

B.I.L.L. BOARD

SPRING 2006
VOLUME 14
NUMBER 3

NEWSLETTER OF THE BERKSHIRE INSTITUTE FOR LIFETIME LEARNING

Spring 2006 Semester Approaches

From April 17 through May 25, B.I.L.L. will offer a wide variety of new and stimulating courses for the Spring 2006 semester. Several special interest seminars and one evening course have been planned. Classes will be held in various venues throughout Berkshire County. **See the catalog for complete details or visit our website at www.BerkshireBill.org.**

APRIL 17–MAY 25

ARTS

Dance and Dancers

The View From the North: An Introduction to Scandinavian Cultures

LITERATURE

Lord Tennyson's Lost Friend — Seminar

The Royal Throne of Kings: This Sceptered Isle... The Histories of William Shakespeare

Me and My Friends: Poets, Playwrights, Presidents and Players

SCIENCE

The Search for Life in the Galaxy

Energy's Great Impact: Today and Tomorrow

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Aging in Literature and Film — Seminar

SWAT Teams: A View From Inside

Today's Headlines

Boats and Men: The Creators of River Civilizations in Ancient Egypt

Living Younger Longer: Matching Health Span to Life Span

Corporate Bad Guys: How They Did and Did Not Get Away With It

Espionage in History and Fiction

The Great Triumvirate and the Civil War: Calhoun, Clay and Webster — Evening

American Political Condition Since End of Cold War: Return of Conservatism



A "SPECIAL" SPECIAL EVENT

CORNING: The Sparkling Crystal City

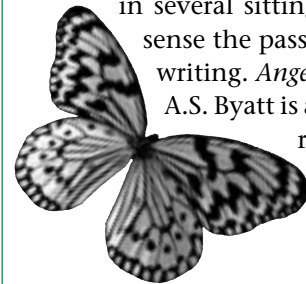
October 4–6, 2006

Explore the Finger Lakes Region with B.I.L.L.
Fall Foliage – Glass – Museums – Wine

Join Us for a Fabulous Time!

Reminder

Those members who have registered for *Tennyson's Lost Friend* are required to have read through the Tennyson poem *In Memorium* before the start of classes. It is suggested that you do so in several sittings in order to sense the passage of time in writing. *Angels & Insects* by A.S. Byatt is also a required reading for the course.



Flex Registration Continues

The procedure that worked so well during the past winter semester, FLEX REGISTRATION, will again be available to members who are traveling or will not be present for a part of the spring semester. A letter describing this procedure has been sent to all members, and the registration form in the spring catalog provides for this type of enrollment.

Please note that FLEX REGISTRATION does not cover the following courses in the spring because of limited class size, facility limitations or the need for course continuity:

M101 – *Aging in Literature and Film*

M102 – *Lord Tennyson's Lost Friend*

M106 – *Living Younger Longer: Matching Health Span to Life Span*

Register today! Use the FLEX!

— Art Sherman

President's Message

Another winter has passed. The days are longer, it is gradually getting warmer, and the wonderful spring, summer and fall of the Berkshires are ahead of us.

Our winter semester went well in our new, much less expensive winter locations at the Lenox Library and Simon's Rock College. The introduction of our FLEX REGISTRATION option proved enormously successful. Many members who intended to travel during the semester were able to register for courses and optimize their participation.

The committees have been very busy. The spring '06 semester is a powerhouse loaded with sixteen stimulating courses, quality instructors and a wide variety of venues including a special dance course at the new Williams College '62 Center for Theatre and Dance. Members who plan to travel for a part of the semester or those who will return after the start of the semester, may once again use FLEX REGISTRATION. Don't miss this semester!

Special Events and Special Projects programs have been planned for your enjoyment. Special Projects continues the outstanding June Distinguished Speaker Series. Special Events has scheduled a wonderful season: Music-Works in April; the Sculpture Gardens of PepsiCo in May along with the Neuberger Museum of Art; Jacob's Pillow in June; SPAC in July and a

fabulous overnight at Corning, the Sparkling Crystal City, in October.

Don't forget the B.I.L.L. Annual Meeting on June 7, 2006. Our guest speaker will be a very dynamic personality in the Berkshires, Mary Grant, President of MCLA.

And keep in mind the First Annual Symposium in the Berkshires by Brandeis University, our consortium partner, for the weekend of July 8-9, 2006, at Cranwell Resort in Lenox. The symposium is entitled *Crisis and Change in the Middle East*.

With the goal of increasing membership, we have embarked on a marketing program to make the public more aware of B.I.L.L. The grants we received from Berkshire Bank and Williams College are being used for this purpose. Additional grants are being sought. Despite the fact that we are a volunteer-driven organization, we have grown to the point of needing an irreducible minimum fixed overhead in order to operate

reliably. That overhead can now readily absorb further membership growth without an accompanying expense. If our marketing efforts are successful, B.I.L.L. will be launched toward a secure, long-term financial future.

Our Board of Directors and committees are working with the information and ideas that were gathered during the member survey summarized in this issue, and we will begin over the next several months to engage with Brandeis University and Harvard University to see how to move forward the concepts of seminar courses and mini-semesters.

B.I.L.L. continues to be an awe-inspiring organization, and I am constantly encouraged by the willingness of members to help. To all of you I say, "Thank You." Have a wonderful spring and summer!



B.I.L.L. Annual Meeting

JUNE 7, 2006



Dr. Mary Grant, MCLA President

Mary K. Grant will be the speaker at B.I.L.L.'s Annual Meeting at Berkshire Community College. She became the eleventh president of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in 2002. Prior to coming to MCLA, President Grant served as the chief academic officer and deputy CEO of UmassOnline at the University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Grant holds a Ph.D. in Social Policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University and a M.S. in Public Affairs from the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts. Her B.A. was completed at MCLA in the area of sociology.

As a member of a steering committee for the Berkshire Wireless Initiative, Dr. Grant helped develop a state pilot program that provides laptop computers to middle school students in Pittsfield and North Adams. She serves on numerous local boards and has worked with a variety of community and educational organizations. Mary Grant was selected as the 2003 Woman of Achievement by the Organization for Massachusetts Business & Professional Women.

B.I.L.L. BOARD

Helen-Mary Shaffer, *Editor*
Home: 413-499-1913
Email: hms@rnetworx.com

Bonnie Desrosiers,
Managing Editor
Peri Caverly, *Editorial Assistant*
Ruth Degenhardt,
General Assistant
Wilma Michaels,
Proofreading Assistant

Dates To Save

MONDAYS AT THE MOVIES

Triplex Cinema, Great Barrington
March 27: *Rain Man*

CLARK ART SERIES • Williamstown

March 23: *Mixed Messages — The
17th and 18th Centuries*
March 30: *Message? What Message?
The 19th and 20th Centuries*

April 18: *The Journals of Lewis and
Clark: The American Epic Discover*
William Fox, Simon's Rock
Lecture Center, Great Barrington

April 22: *MusicWorks — Terezin:
Resistance and Revival*, Lenox
Memorial High School, Lenox

May 12: Neuberger Museum of Art,
SUNY Purchase and Donald M.
Kendall Sculpture Gardens at
PepsiCo, Purchase, NY

June 7: B.I.L.L. Annual Meeting, BCC

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

Berkshire Community College
June 10: *The Magic of Music: An
Encore Presentation*, Jeremy Yudkin
June 19: *The RoundTable:* Susan
Arbetter, Joe Donahue, Paul Elisha

June 22: Nacho Duato and CNDA
(Compania Nacional de Danza 2)
Jacob's Pillow

July 8–9: Brandeis in The Berkshires
*First Annual Symposium: Crisis
and Change in the Middle East*
Cranwell Resort, Lenox

July 13 or 20: SPAC

October 4–6: Corning, the Sparkling
Crystal City (2 nights)

B.I.L.L. Members Speak Out – Survey Results

Members were surveyed to learn how they feel about B.I.L.L. and to explore new approaches to improve B.I.L.L. offerings. Both Ed and Phyllis Epstein contributed their considerable professional expertise to design a statistically valid survey instrument and interpret the results. Wilma Michaels brought together the phone volunteers, and Bonnie and Bob Desrosiers devoted many hours to the tabulation and computerization of the survey data.

A more complete report of the survey, with information about the statistical confidence in the findings, is available on www.BerkshireBILL.org. Some of the more interesting results are summarized below:

- ◆ Overall, members rate B.I.L.L. very highly with about half of them giving the highest possible rating, Excellent, and the overwhelming majority, 87%, rating it Excellent or Very Good. The Excellent rating was offered by 55% of the women surveyed but by only 32% of the men.
- ◆ The most extraordinary finding is the educational make-up of B.I.L.L. members. Based on the survey, more than half, 56%, have post-graduate degrees. The Excellent rating was offered by 60% of members without post-graduate degrees and by 39% of those with advanced degrees.
- ◆ Women comprise 65% of the B.I.L.L. membership. The survey indicates that 50% have post-graduate degrees, 30% have college degrees and 20% are non-college graduates. In contrast, men comprise 35% of the membership. The survey indicates that 71% of them have post-graduate degrees, 24% have college degrees and 5% are non-college graduates.
- ◆ B.I.L.L. members residing full time in the Berkshires (62%). Only 14% are here from 4-6 months and 24% are here from 7-11 months. The following breakdown of members' ages was determined by the survey: under 65 (23%), 65-69 (14%), 70-74 (32%), 75-79 (17%) and 80 plus (14%).
- ◆ B.I.L.L. members who joined in 2003 or earlier were asked how the organization compares now to when they first joined. Most said it was the same or better now.
- ◆ Those who joined in 2004 and 2005 rated B.I.L.L. better than they expected or about as expected. The two most frequent reasons given for finding it better were that the quality of the instructors was a pleasant surprise and more activities were offered than anticipated. Indeed 67% of the entire membership is very impressed with the instructors' knowledge of their subject matter.
- ◆ The possibility of adding seminars or study group courses to the curriculum, with limited enrollment and course requirements, drew 36% interest.
- ◆ Very high interest was also shown in 2-3 week mini-courses held between the three current semesters (55% very interested). This clearly had the most appeal of all the ideas tested. Those that want seminar courses also want the between session mini-courses (71%). About 22% of the members indicated they are very interested in summer classes (primarily among those away in the winter). Interest in evening courses is centered mainly among men with 24% of them very interested.
- ◆ Only 2% expressed interest in B.I.L.L. offering social activities such as dinner dances or social clubs and 22% indicated "very interested" in B.I.L.L. sponsored travel.
- ◆ Most mentioned as "liked best" were the variety of courses, specific courses, quality of instructors, special event trips and intellectual stimulation.

New Year's Brunch 2006

A wonderful start to the New Year at Ventfort Hall in Lenox! Members and guests basked in the ambience of the gilded-age while enjoying the scrumptious cooking of the B.I.L.L. chefs under the direction of Special Events Chair Arline Breskin. Great food and conversation were followed by entertainment by the ChordSharks.



E-mail: whubbard@berkshirecc.edu
 E-mail: smack@berkshirecc.edu

Website: www.berkshirebill.org

Phone: 413-499-4660, Ext. 456
 Phone: 413-499-4660, Ext. 496

B.I.L.L. Sponsors:
 Berkshire Community College
 Simon's Rock College of Bard
 Williams College

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

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PITTSFIELD, MA
 PERMIT NO. 79

Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning,
 Ltd.
 Berkshire Community College
 1350 West Street
 Pittsfield, MA 01201

