Dear LLI Members,

For me personally, the James Madison University Lifelong Learning Institute (JMU-LLI) has provided an opportunity to explore a variety of topics with knowledgeable instructors. I am repeatedly impressed by the level of excellence of each program and the lively involvement of fellow students. When I finish a course, I always wish more people could have participated in the experience. By more people, I mean all those potential members who don't know LLI exists. So far, our efforts to attract new members have just managed to compensate for those we lose each year. There is a need to significantly expand our outreach, and this appeal will, hopefully, provide resources to do just that.

The JMU-LLI is starting an annual appeal for the purpose of augmenting the budget line items available for publicity and printed materials. We are pursuing an annual goal of $10,000. Success in reaching a $10,000 target would help us to grow, while continuing to maintain the affordability of our membership and registration fees. Fees provide 60% of our operating income, and JMU provides 40%.

So I would ask, has your life been changed by LLI because you

- Mastered a new skill, such as playing an instrument?
- Enjoyed music at a concert or a show at the Forbes Center?
- Met new and interesting people through classes, field trips, and social events?

This is just a sampling of the great opportunities of LLI, so please consider making a tax deductible donation so that LLI can expand and thrive. Think of yourself as a LLI alum and show your support. Please donate whatever amount is right for you. To make your gift online, go to www.jmu.edu/give, then enter LLI or Appeal code 71204.

Or make checks payable to: James Madison Foundation Inc. Include on the memo line of your check: Fund #1002239.

Mail your check to: Gifts and Records, JMU Advancement Gifts and Records, 220 University Blvd., MSC 3603, Harrisonburg, VA 22807-0002.

Thank you for your support of the Lifelong Learning Institute.

Sincerely, Knute Leidal, LLI Advisory Board President, 2013-2014

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Smithsonian Museums - all within walking distance of the Smithsonian “Castle”; including National Air and Space, Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Freer Gallery, Sackler Gallery, National Museum of African Art, National Museum of Natural History, American History Museum, National Museum of the American Indian, National Museum of African-American History and Culture. Admission is free and when you're tired of walking, grab a hot dog or sandwich from a street vendor, or one of the many restaurants in the museums themselves. You have enough time to take in an IMAX theater at the Air and Space Museum - about 40 minutes in length and $7.50 for seniors. If you have never been in an IMAX-Theater, you're in for a real treat!

For the trip fee of $44, you can't afford to drive into D.C., let alone pay a parking fee for the day. The timing of the trip on April 30th means that D.C. will be at its loveliest with reasonable temperatures, suitable for walking. Sign up and enjoy a great day!

Smithsonian Institute - National Mall
April 30, 2014 - Cost $44, register by April 9, 2014

The clock is ticking, but you can still register for several B and C session classes - check the spring online schedule or in the Spring 2014 Program Guide. The following classes are closed: Da Vinci Code Updated, First Bites, "All Roads Lead to Rome": Exploring Art & Culture in Central Italy.

David Ehrenpreis, director of the JMU Institute for Visual Studies and instructor for the upcoming LLI class "Remembering Place,” has an exhibit "What Was Lost: Urban Renewal in 1960s Harrisonburg." The exhibit is on display through April 4 in Room 208 of Roop Hall. The focus of Ehrenpreis’ LLI class will be on the history of our own place, Harrisonburg. By exploring how we remember the past, we know how to behave in the future in regard to public space.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: VPAS (Valley Program for Aging Seniors) is in need of drivers (with your own car) to deliver meals from the Harrisonburg, Senior Center to homebound older adults Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Please contact volunteer coordinator Dawn Shull at 540-383-6855
March 4 - Silver Screen magic! Old-Time Movie with Live Music
We will watch a silent black and white movie from the mid 1920's and munch popcorn YOU bring, beverages will be provided. There will be introductory comments about the music and musicians who pioneered this genre. Adair McConnell will improvise music “just like the old days.”

March 18 - Getting the Most Out of Your Cell Phone Camera!
Learn some ways to improve the pictures you take with your cell phone camera. Find ways to edit and enhance your photos “in camera” and then share them with others. Discover the many applications available to get you on the way to making special memories.

Join us for a two part series:
April 1 - Aging Happens: Staying Independent Takes Planning
April 15 - Aging Happens: Navigating Your Healthcare Options
We are all on an independent journey in the aging process, yet face similar circumstances, barriers, concerns, and questions. Join us in a two part series to gain insight and knowledge on strategies for successfully navigating your journey. Jeannette Suter, Community Service Representative for Home Instead Stead Senior Care. She is a social worker with 15 years of experience in the field of gerontology. Questions are welcomed and will be addressed.

May 6 - Definitions of Art
Jerry Coulter will discuss various definitions of art and why they change over time. Jerry is a professor of art at James Madison University, and is an active, full-time artist.

May 20 - Rite/Riot of Spring
May 1913, Igor Stravinsky debuted his ballet The Rite of Spring. Though it is one of Stravinsky’s most famous works, his creation was first met with harsh criticism, negative reviews, and yes - a riot. We will watch a PBS DVD made in the 1980’s, learning both background of the production and its faithfulness to the settings, costumes, and music of the original performance. Adair McConnell will elaborate in entertaining detail as we see the show in almost exactly the same way as the rioting audience of 1913. There will NOT be a food-fight!

June 3 - Rethinking the US Peace Corps - Better Late Than Never!
Volunteers of all ages have a lot to bring to the Peace Corps, and that may be especially true of those approaching or already in retirement. Two such seasoned volunteers retrace their steps through the application process, orientation, actual volunteer work...then talk about the different paths they followed as they readjusted to life at home. Tim and Nancy Hulings were ready for a change so why not apply to the Peace Corps? They left their jobs and began a two and a half year adventure in Romania. Today they are back on their small farm where they grow wine grapes and raise horses.

Brown Bag lunches are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, from 11:30 AM - 12:45 at Gilkerson Activity Center, Westover Park, 305 S Dogwood Drive, and are open to the public as a way to get to know LLI. There is no registration required, nor any fee. Bring your lunch! Come and enjoy fun and fellowship while having the opportunity to enhance your knowledge.
For further information, call 540-568-2923 or send an email to lli@jmu.edu

Be a friend, bring a friend!
When we visit the Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive, we’re taken in by the sheer beauty of the vistas, flora and fauna. Ken Burns said it best, “Our National Parks, America’s Best Idea.” Yet our Shenandoah—a star among the parks—was born from a “best” idea shrouded in conflict and controversy, with social and economic consequences still deeply felt today.

Thanks to enthusiastic participant feedback from the Fall 2013 offering of “Shenandoah National Park: The Clash of Cultures,” facilitated by Jim Lawson and Sandra Conrad, the course is being repeated in the Spring 2014 C Session. (This offering is already full, but, we hope, won’t be the last!)

The stories of the park’s clashes and sacrifices are hidden, “ghost-like,” along the roadsides and in deep woods. Court battles, all the way to the Supreme Court, were part of the creation. Even the final location of the park pitted mountain cultures against powerful government and business leaders. Smaller clashes within CCC camps involved ethnic and religious differences. Conflict over racial discrimination lasted for decades. Also, territorial disputes over the path of the Appalachian Trail and roadbed for the Skyline Drive were based on whether the park was meant for walking or driving.

Jim Lawson, whose mother and maternal grandparents were former “Park People,” has made this part of his heritage and its history an ongoing study. Sandra Conrad, since coming to the Valley 35 years ago, has developed a love of these mountains and immersed herself in learning as much as she can about them.

These two, assisted by guest park interpreters and specialists, guide learners through the Park, its peoples and histories. Visits to haunting locations reveal stories of former inhabitants’ sacrifices and experiences. Learners explore together the “hows,” “whys,” “whos” and “wheres” of the Park’s turbulent past, its connection to movers and shakers of the time and how that affected the Park’s formation. They explore consequences of policies and decisions on the Park’s boundaries and former residents.

The initial course featured an interpretive tour, led by a park ranger, of the famous Massanutten Lodge, a “president’s wives tea” led by Sandy with entertainment by LLI members Tom and Jan Scanlon, informative visits to the Lewis Mountain area and Pocosin Mission ruins, and the Limberlost walk. The Limberlost—former home to a hemlock grove destroyed by a parasite—represents a microcosm of constant change in the park’s landscapes. On the short Limberlost hike, participants enjoyed an opportunity to view an unusual columnar rock formation that illustrates how these ancient mountains were formed. Of course, wildflowers, deer and bear were part of the experience. Our adventures provided opportunity to discover, explore, learn and have fun... and will again this Spring.

John Muir, a lover of mountains and wild places, best summed it up in his letter to his sister Sarah in 1873, by writing “The mountains are calling, and I must go.”

--by Jim Lawson and Sandra Conrad
and yes, there certainly is wildlife in the Shenandoah National Park!
What better way to learn about Greece and its culture than to have a taste of its cuisine. In his LLI course, “Greek Archaeology and Dining,” Mike Allain is offering not only a history of the archaeological approaches to uncovering the mysteries of Greek culture, but also a range of Greek food. The fortunate folks who signed up for this course have not been disappointed. He is covering the different periods which are the basis of Indo-European culture, including the Bronze Age, Early Greece, Classical Greece, Hellenistic Greece and Roman Greece. The treat, of course, includes meze—similar to Spanish tapas. We applaud Mike for offering a fascinating look at the complexities of ancient civilizations, the major names in archeological study, and cautioning us all to keep open minds about the various theories concerning the development of Greek civilization. The story is still being written. Written by Betty Hoskins
In May 2013, my husband Lloyd and I traveled to the British Isles for a 10-day Road Scholar course about Wales. Wales is located along the Atlantic Coast and the Irish Sea and is west of England. Although technically part of Great Britain, Wales has its own language that many citizens use. Many Welsh consider Wales a separate country from England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Welsh are of Celtic origin, as are the Cornish, the Irish, and the Scots. The land has marvelous sea coasts, gorgeous mountains, and a long, colorful, and sometimes tragic history.

The program’s director, Conway (Conwy in Welsh), a professor of Welsh history at the University of Wales in Carmarthen is a fluent Welsh and English speaker. He demonstrated his thorough knowledge of all things Welsh through his entertaining lectures and stories, his efforts to teach his mostly American audience the Welsh alphabet, and his ability to expound on any topic or questions about Wales that we put to him. He went to great lengths to convince us that many discoveries, inventions, customs, and English words have Welsh origins. We visited many fascinating, memorable, and historic sites. Here are a few especially noteworthy highlights of our trip:

We spent numerous hours on our first day walking through the magnificent Bodnant Gardens in North Wales where we saw literally hundreds of flowering trees, shrubs, and flowers. Notwithstanding the rain that fell gently, the scenery was breath-taking. When in the British Isles one must see at least one castle. One of ours was Conwy Castle, built in the 13th Century by King Edward I, one of Wales’ English conquerors. Now largely in ruins, one can easily imagine and marvel at its immense size and the engineering genius of its master architects, engineers, and builders.

We spent a few hours at the Great Orme Copper Mines, first mined, unbelievably enough, by Bronze Age people about 4,000 years ago. Producing copper is complex and the prehistoric people used bone scrapers from their animals and stone hammers to retrieve it.

In the seacoast town of Laugharne, we visited the Boat House where Dylan Thomas wrote some of his best work, at times locked in by his wife, to be sure he was working and couldn’t drink.

At Nevern (Nanhyfer in ancient Celtic), we spent time wandering in and around an ancient Celtic church dedicated to Saint Brynach. We were awed by two features there: the Great Cross, considered the finest High Cross in Wales and carved around 1000 AD, and the Maglocunus Stone, a bilingual stone (Latin and Celtic) that has greatly helped the understanding of early Celtic culture and language.

Road Scholar (RS), formerly known as Elderhostel, offers hundreds of courses in North America and in many international locations, including Europe and Australia. Its courses always include well-prepared historical, cultural, food and, of course, learning opportunities as well as free time for on-your-own exploration. There is usually a knowledgeable program director (to present lectures and serve as a tour guide extraordinaire) and a program coordinator (to see to your logistics needs). We believe these programs offer great value for the cost and we like the fact that we pay one price for every aspect of the tour (no hidden fees or optional excursions). We are looking forward to our next Road Scholar adventures, coming up soon in April and May in Utah’s southern national parks and New Mexico’s northwest areas. The Road Scholar Address is http://www.roadscholar.org/
Celtic Cross

Conway Castle
Did you know that LLI has a FaceBook site? Check it out at www.facebook.com/lifelonglearningjmu

However, since its inception in the spring of 2013, it has been languishing, with little new material. Nancy Owens would be thrilled to have someone - or more than one person- to step up to the plate and volunteer to maintain the site to keep it current. If you'd like to do this, please contact Nancy Owens at 540-568-2923.

Don't miss out on one of the six Ed-Ventures offerings - small, inexpensive day trips in March, April and June; times vary from 2 to 5 hours in length, plus one all day trip by bus. Check your spring program guide catalog online at http://www.jmu.edu/socwork/lli/social.html

Dinner and Forbes Center Performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore" - April 17 2014. Dinner at Clementine’s at 5:30 p.m. with the performance at 8:00 p.m. $46.00 per person.
Welcome to New and Returning Members!


FREE AARP TAX HELP: A volunteer-led program specializing in senior citizen issues and low-to-moderate income families. Tuesdays & Saturdays from February 2 until April 13. Times are 8:30 to 11:30 AM and 12:30 to 3:30 PM on Tuesdays and 9 AM - 2 PM on Saturdays. Location is the Gilkerston Community Activities Center in Westover Park off Dogwood Drive in Harrisonburg.