



ALRI Newsletter

Connecting....
People, Community,
and Knowledge

Fall 2004
Volume 1, Issue 6

. . . NEWS

- The new registration process worked smoothly. Those who registered in a timely manner after receiving their Fall Catalog were able to get the classes of their first choice. Although it represented a change over the previous lottery system, most ALRI members appreciated the opportunity to sign up before classes were filled.

A L E R T . . .

- There is still space available in certain classes. Contact the ALRI Office to verify which classes are open.

Letter From The President

Welcome to the start of ALRI's third year of operation and its 2004 fall term. Speaking for the Board of Directors, I offer a heartfelt welcome to our newest members. And to old friends who have renewed their membership, welcome to another year. We look forward to seeing all of you in class and at Special Events.

ALRI's second birthday was celebrated on the 15th of September! October 4th marks the beginning of ALRI's fourth term of course offerings during which 110 courses will have been scheduled and engaged most of our over 450 members. In addition, many of you have enjoyed a number of "Special Events," with many more planned for this and next calendar year. Finally, we had the largest attendance ever (over 135 members) at the September 10 "Open House" to meet the Fall Term instructors. These participation numbers clearly demonstrate a continued high level of interest in ALRI.

This term we have increased the number of classes held at the GMU Arlington Campus and at the Madison Recreation Center while maintaining a solid presence at the Arlington Public Schools Division of Career, Technical and Adult Education and Marymount University. We thank them for their continuing support.

As always, I and the Board of Directors appreciate your comments on how we are doing and welcome your ideas for making the ALRI even better. You can reach us at ALRI's telephone number or e-mail.

John Sprott

Upcoming Events

Fall Lecture Series
American History and Culture
Arlington Central Library

October 25, 3:00 p.m.

The Great Collaboration: Washington and Hamilton, with Peter Henriques, professor of history, emeritus, GMU

November 29, 3:00 p.m.

The Life of Lew Wallace, 19th Century Renaissance Man, with Gail Stephens, award-winning Civil War Researcher and author

Special Event Tour

December 9, 11:00 a.m.

*National Gallery of Art Exhibit
Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

Spotlight Speaker Series

October 27, 7:00 p.m., GMU Arlington Campus

The Election--What's at Stake? with a panel of GMU School of Public Policy professors

November 18, 7:00 p.m., Arl. Central Library

Connecting the Dots--National Security with David Schum, Professor, GMU

These lectures are free and all are welcome

May We Introduce Rose Langbein

In this election year (and the beginning of Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute's third year) spotlighting Rose Langbein, our candidate for ALRI's most inspiring member, is especially appropriate. Rose, a ninety-year-old life long learner, was born in New York City. After graduating from Hunter College, she received a Master's Degree from the New York School of Social Work (later affiliated with Columbia University). She and her late husband Walter, a hydrologist with the US Geological Survey in the Interior Department, first lived in Buckingham Apartments as newlyweds and then moved into a new house on 38th Street in 1941 where they raised a family. Her daughter and son attended Arlington County elementary and high schools, and Rose relates that "Arlington public schools gave my children

a fine formal education but stimulated their outside interests as well." At the Jefferson in Ballston, Rose's current residence, she line dances and enjoys water aerobics, exercise for a "traditional lady of a certain age." But when she speaks of scholarly pursuits, she is clearly cerebral and refreshingly unique.

Rose has participated in ALRI since its beginning. She has taken a course every session, and her choices illustrate her intrigue with things intellectual—Our Living Planet, National Science Foundation: Where is Research Leading Us?, and Fundamentals of Terrorism (this fall). She has also volunteered in the ALRI office at the Career Education Center and worked in the ALRI booth at the Arlington Fair this past summer with the Membership Committee

as part of the new community outreach program. "It wasn't much; it was only an hour," she precisely quipped.

The way Rose sees it, "ALRI is an excellent source of continuing stimulation. The personal contacts are extremely pleasant." Describing her life in Arlington, she brightened visibly. "I enjoy this interesting metropolitan area; I have good old friends and an opportunity to make new friends as well." When asked what courses she would most like to see added to the ALRI spring catalog, she responded, "Oh, music especially. I have for years been a season subscriber to the National Symphony Orchestra, but I would love another music class."

As Told To Ann Holmes

From The Administrator's Desk

ALRI is happy to announce that the Administrator's office has moved to the "Original Building" at the GMU-Arlington campus. Now located on the third floor, in close proximity to our classes offered at GMU, I can easily interact with our university liaisons and with members wishing to pick up extra catalogs for their book clubs or aerobics buddies or golf partners. The office is compact but can hold another working body in a pinch and has great access to the restrooms, soda machines and the exit stairs. Sadly devoid of artwork (hint, hint) but filled with good humor and a can-do spirit, the office welcomes visitors during the general business hours of noon to 3 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Don't be upset if I continue working while you visit – my part-time hours leave little leeway for socializing. If the door is locked, simply slip your message under the door and I will retrieve it upon my return. If you wish to join my small, select group of Office Management volunteers, drop me a line at our new email address: ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org or leave a message on our line: 703-228-2144.

Marjorie Varner

Special Events

Rave Reviews for *Nathan the Wise*

Imagine a time when Christians, Jews and Muslims live side by side in mutual respect. Imagine a leader who is tolerant and feels responsible for all mankind. Put these concepts together and you have the essence of Nathan The Wise. Approximately 30 people viewed either the play or video then participated in a stimulating discussion with the writer of this remarkable work.

Paul D'Andrea, a Clarence J. Robinson Professor of Theatre and English at George Mason University, translated and adapted this play from the work of G.E. Lessing, an 18th century German playwright. The discussion with Professor D'Andrea was lively and enlightening. The play dramatic and thought provoking. Its message of tolerance and respect is timely and can help to further our discussion of how we can work together to find ways to create a world of mutual respect and harmony.

The ALRI Board of Directors and Special Events Committee are to be commended for providing this enriching opportunity to

its members and the community at large. I encourage you to take advantage of this offering if it is repeated in the future.

Sonja Gelman

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Please send us your articles, questions or suggestions

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Ann Holmes, Joann Levine, Leanne Peters,
Carol Mason Downs

In this new column, the Membership Committee will report its activities for the quarter. The Committee recruits new members and serves the membership by planning hospitality and organizing volunteers. It seeks information from all members and appreciates your project ideas. Sharon Bisdee and Jeanne Sprott are co-chairs for the committee and can be reached via the ALRI e-mail and telephone number.

The Membership Committee hosted its first New Member-Get-Together on July 27 at the Mt. Olivet Methodist Church. New members, Board members, and volunteers from the Membership Committee mingled, drank punch, ate cake and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Since this occasion was so successful, we're going to have another. So, if you've joined in the last few months, we'll be in touch soon about the next event.

ALRI shared booths with both the Arlington Public Schools and George Mason University at the annual Arlington County Fair. Rose Langbein, Dee Mathews, Priscilla Becker, Sharon Bisdee, and Jeanne Sprott from the Membership Committee staffed the booths for ALRI. Then our volunteers set up a table at the Clarendon Farmer's Market on August 28. Marge Alia, Millie Duffy, Sharon Jourdan, and Sharon Bisdee report that seniors at the market were interested in ALRI. ALRI information was distributed at both events, and the response was very favorable. Next year we hope to reserve our own table at the County Fair and plan to staff a table on two different weekends at the Farmers' Market.

Many thanks to Dee Mathews and Doris Mattos, members of the Membership Committee, for assuming the important position as co-coordinators for the ALRI volunteer program. They plan to work with new ALRI volunteers by helping them identify the committee, project, or function that best suits their interests and skills. Both come with extensive expertise in the volunteer area. Dee headed the volunteer function at the Red Cross, and Doris was in charge of volunteers at the Youth for Understanding International Center. Their article in the January newsletter will detail what's happening with volunteers. In the meantime,

if you are interested in volunteering you can leave a message on ALRI's telephone or e-mail.

Clubs

Want to organize a club? The Membership Committee is ready to implement the club policy recently approved by the Board of Directors, and Bernice Foster and Gary Lee have volunteered to serve as Club Liaison Officers. Several members have already expressed interest, and Gary and Bernice will be working with them to start their respective clubs. In the future, announcements about club contacts and activities will be posted in the ALRI Newsletter. Bernice and Gary can be reached through the ALRI message center, 703-228-2144, or through the e-mail <http://ArlingtonLRI.gmu.edu>. Each club should appoint someone(s) to communicate the club's activities with Gary and Bernice. Please indicate if you are interested in coordinating activities for a club when you respond.

Each club will need a written organization and operations statement to submit to the ALRI Board. This document will be a simple statement about the purpose of the club and where, when, and who will be meeting. For this requirement, the Club Liaison Officers have created a simple outline for members to use. Clubs must be self-supporting and not compete with ALRI for facilities, instructors, or programs. The role of ALRI will be that of facilitator or advisor and will not involve itself in a club's administration, finances, or activities. Please contact Bernice or Gary for a copy of the Club Policy. They will be glad to answer any questions.

Coffee Socials
New member coffees
will be held through the year

ALRI PREVIEWS CLASSES AT ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

“This is the first time I’ve taught people my own age,” commented Herbert Weinstein, instructor for *Food Science and the Technology of Cooking*, when introduced by President John Sprott at the Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute’s Open House, held September 10.

The annual event, which took place at George Mason University’s Arlington Campus, afforded Institute members an opportunity to meet teachers and hear course descriptions for 12 of the 30 classes scheduled for Fall Term 2004.

In addition to Weinstein, speakers included: Cherie Bottum (*Creative Writing*), Ann Harborough (*Medical Achievements/Hard Choices*), Andrew Rice (*International Organizations*), Alan Schuman (*Correctional Systems*), Tom Dunlap (*Poetry of W.B. Yeats*), Carlos Stern (*Environment 2004*), and Margaret Goodwin (*Economic Development and Social Change*).

Representatives from two popular team-taught classes also spoke. Alan Heil and Ken Wesolik described their contributions to *International Relations Tour d’Horizon*, and Dennis McBride discussed his role in *Fundamentals of Terrorism*, a course taught by faculty from the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

Tom Dunlap reflected the overall enthusiasm of participants when he noted, “The Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute comes as close as any program I know to achieving Thomas Jefferson’s ideal of an academic village.”

Sharon Jourdan

Academic Planning Committee

ALRI’s Academic Programs Committee is now off and running developing courses and recruiting instructors for next spring’s term. While we have had remarkable success in developing excellent courses with excellent instructors in the relatively short time ALRI has been in existence, there is always room for improvement.

There is a strong feeling among the members that we need more courses in several areas. Fine Arts, Theater, and Music courses are much in demand, yet we managed to offer only two in this category this semester. We also would like to beef up our offerings in Literature and Writing and the Social Sciences.

We have a very active committee looking for these and other courses. But we know that many of you out there may know of a course or instructor that would fit in well with our program, even if they are not in the academic areas mentioned above. Or better yet, perhaps you have the credentials and experience to teach a solid college-level course. In either case, give our Academic Program Committee chair Richard Barton a call at 703-522-1958 or send him an e-mail at rbarton@towervillas.com. He will be very happy to hear from you!

Richard Barton

Classroom Aide Training

On September 24th ALRI provided the second training session for ALRI course participants volunteering to assist fall term instructors. The Classroom Aide is really one of the more important ALRI positions, serving as the principal point-of-contact between students, instructors, the classroom venue, and ALRI. Each class has a primary Class Aide and many have back-up Class Aides. John Niehaus and Carolyn Gosling co-hosted the training session with approximately twenty-five Class Aides in attendance, representing both new and former Aides.

Like course participants, instructors volunteer their time and expertise. Class Aides relieve instructors of as many administrative duties as possible, i.e., photo-copying class material, helping to set up audio-visual equipment before class, taking attendance, and notifying course participants in the event of a schedule change (such as an instructor absence due to a family matter.)

Training goals included ensuring Class Aides knew what to expect and that they had the materials and training necessary to success-

fully and easily carryout their duties. Class Aides received a “Class Aide Information” guide describing principal duties and providing “key contact names and phone numbers” for key ALRI members and classroom site staff.

The Class Aide is an valuable function, contributing to enjoyment of the ALRI courses. Besides the inner satisfaction of knowing you are helping ALRI to run smoothly and making the instructors’ jobs easier, there are the fun elements of increased interaction with the instructor and a financial benefit of free parking when performing official class aide duties.

Please consider volunteering in the future to help ALRI, the instructors, and your fellow course participants. You can do this by checking the block on the class registration form to indicate your willingness to be an aide. You won’t regret it.

John Niehaus, Coordinator
Carolyn Gosling, Associate Coordinator

September in Rome

Travel is enriching, especially with a guide who knows not only the history of the area but also where to get the best ice cream.

For a group of ALRI members and friends, the invaluable guide to Rome for a week in September was Tom Wukitsch, ALRI teacher of Roman history and former resident of Rome for several years.

Our view of Rome began with a visit to Vatican City and the Coliseum conducted by a Globus tour guide, as part of the travel arrangements made by tour member Sharon Schoumacher. Then Tom began sharing his enormous knowledge about ancient Rome. We started at 9 each morning and traveled on foot or by taxi, breaking for lunch at one of Tom's favorite restaurants and reconvening in our hotel at 5:30 to learn about the next day's plans.

Some members of the group also took commercial tours to Pompeii for one day or Tivoli for an afternoon and evening, but the consensus clearly showed that Wukitsch was the highlight of the week. "Rome is the Eternal City, but in one week, Tom opened up its ancient layers for us. Indefatigable walker, learned guide, enthusiastic companion, Tom provided us with a very special and valued holiday," said Jerry Greenwald.

Even those who had been to Rome before found something new this time around. For Winifred Hart, who has lived in Rome and speaks Italian, a tour of Tiber Island was special, and "Tom also brought the Palatine alive." She has affectionate memories of tutto bosco gelato at Tre Scalini (the best gelato in the city, according to Frommer's), where Tom took us for an afternoon break, and says she'll just have to go back (perhaps on a Wukitsch-guided tour of medieval or Renaissance Rome).

Connie Collins, who had visited many of the sites before, now has a greater appreciation of their role in Roman history, thanks to Tom's depth of knowledge and patient guidance. "He was not bad at picking restaurants either," she notes, mentioning particularly gelato and spaghetti carbonara.

Highlights of the week for Sharon Schoumacher were the Pantheon, "with Tom's remarkable information on how it was created, with a continuous pour of cement, back in the first century...." and Castel Sant'Angelo, built for Hadrian's tomb, used as a fortress and a prison, and with beautiful rooms used by Renaissance popes. The gorgeous bathroom for a pope and the frescoed walls with graffiti dating back to the 1500s were exciting to see."

Win Greenwald "will remember not only the sights, and the excellent guidance provided by Tom Wukitsch. Most of all, I will remember the group we went with. We turned from acquaintances into friends in the short span of a week."

Tom commented about "how much fun it was to do the trip with a group of people so eager to see what was there. When I lived in Rome, I sometimes took groups around who were actually in Rome for other reasons and, if you imagine, not really interested in all that 'old stuff.'" The guides to the various sites visited and a picture of some of the group at the Vatican Museum are available online at <http://www.mmdtkw.org/RT04-ALRI-2004RomeTrip.html>. Linked to that page are either texts with color illustrations or maps/plans of archeological areas. (The Web site for all of Tom's Rome courses is <http://mmdtkw.org/ALRIkwPages.html>.)

It seemed that every time we turned a corner in Rome there was a "knock-your-socks-off" view. The mix of ancient, medieval, and modern buildings was astonishing, and the sense of history, especially as Tom explained it (gathering us in a shady spot during that wonderfully sunny week), was simply awesome. We even stood next to the site of Julius Caesar's cremation! The afternoon light in Piazza Navona was wondrous, and I understand why Tom's teenaged daughter, when asked what he could bring her from Rome, asked for gelato. (Tom said the closest he's found here at home is at the Arlington Farmers' Market.)

The week ended with a special group dinner at Taverna de Gracchi, a restaurant found and recommended by the Greenwalds. The food was wonderful, the wine was flowing, and Tom and Sharon were guests of the rest of the group for their part in making our week in la bella Roma truly beautiful.

As we strolled back to our hotel that last night, Tom confided that his father once advised him that he needed to learn how to summarize. He needed to remember that when people asked him for the time, they didn't want to know how to build a clock. However, Tom's ALRI audience did indeed appreciate learning "how to build a clock."

The end of "this marvelous trip," in the words of Win Greenwald, is just the beginning of possibilities for ALRI members, since Sharon is hoping to begin an ALRI Travel Club. She proposes that the group meet either monthly or semi-monthly, possibly at The Common Grounds, a coffee house in Clarendon, to discuss future travel possibilities. More details should be available in the next ALRI newsletter.

—
Michele Leber



Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute

ALRI offers short college-level non-credit daytime courses, lectures, special events, and activities to help meet the continuing educational and social needs of any interested persons over fifty years of age.

ALRI is supported, governed, and financed by its members. ALRI is a non-profit, equal opportunity organization without regard to gender, race, color, religion, national origin or disability.

Affiliations

George Mason University
Arlington Public Schools, Adult Education Division
Arlington County Office of Senior Adult Programs
Elderhostel

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