JMU-LLI Celebrates 20 years and still learning!

Mark your calendars now and reserve Wednesday, June 1, 2016 for the Lifelong Learning Institute’s 20th anniversary member dinner at the JMU Festival Conference and Student Center, on East Campus, off University Boulevard.

We will have a social hour with a cash bar from 5-6pm with special music provided by Adair McConnell, followed by a served dinner. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Richard Lindsay, co-founder of the Lindsay Institute for Innovations in Caregiving and this year named Fabulous Virginian Aged 50+. During his six decades of service, Dr. Lindsay has emerged as an innovator in the Commonwealth’s aging network. He has received awards from the National Institute of Aging, been appointed as an advisor to eight Governors and served as a delegate to three White House Conferences on Aging. Come find out more about what it takes to be Fabulous Over 50!

Invitations will be sent to all LLI members, and a non-member guest is allowed. The cost for the evening will be approximately $20.00 per person.

But wait, there’s more!

That’s not all we will do to celebrate 20 years and still learning! On Wednesday, August 10 from 1-4pm, we’ll have a Preview of Fall Events – on steroids. Oh yes, we’ll have fall instructors available to speak about their upcoming classes, but we’ll also have entertainment and displays of LLI members’ art work, most of which they learned in a previous LLI class. Artwork, photography, wood work, fiber arts, if you learned it in an LLI class, we will be asking you to show it off.

This event will be highly advertised, free, and open to the public so bring a friend. We will be at the Festival Center, but before the arrival of students so no worries with parking.
A Day in the WILD

It was a cold crisp fall scene as our little band of ten LLI-Edventurers, from the "Go-Take-A-Hike" class, headed out of Harrisonburg for the wilds of Shenandoah National Park.

This was the third and last in a series of hikes, all scheduled in SNP. We selected a beautiful back road for our motorcade, filled with the morning’s glow of reds, yellows, and greens reflecting the morning sun’s rays as they played peak-a-boo with the mountain peaks. Flip-flapping in the wind on Jerry Hopkin’s windshield, in the lead car, was a beautiful red maple leaf stuck in the wiper blade, its flapping in the wind an omen of what lay ahead.

Little did we know the surprises in store for our small band in our trek to the top of Compton Peak. Would there be chattering teeth, large boulders to circumvent, or even mountain monsters stalking us on this day before Halloween? The brave little band, covered in stocking caps, bundled in multilayered outfits, (after Jerry’s safety lecture on mountaineering skills and how to use hiking sticks) we set out on the AT for the 800 foot climb to the top of the mountain. With many breaks to catch our breath, Jerry filled us with history, geology, invasive plants and the AT trail maintained by Jerry and his fellow PATC members. Upon reaching the peak, we came to a “crossroad” trail marker. Do we take the left or right?

Of course we chose “correctly”, where we had lunch at a rock-top dining room with all-inclusive window seat (albeit a cold one) viewing the Shenandoah Valley. Back to the trail crossroads (left of course) and to the highlight destination that awaited us. Down over the rocks we trek, noting that “what goes down must come back up”.

This was the east side with its panoramic views of the Piedmont. Upon reaching our destination, the group was spellbound by the geological wonder that rose above us on the cliffs. Jerry talked about ancient volcanoes, 800 million year old rocks, and the shifting of continental plates. The highlight was the view of a stunning columnar jointing formation, within arm’s reach, on the side of the cliff.

Now the band of travelers realized the “up” part of the return trail marker still lay ahead. On hands and feet we slowly climbed the switch backs, up and through the rocky trail. Back at the crossroads, hikers greeted one another with high fives for realizing their own capabilities, as none of us were spring chickens. The good news was 800 feet of downhill awaited us back to the parking lot.

Little did we know that a “mountain monster” would appear suddenly out of the woods, ready to pick us off one by one from the back of the pack. Fortunately, the mountain monster revealed itself to be none other than Jerry Hopkins, who had guided us safely on an adventure that we did not realize we were capable of completing.

On the return trip back to the Burg, the red maple leaf continued to flap, still stuck in the windshield, reminding us of one heck of a fun adventure, where we exceeded our own expectations, challenges and survived a day in the wild, just as the red Maple leaf.

Written by Jim Lawson
Twenty-eight LLI members traveled to Richmond on December 11, 2015 to tour the Downton Abbey Exhibit at the Virginia Historical Society. All of the original gowns and attire, both for the female and male actors were displayed on models in appropriate scenarios from the TV series. Afterward we moved on to a tour of Virginia house, where we enjoyed a High Tea. It was a full day of time-travel to years gone by.

In 1925, Alexander and Virginia Weddell bought the priory at a demolition sale in Warwick, England. The Weddells had the house dismantled and rebuilt part of it in Richmond, Virginia, where they hoped the west wing would serve as a museum for the Virginia Historical Society. They planned that the remainder of the house would one day serve as the society’s headquarters. With these plans in mind, in 1929 the Weddells deeded Virginia House to the Virginia Historical Society and maintained a lifetime-tenancy for themselves.

The house has been preserved much as it was when the Weddells resided there.

Rosemarie Palmer
B session open classes, March 14–April 15, 2016

**Monday**
Paint Our Town Caring
Eat Like A Goddess
Wine Appreciation: An Introduction

**Tuesday:**
Writing Prompts and More Writing Prompts
Get Comfortable Between the Sheets with Self-Publishing
Beginning Ballroom Dancing

**Thursday:**
The Sermon on the Mount
New Horizons Band

C Session open classes, April 18 – May 20, 2016

**Monday**
Mennonites in the Valley
Down Rural Roads

**Tuesday**
You Can Eat That?
Politics in Classical Music

**Wednesday**
Scandals in the U.S. Presidency

**Thursday**
The Dark Worlds of Poe, Hawthorne & Melville
New Horizons Band

**Friday**
Zentangle: Create, Relax, and have Fun
Learn to 3D Print
A "Run" Through the Bible

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**Welcome New Members!**
Bridgewater: Nancy Obaugh, Diane Smith, Tara Vetting, Bill Walton. Broadway:
Juan Yuyariim. Elkton: Mary Robinson. Harrisonburg: Jacqueline Brantley, Krista Gisler,
Tami Gunst, John Rachel Hinz, Mary Louise & Wilmer Lehman, Merritt Lincoln, Miriam Martin,
Pauline Miller, Nancy O’Hare, Sue Panos, Barbara Simonetti, Pat Stauff. Massanutten:
Claudia Hanna. Mt. Jackson: Josephine Millett. Penn Laird: Tammy Myers. Rockingham:
Baard Grindal, Regina & Robert King, Donna Werstler. Shenandoah: Ralph Harlow. Singers
Waynesboro: Nancy & Charles Corwin, Kathy Glass.
Brown Bag Lunches

Are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, from 12:00 noon to 1:15 at The Ice House, 127 West Bruce Street, Harrisonburg, VA 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.

PLEASE NOTE: Parking is available, without parking passes, in the JMU lot across from the Ice House during Brown Bag Lunches. Be a friend, bring a friend!

March 15, 2016
Honey Bees: A Closer Look

April 5, 2016
James and Dolley Madison’s “Scandalous Son”

April 19, 2016
The Heifetz International Music Institute

May 3, 2016
Behind the Scenes at Monticello: An Update from Thomas Jefferson’s Mountain

May 17, 2016
What do Cantatas, Countertenors, and Rural Roots have in Common?

June 7, 2016
Picture Perfect: Fixing Your Photos using Your iPad or Android Tablet

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
National Historical Park
April 27, 2016
6:45 am - 5:15 pm

Harpers Ferry is a picturesque hillside town located at the juncture of three states. Spend a morning with a certified Harpers Ferry Park guide who will help you understand the history of Harpers Ferry. Explore the Historic Lower Town as well as other significant features. Learn why an American church chose to fly a British flag during the Civil War. Discover the beginning of modern factory processes and why Harpers Ferry was so strategic to both the Union and Confederate armies, changing hands six times! Lunch on your own and time to see more of the town. Uneven walking surfaces. Fee is $42.00 plus $5 admission without Golden Age park pass. Registration due by April 1, 2016.

This is NOT your “I’ve seen it before” Monticello. So much has been rediscovered and developed at this iconic American treasure that you will be delighted and surprised at the itinerary and new experiences. Prior to the manse tour, you will be given an exclusive introduction to Monticello’s new collections presented by Diane Ehrenpreis. There will be a 2 hour docent guided “Behind the Scenes” tour. The tour is all inclusive and entitles you to all other sites at Monticello. Lunch is on your own. Picnic or eat in the café. Admission includes Monticello and exhibitions. The tour is not handicapped accessible due to steep and narrow stairs.

Fee is $78 per person, with suggested gratuity to bus driver. Registration due by April 14, 2016.
Lifelong Music-Makers:
New Horizons Band draws two long-distance commuters to a long-term gig

David Evans, like many New Horizons Band members, played trumpet in his high-school band, then nothing for decades. Shortly after JMU music prof and band leader Will Dabback organized LLI’s band in Spring 2008, David and Jody Evans, a pianist whom David dubs “my far more musical wife,” dusted off two instruments from her sons’ high-school years. By early 2009, both Evanses had joined New Horizons. David, who describes himself as a "poorly motivated and ungifted music student" in high school, and still "arrhythmically challenged," began learning the alto saxophone. Jody, a Benny Goodman fan, picked up the clarinet, knowing "music from the big band era has wonderful clarinet parts."

Since then, they’ve driven 50 miles each way weekly from their rural West Virginia home for 13-week practice sessions Fall and Spring, plus about five annual performances.

The band is part of the international New Horizons program, channeling the motto "Your best is good enough," Will explains.

Fourteen LLI members convened for a recent practice, joined by flutist Katherine Axtell (Will’s wife) and saxophonist Samantha Reed (one of the band’s two undergraduate music majors). The ensemble includes two former LLI presidents -- Knute Leidal on French horn and Bob Bloomquist on first trumpet -- plus four or five charter members, and, Knute says, “five of us who are playing what we did at age 17.”

The band’s main concert occurs in midwinter, often at the Forbes Center. Local retirement communities provide frequent gigs, with Sunnyside in line for April. Jody and David report delightful moments at nursing homes: residents who had barely appeared conscious tapping time to music, and an old friend with Alzheimer’s singing a favorite song quite well.

Will, who hopes the band can grow more, says, “Really, we’re such a small group that anyone is welcome to play anything.” He’s open to mid-session sign-ups, and neophytes checking the band out.

The atmosphere at practice is serious but casual, with Will’s and Katherine’s small daughters playing quietly nearby and a member’s service dog napping.

Dennis, a trumpet player, advises that he has been having vertigo. “Take a break when you need to,” Will advises before a run-through of “Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair.”

Afterward, Will requests, “Talk to me a little bit about where the beginning went. What did you hear?” “We need a bit more of a crescendo sound,” trombonist Bob Schaeffer replies. “Yes, more lively. Were you in tune?” “Not too well,” comes another voice before they begin a movie-theme medley.

“Will says you have to listen to the others in the band,” says David. Players learn not to freeze when they make mistakes. Will and co-leader Bill Posey expect to convene more breakout, smaller-group sessions this semester as newcomers arrive. Without the formal assessments facing undergraduates, Will adds, “New Horizons is solely about fellowship, mutual interest, and music making.”

The Evanses try to practice an hour a day, Jody says, adding that playing instruments “makes you listen to the music in a whole different way.”

David cites Gary Marcus’s book, Guitar Zero, The New Musician and the Science of Learning. He alludes to “parallel paths in the brain” for language and music, and the “muscle memory” a musician – or anyone learning a skill – must develop. It’s a challenge as we age, but one that helps us stay young.

-by Chris Edwards

(For a more detailed version of this article, email chrisedwardshburg@gmail.com – subject line, “Band.”)
Now that you know what the LLI New Horizons Band is all about, do register and join in on the fun and enjoy playing music, again, if you haven’t played for years and years and years!

Waiting until they are old enough to join in are Will Dabbach and Katherine Axell’s twin daughters! And the service dog isn’t at all put off by the music, and just snoozes away.
LLI is a member-driven organization that relies on volunteer members to help organize classes, trips and events. Without our volunteer committee members, this organization would not exist. Please consider volunteering your time and talents to YOUR organization. Contact the LLI office at 568-2923 to see how you can help.

At a recent LLI Board Meeting, it was suggested that an ongoing series be included in the LLI Newsletter to focus on LLI Volunteers. I was asked to share my experiences of the past ten years as the volunteer editor of the current LLI Newsletter, so here’s my story!

My husband and I moved to the Shenandoah Valley in October 2005 and while unpacking in our new home in Bridgewater, we were visited by Welcome Wagon. Among the gifts we received was a brochure of the LLI classes. We signed up immediately for a class titled Memoir Writing and enjoyed it very much. At the final class, volunteers were solicited to form a committee to advertise the upcoming Tenth Anniversary Celebration of LLI and I joined in. At that time, the LLI newsletter was a front and back two-page letter mailed to members. The new committee felt that an enhanced and easier to read version of the newsletter was a good idea; I had been the editor of a monthly church newsletter in Maryland, and volunteered to update The Explorer.

Reality set in when I realized that I no longer had access to publishing software! Browsing the internet, I found a link to a free software program offered by a company in Nottingham, England, complete with toll free tech support. I spent a lot of time on the phone to England, where the techs very graciously talked me down from panic attacks after finished pages simply vanished off my monitor! However, the program was somewhat cumbersome, and in 2008, LLI purchased a software program for me to use, with the (joking) stipulation from Nancy Owens that I had to continue my work with the newsletter ad infinitum - and here I am, now publicizing the 20th LLI Anniversary Celebration!

For several years, members have been able to access the LLI Newsletter immediately after it has been published online and enjoy the wonderful photos in living color, supplied by members. I’ve learned mostly "by guess and by golly" but take pride in assembling materials and photographs into an attractive and informative newsletter. My part is making the LLI Newsletter look good, but the real work is done by those who write the articles, provide photos, and proof read to catch errors before publication. Attached is a photo of current newsletter committee members.

Nancy Endress
Recollections of Turkey-Greece:  
LLI Tour 2015

Arriving in Istanbul after a fourteen-hour trip, our weary group was warmly greeted by our Turkish guide, Fatos. As our bus headed to a hotel, Fatos pointed out sites on our way along the great Byzantine walls that kept foreign invaders out for hundreds of years. Our group was pleasantly surprised and delighted as we arrived at our wonderful hotel barely a kabob’s throw from Agia Sophia, the Hippodrome, and the Blue Mosque. So began the fifteen-day adventure to Turkey and Greece for our group of 20. Although we visited during the month of Ramadan and heard the call to prayer five times each day, we didn’t feel obligated to fast during the day and readily sampled Turkish cuisine both day and night. Our stay in Istanbul culminated in a morning cruise on the Bosporus, followed by lunch and exciting purchases at the Grand Bazaar.

On the fourth morning we crossed the Hellespont to Asian Turkey on our way by bus to storm Troy. As we stood on the ramparts of Troy, three classicists in our group read passages from Homer’s Iliad. We made our way the following day to the high citadel of Pergamon, built by the Attalids, a powerful Hellenistic dynasty. Below the citadel we visited an ancient hospital complex, an Asclepeion, or sanctuary of Asclepius the god of healing. The Greek physician and surgeon, Galen, first made his reputation at this sanctuary. Then we made our way to Ephesus, the ancient Greek city furnished well by the Romans. The amenities of this bustling city with richly decorated houses attracted many in the ancient world, most famously the apostle Paul. While there, we visited one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, The Temple of the goddess Artemis, now just a pool of standing water with a few random column drums. Perhaps more meaningful was our visit to the house of Mary, the mother of Jesus, where she lived with the apostle John.

From Ephesus we turned inland to the city of Pamukkale to see an amazing terraced rock formation, turned white with thermal pools of calcium carbonate, a sort of snow-mountain. Pamukkale provided our group welcome leisure time. Many in our group ventured into our hotel’s Spa and Turkish Bath, complete with Sauna, mud, and scrubbing. We also visited the nearby archaeological site of Hierapolis, topped off by a plunge in the remains of an ancient Roman bath.

Refreshed at Pamukkale, we took once again to the road to the city of Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus in southwestern Turkey, to make our crossing to the Greek island of Kos where we visited another of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Mausoleum, little more than an excavation with a few scattered stones lying around; the main sculptures from this elaborate tomb are located in the British Museum in London. More impressive at Bodrum was a Castle of the Knights of St. John, built about 1450.

Early the next morning, we set out to explore Kos, birthplace of the physician Hippocrates. Like Ephesus, the island city of Kos prospered during Roman times, evident in a lavish Roman house with its two-story colonnade surrounding a central garden. From there we made our way to the Asclepeion, the triple-tiered hospital complex of Kos. We visited a winery, followed by outstanding seafood at a restaurant named LaPrima.

That afternoon we boarded a fast catamaran for our tour of the island of Rhodes. Next morning, led by our lively guide Charlie, we began an exploration of Rhodes at a Church of the Knights of St. John, alongside a Byzantine monastery on one side and the remains of a temple of the goddess Athena on the other.

After taking in panoramic views across the sea towards Turkey, we traveled along the western coast of the island to the remains of the ancient city Kameiros. Charlie decided that we needed a relaxing lunch overlooking the sea before heading to Lindos, one of the most challenging sites on the tour. Some decided to explore the lower town of Lindos, while the more intrepid took the challenge to climb the ramps and stairways up to the acropolis. Winded at the top of the climb yet exhilarated, we took in the gleaming white marble of columns and temple.

Our last tour of this island was the city of Rhodes itself, first to the ancient Acropolis to explore the remains of temples to Apollo, Athena, and Zeus. A fascinating aspect of Rhodes, however, was its reputation for training ancient orators. Two of the most famous, Cicero and Julius Caesar, studied in Rhodes. A short trip downhill brought us to the castle of the Knights of St. John, whose origins stemmed from the Crusades. Eventually forced out of the near east, the Knights settled on Rhodes, where they constructed this castle with extremely powerful fortifications. They held out for many years, finally succumbing to a massive force led by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522 after a six-month siege.

The following morning we boarded a flight to Athens. We visited the new Acropolis Museum, and scaled the steps to the Acropolis itself. Our tour concluded with a Farewell Dinner provided by our agents, Educational Tours and Cruises.

Michael Allain
These items were made in recent LLI classes. The table display is from the Buds, Berries and Blooms class, and the wreath is from an EDVenture class on wreath making in December 2015.