

# B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning  
Summer '98 • Volume 7 • Number 1

## Curriculum Committee Announces "Embarrassment of Riches" for Fall '98 Semester

B.I.L.L. will again offer 12 courses, but to avoid conflict in class schedules that created painful conflict in our members last spring, we are adding Monday classes.

Ancient Egypt, with emphasis on the 18th Dynasty, will be brought to life for us by Dr. Lenore Congdon.

Phyllis Curtin enjoyed the two classes she gave us last year so much that she will teach an entire course she calls, "Opera From the Inside Out". And who could do this better . . . ?

B.I.L.L. will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Women's Movement with a course on its history given by our own Harriet Vines.

No semester is complete without a "Headlines" course, giving our vocal members a chance to discuss (and argue about) the News of the Day,

with Michael Feltser, Bud Weiss and Jack Rubin as the brave moderators.

We've waited a whole year for another "Great" course put together by Jack and Priscilla Stern. Our reward is, "Great Turns in History" including topics such as From Polytheism to Monotheism, From Manuscript to Printing Press, From Office Space to Cyberspace, and more. The lecturers will include an impressive array of Williams professors besides Jack, himself, and Ethan Zuckerman from Tripod, Inc.

Mythology seems to fascinate us all. Paul Flaum, who has taught Political Science at B.I.L.L. will guide us through Greek, Roman and other myths and their use in literature.

Luckily for us, Emily Dickinson wrote over 1,700 poems, so we can

continue our seminar from last winter's semester with never-before-read poems. David Pierce will once again moderate the discussion, analyze, and just plain enjoyment for old and new students.

Alexandria, Xian, Mexico City, Moscow, Amsterdam and Vienna each made important historical contributions to the world we live in. Join four Williams professors and our own Loet Velmans and Ilse Browner in exploring crucial periods in the development of these historic sites.

Thursday will be a Williamstown Day with David Park gently elucidating Einstein's Theories of Relativity "with minimal use of letters and numbers" and their impact on the world of ideas. Professor Park did the

*(continued on page 3)*

## Exploring the Beaches and Rocky Shores

Not only is life a constant challenge for organisms living in the rocky inter-tidal zones of the shoreline but also for the 70 B.I.L.L. graduates of the course given by Dr. William Fox at Williams during the fall '97 semester, entitled, "At the Edge of the Sea."

Dr. Fox determined May 26th to be the most propitious time for a trip to the edge of the sea because of the occurrence of low-low tides that would permit close examination of the flora and fauna, literally at the edge of the sea. He chose two different types of sites; one a beach and the other, a rocky coast.

We arrived at Winnegard Beach at Cape Ann, on a picture perfect day and ate our brown bag lunches perched on rocks nested in the beach.

With elaborate field guides pre-

pared for us by Dr. Fox, we walked the beach seeking out American beach grass, blue mussels, scallops, ghost crabs, and other wondrous things, preserving them in plastic bags. We then had "show and tell" on the beach with our own and perfect specimens from Dr.

Fox's collection and with input from Gudveig Baaril, an assistant from the Williams College Geosciences Department who accompanied Dr. Fox.

Our next stop was Halibut State Park containing an abandoned, flooded stone quarry. Huge boulders led down to the ocean amidst numerous tidal pools. Barnacles clinging to



*Studying the catch of the day with Professor Fox.*

the rocks and exciting creatures and plants were uncovered by the ebbing tide. At extreme lowest tide a bed of Irish moss was uncovered, a sight rarely seen.

The day ended with a fabulous seashore dinner with the best clams in the rough in New England, at Woodman's in Essex.

## President's Letter

Entering its fifth year B.I.L.L. can look back to an ongoing series of accomplishments with great pride. The number and quality of the courses offered continues to increase and the venues expanded from the BCC main campus to include the one in South County as well as the facilities at Williams College. The excellent fall '98 twelve-course program will be offered over a full five-day week. And last year's successful winter semester will be expanded.

Winter Lecture Series, a film club and a book club were launched with great success and special lectures and events now occur regularly throughout the year and cover a very broad range of trips and other educational events. The B.I.L.L. membership has grown in the four years since its founding from 125 to over 600 and the pool of talented interested and interesting members continues to grow rapidly. Clearly, B.I.L.L. has tapped into a fundamental need of the community and its members.

The progress we have made is due to the dedication and hard work of the Board and Chairpersons of the various standing and special committees and the encouragement they receive by your response in volunteering and participating.

To look back with pride is permissible. But, to look forward is imperative if we are to continue to grow and not stumble over our own successes. We took a major step in that direction at the Annual Meeting at the end of May.

The groundwork which was prepared by Art Sherman, Bob Chandler and Elliot Lowell in redrafting the by-laws, and the establishment of B.I.L.L. as a non-profit, legal entity was recognized by an overwhelming vote of acceptance at this meeting. Many members commented that their attendance gave them a deeper insight into the efforts of the Board and Chairpersons.

The new members who were elected to the Board bring their considerable talents and expertise to our plans for B.I.L.L.'s continued success. Their efforts require the continued

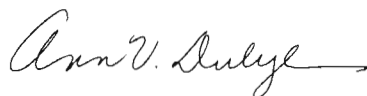
dedication of the many volunteers on the various committees, and the improved use of the huge membership capabilities in areas of peer teaching.

We are continually grateful for the support of our sponsors. Berkshire Community College continues to provide the facilities in Pittsfield and in South County. Williams College provides a variety of facilities on its campus as well as highly qualified faculty lecturers.

Our spanking new office in the Student Lounge at BCC offers convenience and professional services for you. Please stop in to meet Sharon Mack, our Administrative Secretary. Our sincerest thanks go to Barbara Viniar and Alexandra Warshaw for making this very fine space available.

Attending B.I.L.L. functions is not only a source of unfolding knowledge, but also a delightful experience in meeting and developing friendships. Remember to register for the very exciting Fall '98 semester and enjoy your summer.

As my first year as President comes to an end, I must tell you that it has been a great honor and a source of deep pride to represent B.I.L.L. But, I cannot do it without all of YOU.



## B.I.L.L. Officers and Committees

### Founders

Tom and Judy Easton

*Ex-Officio President, 1996-97*

Len Stolzberg

### President

Ann Dulye

### 1st Vice President

Norman Avnet

### 2nd Vice President

Arthur Sherman

### Secretary

Elske v.P. Smith

### Treasurer

Walter Leon

### Ex-Officio Advisors

Elliot Lowell, Legal

David Orenstein, Financial

### Director-At-Large

Ilse Browner

Robert Chandler

Anna Pollack

Jack Rubin

Karl Easton

Shirley Tremblay

Ed Levin

### Committee Chairpersons

Ellie Sack, Curriculum

Arline Breskin, Special Events

Ileen Cohen, Membership

Sue Phillips, Public Relations

Howard Gorham, Finance

Elliott Vines, Winter Lecture Series

Wilma Michaels, B.I.L.L. Board

## A Special Letter

Dear B.I.L.L. Board Editor,

As a former schoolteacher, I am really excited to learn that over 600 adults belong to B.I.L.L. and are interested in further learning. What a tribute to the organization the steadily increasing members are!

The courses have been so stimulating and varied, and beautifully taught. I cannot praise the instructors highly enough. They put so much effort into their preparation and presentation.

Finally, meeting the remarkable people taking the courses is an inspiration to me to continue living in order to be part of B.I.L.L.

Sincerely,  
Gertrude Knepper

## Letter To The Editor

To: B.I.L.L. Board Editor

I wrote this returning home from our wonderful day in Boston. Jim and I want to say, "Thank you!"

As this "so pleasant" day is on  
the wane  
Contented perfection defines its  
reign  
From early this morning, no  
clouds, no rain!  
We took the bus? It beats the  
plane!

We wended toward Boston, to  
the V and the A  
Where Conforti's intro proved to  
be our mainstay  
We listened, we looked; liked or  
ixnayed  
Shared views with B.I.L.L. friends,  
they nodded, they nayed!

Too soon came the end of our  
glorious day  
But . . . put away your fears; your  
fears please allay  
For snacks were forthcoming — a  
B.I.L.L. team hip hooray!  
With Arline at the helm, what  
more can I say?

— Anne Lostrangio

## Curriculum for Fall '98 *continued* from page 1

same for "A Tour of the Cosmos" course in our first two semesters.

Also in Williamstown, we will hear about "The Black Experience" by Professor Alex Willingham who is Chair of Afro-American Studies at Williams College.

On Friday mornings we move to Great Barrington for an enlightening look at "Investing in the New Millennium" with Paul Fortini, an investment banker.

In the afternoons, Phyllis Jaffe is returning in the company of "Daughters and Fathers in Literature, from Agamemnon to Sylvia Plath". We were privileged to hear her course on "Gertrude Stein and Her Circle" last year and welcome her back with much enthusiasm.

## Getting To Know You

### ARLINE BRESKIN

Arline is the smiling, energetic lady in the front of the bus at Special Event trips who directs that exciting part of B.I.L.L.'s activities. Since retiring to the Berkshires four years ago from Westchester County, Arline has characteristically become very involved in community activities. She became a Docent at the Berkshire Museum where she also did voluntary catering, a skill she was intimately familiar with since, for 20 years before retirement, she was President of Arline Breskin, LTD, where she successfully catered at least 150 events a year,

Her skills and awards are numerous. She had been Chief Occupational Therapist at Blythdale Children's Hospital. She was in "Who's Who in American Women" and received the Westchester County Senior Citizen



Hall of Fame Special Recognition award.

Her husband John aptly describes her as a "short circuited dynamo". They met at a tennis camp in Amherst. (The score was "love" at first sight.) Presently active in Lee Community Tennis, she plays at least three times a week. Arline and John are indeed goal directed. They purchased their very interesting home only

ten minutes after the "for sale" sign was posted. Both personally labored on its renovations.

B.I.L.L. has been very important for Arline. Not knowing anybody in the Berkshires initially she immediately joined. She loves the courses, has "fun" running the Special Events program, and loves the camaraderie on her committee.

## A Grand Design: The Victoria and Albert Museum

B.I.L.L. members visited Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to view this exceptional exhibit. The trip really began two weeks earlier with an excellent lecture by Michael Conforti, Director of the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown. He presented an overview of the history of the V and A in London and the exhibit in Boston and discussed from a broad perspective the changing role of art museums. Their increasing emphasis on marketing and blockbuster exhibits requiring advance reservations may be impacting scholarship.

Since the V and A is a museum of decorative arts, the exhibit reflected the vast cross section of works in many media. There were lavish displays of jewelry, silver service, tapestries, furniture, paintings and sculpture. One writer describing the museum itself noted that it offers a blend of the ideal and the pragmatic. The works displayed from the twentieth century collection had a functional aspect as articles one might use in a home; however, the unique designs and imaginative treatment of everyday objects brought the viewer to a level far beyond the pragmatic.

Room after room yielded glorious treasures from many centuries. And although most of us reached a point of sensory saturation from the exhibit, the day in Boston also allowed time to explore other areas of the city. All in all, it was a terrific day.

## SPECIAL EVENTS PRESENTS



### Saratoga Performing Arts Center - Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup> AN INVITATION TO DANCE

The day includes a talk by a member of the New York City Ballet, a sumptuous buffet lunch in the Hall of Springs, the performance, bus transportation, and a refreshing snack on return trip. The program includes Bournonville Divertissements, Variations on a Nursery Song, and Chaconne. \$50.00/person (Guests subject to availability). Event Leaders : Arline Gilbert (413 637 1114) and Judy Korostoff(413 232 7020)

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**E=mc<sup>2</sup>**

### MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EINSTEIN

Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at BCC in k111 at 10 AM

**DR. ROBERT RESNICK**

A charming professor of physics with an impressive dossier of educational background and achievement, he will surprise you with related slides that will dispel Einstein myths— Did you know Einstein won his Nobel Prize for photo electric effect and not for relativity ? \$3.00 /Bill member - \$5.00/ guest.

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### “THE MERCHANT OF VENICE”

**PHYLLIS JAFFE, B.I.L.L. lecturer par excellence!**

Gain an understanding of this classic play being presented Mainstage at “SHAKESPEARE & COMPANY” during August.

Don't be a SHYLOCK - Come join the discussion!

Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup> 10AM BCC - K111

Cost \$3.00/person