkshire Opera Company  
"Music at the Mahawie"

## President's Message

I hope this finds all of you in good health and happy to start the New Year and a wonderful "real" millennium.

It's that time again. Winter is here in full blast with snow everywhere and icicles hanging from the roof of the house. I get into my car and drive through the snow and ice to the Quality Inn for the winter semester courses.

The Curriculum Committee has put together a great winter program: from law, music, genetics, headlines, and renewable energy to Shakespeare and Robert Frost. I learn about the Human Genome and Jazz — both fascinating and thoroughly interesting. Usually my wife and I spend time in Florida in January and February, but this year we decided to stay in the Berkshires. I can now appreciate why the non-snowbirds are so eager to have winter classes. Despite the snow and freezing temperatures, attendance is excellent.

B.I.L.L. committees are meeting and planning the spring and fall semesters (and beyond). I especially would like to thank the Special Events Committee, the Curriculum Committee and its sub-committees, the B.I.L.L. BOARD editorial staff, and the office staff volunteers for their continued work and effort throughout the year. In addition, the spring Catalog has gone to the printer.

Have a good winter wherever you happen to be. See you in the spring.



## B.I.L.L. BOARD

Wilma Michaels, *Editor*

Home (413) 637-1148

Fax (413) 637-4565

E-mail [nmmwm@aol.com](mailto:nmmwm@aol.com)

Marge Lewis, *Editorial Assistant*

Peri Caverly, *Proofreading Assistant*

Susan Orenstein, *Proofreading Assistant*

## WAMC "Media Project"

More than 120 B.I.L.L. members and their guests came to the Country Club of Pittsfield on Friday, December 18, for the WAMC recording of the "Media Project," which was aired on Monday, December 21, at 3 p.m.

Moderator Alan Chartock (SUNY Professor of Political Science, radio personality, and columnist for *The Berkshire Eagle*) and

panelists David Scribner and Clarence Fanto, editor and managing editor respectively of *The Berkshire Eagle*, engaged in a lively discussion about freedom of the press and coverage of the elections. The topic was timely, and needless to say, when they finished, B.I.L.L. members had many questions and comments.

The broadcast recording was followed by a delightful buffet breakfast. The beautiful setting at the Country Club reinforced the feeling that we are indeed lucky to live in the Berkshires. B.I.L.L. plans to have the "Media Project" as an annual Special Event.

— Sue Gorham



David Scribner and Alan Chartock

BARBARA L. COHEN-HOBBS

## Did You Know....

B.I.L.L. is a not-for-profit educational organization. Contributions made to B.I.L.L., a 501C3 organization, are tax-deductible by the donor. Contributions can be made through the B.I.L.L. office.

B.I.L.L. acknowledges and appreciates the generous gift of \$1,000 received from the Charles Read Foundation.

## B.I.L.L. Office is Moving

The B.I.L.L. office will be moved on May 12 and 13 to a temporary location (these dates are approximate and are subject to change). We will be on the lower level in the Jonathan Edwards Library between Rooms E-10 and E-11. Signs will be posted to help you locate the office. As of this date, we have not been assigned a permanent space. We will keep you informed.

## Thank You, Quality Inn

B.I.L.L. thanks the management of the Quality Inn, located on Route 7 in Lenox, for providing us with an ideal location for winter programs, and for its welcoming hospitality, accessible parking, and comfortable warm classrooms.

**THINK**   
 **SPRING!**

## Letters to the Editor

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

I want to share with you my enthusiasm for B.I.L.L. courses and especially for the two I took in the fall semester: *The Joys of Thinking* taught by Edward Burger and *War and Peace in Homer's Iliad* taught by Clara Clairborne Park. Thursday became a most enjoyable day! It is a wonderful added bonus to enjoy lunch at the Williams College Faculty House with other B.I.L.L. students.

Professor Burger's course certainly lived up to its name. He is a dynamic teacher who injects humor into each class along with the higher level thinking skills he imparts seemingly with no effort. The time flew by with the fun of discovery and much humor. The lunch table conversation that followed his class involved discussions of fibonacci numbers, the fourth dimension, and fractals.

After lunch, we read and discussed Homer's *Iliad* under the tutelage of Professor Park. She knows her subject well and from time to time treated us to readings in the original Greek. Homer's world from three millennia ago came alive in her class.

My thanks to these wonderful programs which truly promote lifetime learning. — Elizabeth (Betty) Clark

Dear B.I.L.L.BOARD Editor:

I wish to commend the Curriculum Committee for its inclusion of the Medical Review course. Drs. Robert McInerney and Sandor Wax, the presenters of this most interesting series of discussions, did an outstanding job of making clear some facets of medicine important to most people. Their presentations were excellent and professionally staged. They did a great job demystifying the jargon in a pleasant and enjoyable way. They were able to make seemingly impenetrable articles from *The New England Journal of Medicine* comprehensible and enjoyable.

I want to thank them both for their efforts. I look forward to next year's course and highly recommend it to everyone interested in medical topics.

— Bill Mezzabarba

## Getting to Know You

### BOB CHANDLER

At a recent luncheon meeting of the "Boys' Club," a social and educational group of primarily Berkshire gentlemen, Bob was the main speaker. His subject was "What went wrong with the television return reporting on election night, November 7?" At the outset, he stated, "I ought to know since I was instrumental in setting up the reporting process." This in a nutshell exemplifies the kind of executive decision-making power Bob enjoyed during his illustrious career in the TV industry at CBS.

Early in Bob's career he was Director of Information Services. He became Manager of Program Administration in charge of documentaries and then Vice President and Director of Public Affairs in charge of political coverage. He was in charge of "CBS Reports" and programs of special events. Proposals for documentaries required his approval. When asked how he felt in giving up this power upon his retirement to the



BONNIE GELLER-GELD

Berkshires nine years ago, he stated with a broad grin, "I don't miss a thing. I love my retirement."

Bob joined B.I.L.L. at its first open meeting and continues to be extremely active. He has served as Public Relations Chair, Second Vice President, and Director-at-Large, and is currently Board Parliamentarian.

A great teacher, he has given widely-attended B.I.L.L. lectures on wide-ranging subjects such as: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Dunkirk, McCarthy-Army Hearings, Journalistic Ethics, Polling, Leadership in Communications. He also teaches Elderhostel courses.

Bob met his wife, Ellie, in college. They married when he returned from his stint in Germany after being drafted into the army. Ellie is also an active member of B.I.L.L. The rumor is that Ellie takes credit for Bob's success. Bob agrees. — Karl Easton

## Convocation - May 30, 2001

Evan S. Dobbelle, President of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, will be the speaker at B.I.L.L.'s Convocation, which will take place at Berkshire Community College, Koussevitsky Arts Center, Boland Hall at 1:30 p.m.

Under President Dobbelle's leadership, Trinity is setting the standard for excellence in liberal arts education while at the same time serving as a national model for linking higher education in innovative partnerships with corporate, cultural, and government institutions.

President Dobbelle is a leading advocate for the liberal arts, a staunch supporter of research and technology, and a passionate advocate of public-private partnerships to spur economic development.

President Dobbelle pursued a notable career in academia and public service. He served as the twice-elected Mayor of Pittsfield, MA, while in his twenties. He was chosen by President Carter to be U.S. Chief of Protocol for the White House and Assistant Secretary of State with the rank of Ambassador at age 31. Prior to his current position, he served as chancellor and president of City College of San Francisco and before that he was president of Middlesex Community College in Lowell, MA.

**New Year's Brunch 2001**

A wonderful start to the New Year! B.I.L.L. members and guests enjoyed the delightful presentation of food and great entertainment at the Country Club of Pittsfield.



**Friends!**



*Photos by Norman Avnet and Wilma Michaels*



*Family!*

*Food!*



*Fun!*

*Entertainment!*





Jazz — Joel Bishop O'Brien, Joseph Berger, Karl Easton



The Committee



## Plein-Air in Hartford

On Halloween, instead of going trick-or-treating, 57 B.I.L.L. members headed for Hartford. Our first stop was the Wadsworth Atheneum to view the exhibit, "The Impressionists of Argenteuil," a collection of 50 paintings that had been gathered from private collections and museums around the world. The audio guide accompanying the exhibit gave us a look into the personal lives of the artists and their impressions of Argenteuil.

Argenteuil, located on the banks of the Seine, was a bourgeois town a few miles from Paris. Monet settled his family there, and fellow painters visited for various lengths of time to paint with him.

After lunch, we toured the homes of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Their Victorian dwellings were built on land known as Nook Farm located in Hartford beside the north branch of the Park River. Docents at

Nook Farm provided us with insight into the lives of these two famous writers—their triumphs and their tragedies. We stepped back to the Gilded Age in the 19-room Tiffany decorated mansion where Mark Twain lived with his family from 1879 to 1891. During this period he wrote the classics, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Harriet Beecher Stowe lived in a more modest 17-room, painted brick cottage with her husband and their twin daughters. We learned that in addition to being a gifted writer, an avid abolitionist, and a suffragette, she was also a painter, a kitchen designer, a lecturer, a gardener, and the breadwinner of the family.

It was a wonderful day. Thanks for this extremely well planned trip go to Julie Lowell, Barbara Nelick, Bobbi Liebert, and, of course, Arline Breskin and her helpers. — Evelyn Zwerner



## Trip to Boston

On a cold, rainy morning in November, two busloads of B.I.L.L. members took off for Boston. The weather had not improved when we disembarked on Massachusetts Avenue to attend a rehearsal of the premiere performance of John Corigliano's Second Symphony written as a tribute to Boston's Symphony Hall's 100th anniversary. The moment I stepped inside that marvelous musical shrine, I was once again in Old Boston where women wore hats and gloves and oh-so-sensible shoes. What a wonderful treat it was, and I am sure we will hear that piece played at Tanglewood. Unfortunately, we had to leave after hearing only a few minutes of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Krystian Zimmernan as pianist.

Our buses were waiting in the pouring rain to take us to the Aquarium on Boston Harbor, where we had lunch. After lunch, depending on our interests, we went in various directions to the many fascinating exhibits and activities in the Aquarium. Most of us chose to visit the seals.

Thanks to Arline and her committee for another exciting day and the always welcome refreshments on the return bus trip. — Polly Pierce

## Election 2000

Who expected that

a dead man would be elected to the Senate;

the man who got the most votes (and probably the most votes in Florida) wouldn't win the election;

instead of a President picking Justices, Justices picked a President?

While other elections have been close, confused, or contested, this one beats them all.

As citizens, we learned a great deal from this election. We learned that, despite the technological age we are in, we still use outmoded methods for elections and, as a result, many votes did not get counted. We also learned that the American public is willing to let the system work, is almost infinitely patient, and will accept the results of the process even if we have questions about the way it functioned.

The most significant thing we learned is how our electoral process does or does not work. The American people are now much more aware of the intricacies and shortcomings of the system and how important proper and effective voting is. Every vote, properly cast, matters. Will this message carry over to 2004? One hopes it will — but I'm not optimistic — people's memories can be very short.

Ultimately, the lesson of the 2000 elections is that Americans are very resilient. Our nation never missed a beat (even the stock market went about its usual ups and downs). Now it is up to the two parties to reach intelligent compromises that will move us forward. It is the responsibility of President Bush to try to heal the wounds left by the Florida fiasco and his questioned legitimacy. His place in history will be largely determined by how effectively he deals with this issue. Not that politics can be put aside, but our leaders must prove that they are leaders and move the agenda of our country forward. And, of course, they must start the campaign for 2004. — Paul Flaum

Paul Flaum, a B.I.L.L. member, taught the *History of Presidential Elections* course in the fall 2000 semester. He also gave two lectures as part of the course, *The Year 2000 Elections*. His topics were "The Presidential Election" and "Congressional Races: The Senate."

## Technology Connections

Experience has taught me that expanding interests makes life richer. And when one interest runs into another, the connections can be surprising.

My kids sailing around the world has led me to satellite technology, and it is exciting! They are circumnavigating the globe in a sailboat, which they picked up in Puerto Rico and refurbished in Maine. At this writing, they are four months and 7,000 miles through the West Indies, Panama Canal, and Galapagos, and nearing Tahiti in the French Polynesian Islands.

I expected my involvement to be limited to occasional visits to exotic

places. I didn't have any idea how hard it would be to fall asleep at night thinking of the kids — out of touch. It was a blessing when they finally set up a special e-mail connection that catches a radio beam from a satellite if the sea is not too rough.

A company called Stratos bills according to the number of characters in the message with mysterious numbers for space time and landing times. I post the latest messages on a personally designed web page for friends and family. The frequent communication is great fun and lets me sleep like a baby at night.

Getting familiar with web page

usage has led to the next connection. Organizing tennis games and facilitating arrangements for the many players in this area has kept me busy in my retirement. I started this project about seven years ago. It is sort of a combined clearinghouse and matching service for tennis players with different skill levels.

Using a web page and other high-tech wizardry can get complicated, but it keeps you in touch with the world.

— Herb Sandick

