

# B.I.L.L. BOARD

SUMMER 2005  
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NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKSHIRE INSTITUTE FOR LIFETIME LEARNING

## Looking Ahead to Fall 2005

The Curriculum Committee is putting together a wide array of stimulating courses and lecturers for the fall 2005 semester. A preliminary list of courses follows. Several special interest seminar courses and one evening course are being planned. Watch for the catalog this summer which will have a complete listing of courses and lecturers.

### ARTS

*Dr. Faust in Music*  
*Instrumentally Yours*  
*Collecting, Conserving and Conniving: Art Seen Through Different Glasses*  
*Let's Make Music*  
*Voices of Opera*  
*Adventuring With Sherlock Holmes*  
*The Circus: The Mirror of American Life*

### LITERATURE

*Autobiographical Writing – Seminar*  
*South African Writers*  
*The Sea in Prose and Poetry – Seminar*

### SCIENCE

*Drugs, Science and Policy*  
*Celebrating Genius: Einstein 100 Years Later*

### SOCIAL SCIENCES

*Today's Headlines*  
*Health From Inside Out – Canyon Ranch staff*  
*Uncle Joe Stalin: Not Your Average Joe; Not Your Average Uncle*  
*Great Men, Critical Times*  
*Show Me the Money: National Financial Issues*  
*Ideas That Changed the World*  
*Early Christian History to 600 C.E.*  
*Mayan Culture: 1500 to Now – Seminar*  
*Berkshire County from the 17th Century to the 20th Century*  
*Seeing the Forest from the Trees*  
*John Marshall or John Adams – Evening*



Phyllis Jaffe, Lecturer  
South African Writers



Paul Flaum, Lecturer  
Great Men, Critical Times

## Dates to Save

- June 1:** Convocation — BCC
- June 4:** *Great Piano Concertos and 1959: The Greatest Year in Jazz* — Jeremy Yudkin, BCC
- June 8:** Tallix Foundry, Beacon, NY and Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, NY
- June 13:** *Mahler: The Man and his Music* — Stuart Feder, Simon Wainrib, BCC
- June 20:** *B.I.L.L. READS* — Susan Dworkin, Phyllis Jaffe, Paul Stein, Matthew Tannenbaum
- June 23:** Savion Glover — Jacob's Pillow
- June 27:** *Mysteries of Light and Color* — Bob Berman, BCC
- July 11:** *Averros and Maimonides* — Alfred Ivry, BCC
- July 21:** New York City Ballet — SPAC
- July 25 and 27:** Berkshire Opera — *The Old Maid and the Thief* and *L'Heure espagnole*, Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington
- July 30:** *Landscape as Inspiration: Artists Talk* — James Bleeker, Stephen Hannock, Gabrielle Senza, Berkshire Museum
- August 29 and 31:** Berkshire Opera — *L'Elisir d'amore*, BCC
- September 6:** *Salem Revisited* — Salem, MA



**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER**

## President's Message

As I write this last column as President of B.I.L.L., I take great pleasure in reflecting on the past two years. We have seen our membership increase, new activities such as our Special Projects grow in quality and quantity and our information systems move into the 21st century. Our basic courses and Special Events continue to provide stimulating learning opportunities for our membership. During my presidency, we began a mentoring program at BCC and are working to develop an extended travel program that will be of value to our members. We continue to find new ways to serve our population while retaining the current core of traditional programs.

So many people make B.I.L.L. work that it is impossible to mention each person individually. Please accept my thanks on behalf of B.I.L.L. for all that each of you has done to make our organization the success that it is. On a personal note, I want to thank the membership for having given me this opportunity to play a role in B.I.L.L.'s continuing development. I have met many of you during the last two years and have established new friendships that I will continue to cherish in the years ahead. I want particularly to thank my wife, Marilyn, who has put up with phone calls at all hours, the time I have spent at numerous meetings and the adjustments that have been required. I could not have done my job without her patience, love and support.

In closing, let me urge each of you to become more involved in B.I.L.L.; you will find, as I have, that the rewards far outweigh the time and effort you expend. I know that Mona Sherman, our incoming President, will continue to do the outstanding job she has done in every aspect of her work for B.I.L.L.



## From Concept to Stage: The True Inside Story of Putting Together a Season at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Part 1)

Think of a calliope playing a fugue full tilt or that plate-spinner some of you may remember from *The Ed Sullivan Show*. These are not the images you may have expected me to refer to, but they well describe the dynamics of putting together a season at Jacob's Pillow. The high-end term for it is "curating"—combining years of experience in the arts field with the vision of the institution and what I think audiences may find interesting, moving, provocative and even revelatory.

In addition to my many responsibilities at the Pillow, I travel around the country and the world to see performers at work. There is no substitute for being in the theater with a live audience in order to understand the experience of a performance and the effect it might have on audiences at the Pillow.

"Budget" is probably the word heard most often at the Pillow besides "art." We need to raise nearly \$2 million every year to meet expenses for the Festival and the 200 free events we present concurrently along with our archives, school and year-round community programs. Funds are also needed for travel because I'm invited by cultural agencies, governments, foundations and presenting organizations in other countries to see performances or to speak at conferences.

The Pillow is known far and wide as the "mother ship" of dance and to perform at the Pillow is a prestigious imprimatur for artists, much like the currency of having been invited to Bayreuth, the Biennale or Spoleto. It is a privilege to represent such an honored institution. Typically, I arrive somewhere, check into the hotel and begin a marathon schedule of meetings, rehearsals, performances and receptions—jet-lagged all the way. On a recent trip to Stockholm, for example, I attended eight performances, four meetings and two official receptions in two days and then flew home for a Board meeting.

I view artists' DVDs constantly—early morning, late at night and in various moving vehicles and hotel rooms; I receive about 20 unsolicited submissions a week from artists, managers and agents. I also read trade publications, research online and have networks of colleagues all over the world who share information about artists.

Artistic merit is the unwavering criterion for choosing who to present at the Festival. However, there are other variables that also must be considered in putting together the Festival.

[To be continued]

— Ella Baff

Ella Baff is the Executive Director of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and a lecturer for B.I.L.L. Part 2 of her article will appear in the next issue of B.I.L.L. BOARD.

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## ***B.I.L.L. 2004 — 2005 Volunteers***

B.I.L.L.'s strength and vitality comes from its corps of active, committed volunteers—the people who plan courses, special events, special projects, recruit lecturers, keep our membership growing, help in the office, publicize our activities, communicate with our members, supervise class arrangements, provide leadership and pitch in wherever help is needed. These are the men and women, 229 strong, who gave B.I.L.L. their time, energy, creativity and skill during the past year. We hope we included everyone. They are our engine and our fuel, and we give them our thanks.

Elaine Andersen	Phyllis Epstein	Eileen Henle	Norman Michaels	Anthony Segal
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# The Bidwell House

A mile down a dirt road through thick woods in Monterey is the Bidwell House. Visitors want to know what it is doing in the middle of nowhere. In 1750, this was the center of town when the Reverend Adonijah Bidwell was hired to be the first minister of newly settled Township #1. He built a large and stately Georgian saltbox home near the church meeting house, and here he lived, preached and farmed until his death in 1784.

Three generations of Bidwells lived in the house for almost one hundred years, enlarging the house and property. It then went through several owners and at one time was an art school. In 1960, it was bought by Jack Hargis and David Brush. They came across the Reverend's death inventory and used this as a shopping list to furnish the house in a manner Bidwell would have found quite familiar. In their wills, Hargis and Brush stipulated that the house become a museum which opened in 1990. The house



with its elegant wooden molding and paneling, some in original paint, four fireplaces and two beehive ovens is in great shape after these 250 plus years.

Hargis and Brush had a particular interest in the decorative arts of the period, especially textiles. The museum has many quilts, bed covers, rugs and drapes—some of which have traveled on loan to national exhibits. There are many fine examples of period American furniture, pewter and redware, as well.

There are so many stories to tell of the life and times of this house and property. The museum tells of the

changing rural economy; how agricultural practices and land use change over time; how one part of town may build up and thrive and another decline; how a major thoroughfare such as the Royal Hemlock Road may diminish to an obscure footpath; how a stately and venerable wooden manse can straddle four centuries and survive in spite of the forest that creeps around it.

Today, the museum stands on almost 200 acres with out-buildings, fields, stone walls, walking paths and overgrown apple orchards. There is a vibrant program with tours, historic gardens, lectures, demonstrations and school group programs.

With its collection, archives, library and programming, the Bidwell House Museum is a center for local colonial studies. For more information visit the museums' website at [www.bidwellhousemuseum.org](http://www.bidwellhousemuseum.org).

— Richard Greene

*Dr. Richard Greene serves on the Board of Trustees of the Bidwell House Museum.*

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

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