



Connecting....
People, Community,
and Knowledge

ALRI NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

From Silk Road to Film Making, Spring Classes Offer Variety

When registration for spring classes begins February 15, ALRI members will have 29 courses from which to choose. Over 60 percent of these courses are being offered for the first time.

Two single-country courses will be taught this term: "Russia Enters the 21st Century" and "Mexico and the U.S." History enthusiasts will find new courses dealing with major conflicts – "Virginia in the Revolution" and "World War II" -- and also the history of a significant area of the world, the "Silk Road." In "Rome in Hollywood," Tom Wukitsch will show how various filmmakers have depicted Roman history. In "Film Making," students will work together to create an original film.

Music lovers have two choices this spring: an opera course, "Wagner: A Villain Humanized," taught by John Edward Niles and a course on the works of "20th Century Composers." Those interested in writing and writers will find two courses not offered previously: "Literary Nonfiction" and "Writing About Your Life." [Note: Latter held at JEF, not MAD as in catalog.]

Health and science issues have inspired several new courses for the spring term. "Supermarket Botany" will examine the plants available in our grocery stores, while "Cooking for Health" will look at foods and their preparation from the perspective of maintaining good health. Tom Connally will teach a new course, "The World of Neuroscience," and ALRI will offer its first course on ornithology, "The Green Canary."

In the social sciences area, "Great Thinkers on Ethics" is a new offering. Two multi-lecturer courses will return – "NPR: The Inside Scoop," featuring National Public Radio producers and other staff members, and "How Arlington Works," taught by Arlington's planning director and other representatives of the county government. So ALRI members who missed out on these popular courses last term now have another chance.

— Joan Reed

New Council To Advise ALRI

The ALRI Board of Directors created the Community Advisory Council last fall to open avenues of communication with the community. Council members will advise ALRI on how the organization can become fully institutionalized as a permanent part of the Arlington community, how it can benefit the community at large and how ALRI can be best marketed.

While primarily exploratory, the first meeting last October produced some positive developments, particularly agreements with WETA and DeVry University to use their facilities for ALRI classes — the first ever in south Arlington. Council members freely gave suggestions and advice for future ALRI programs and direction. The council will meet at least twice a year, with the next meeting in March or April.

Board member Richard Barton is council chair and will act as liaison between the Board and the council. Council members – all leaders from the

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President's Report

The ALRI Board of Directors and I wish all of you a most healthy and happy 2007! The year 2006 was a healthy one for ALRI: over 60 courses were offered, nearly half of which were new, and the pace of special events increased to two or more a month, with events scheduled six months into the future.

A finance committee of non-board members has been established to work with the treasurer and to provide advice on managing and presenting ALRI finances (see treasurer's report, page 6). The Community Advisory Council of 18 prominent local leaders has been created and met with the Board of Directors in October (see page 1).

We are privileged to have been allotted excellent office space at the Clarendon Education Center (CEC) by the Arlington Public Schools Career, Technical and Adult Education Program. The office is still being outfitted but is already getting heavy use as more and more ALRI work moves from volunteers' homes to the office.

New agreements with local institutions provide us classroom space to deliver ALRI courses more widely in Arlington County: at the Jefferson in Ballston last spring, at WETA's headquarters in Shirlington beginning this spring, and at DeVry University in Crystal City beginning this fall. Last fall ALRI membership reached 600, and with these new classroom locations I believe membership will continue to grow.

I look forward to seeing you in class or at an ALRI event. Check your membership expiration date on the mailing label of this newsletter, and remember the easiest way to renew your membership, as well as register for courses or events, is online at www.ArlingtonLRI.org. —John Sprott

Nominating Process Begins for Board Positions

The Nominating Committee, headed by Sharon Bisdee, has begun the process that will culminate in the election of the ALRI Board of Directors in June. ALRI members serving with her include Vivian Webb, Andrea Vojtko, Richard Pariseau and Lou Spector.

Under ALRI bylaws, the Board of Directors annually establishes a nominating committee to fill all board positions. These include officers (president, vice president, treasurer and secretary) and committee chairs (academic programs, class aides, information technology support, membership, organization, publications and advisory council). All serve one-year terms; current board members may choose to run for a second term.

The committee will meet into May, when the slate of candidates for office will be mailed to all members. The election will occur at the annual ALRI business meeting on June 8.

Bisdee has been active in ALRI since its

founding and served in numerous capacities, including as co-chair of the public relations and membership committees. If you are interested in one of the board positions, contact her at ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org or call (703) 228-2144.

Arlington law firm aids ALRI

The ALRI Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Arlington law firm of Sher, Cummings and Ellis has volunteered to act as ALRI legal counsel.

David Sher, Mark Cummings and John Ellis are long-time Arlingtonians who have been active in the county and state bars. Ellis is a member of ALRI. Sher now represents ALRI with the State Corporation Commission, replacing volunteer Amanda Ellis, who retired from the practice of law January 1.

"We are grateful both to Amanda for her prior service, and to the law firm for volunteering to serve ALRI's legal needs," said President John Sprott. —Gerald Greenwald

Behind the Scenes With Special Events



Are ALRI's special events popular? You bet. Forty members – 15 more than could be accommodated – expressed an interest in the docent-led tour of the Supreme Court on February 6. More than 30 toured the Diplomatic Rooms of the State Department in January. And that's just 2007.

The challenge of developing and organizing educational, social, informational and fun activities for ALRI members falls to the Special Events Committee. Through their connections to many civic and cultural groups in the Arlington area, committee

members are able to arrange more than 30 diverse activities throughout the year. In 2006 a total of 174 ALRI members signed up to attend at least one activity; filling 479 event slots. On average, those participating in the special events program committed to 2.5 events during the year.

The committee of 13 meets monthly to assure that the planning for upcoming activities is on schedule, to talk about the feasibility of suggested activities, and to brainstorm additional outreach to cultural and educational events of interest to ALRI members.

Committee members secure discounted admission to several choral and orchestral concerts and theatre outings and, in some instances, schedule post-performance dialogs with the director and/or members of the performing group. Occasionally, they arrange outings to free performances.

The committee has also organized tours of county facilities and other local sites. On one recent tour members learned about the newly opened "green" Walter Reed Community Center and its many educational/recreation activities. Another tour was to the Arlington Career Center, which provides



educational experiences for Arlington high school students in over two dozen areas, from flying airplanes to sports medicine to television and theatre production. Following the tour, the 35 participants were treated to lunch prepared by students in the food services program.

In cooperation with the Arlington Central Library, ALRI organizes the very popular Meet-the-Author series, as well as lectures on "hot topics" and other subjects of interest to members.

If you have suggestions for possible events, or contacts with organizations you think ALRI members would be interested in learning about, please contact Special Events Committee chair Karin Price (karinaps@comcast.net), or consider joining the committee and sharing your ideas.

A detailed calendar of upcoming events is posted on the ALRI website, where you can sign up for activities requiring prior registration.



The December tour of the Mansion on O Street included a lavish lunch.

— Maggie Griffin



Spice Your Life With ALRI Special Events

ALRI's calendar of special events offers members a choice of numerous lectures, tours and performances. Registration is required for most events. You can learn about new events and get calendar updates by going to the ALRI website, www.ArlingtonLRI.org.

There are three ways to register:

- Online – www.ArlingtonLRI.org
- Phone – 703-228-2144 and press “3” for Special Events
- Email – ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org (Use “Special Event reservation” in the subject line.)

Monday, February 26 – Evolution, Creationism and Intelligent Design

Why is evolution so controversial today? As part of the Meet the Speaker Series, Dr. Mary McCutcheon, a retired anthropology professor at George Mason University will address the reasons evolution is questioned so much today in the U.S. Philosophical, historic, religious and economic reasons will be discussed. 3 p.m., Arlington Central Library. Free, all are welcome, no need to register.

Friday, March 2 – Walt Disney-Tishman Collection of African Art

Join ALRI in an inaugural tour of the world-renowned Walt Disney-Tishman Collection of African Art, a recent gift to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art.

11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., National Museum of African Art, 950 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. Limited to 20 participants.

Sunday, March 11 – Evening Vespers Choral Concert

Enjoy an afternoon of Russian vespers sung by the 130 voices of the Alexandria Choral Society and the Capitol Hill Chorale. The program will include the great Vespers of Rachmaninoff and the Requiem of Herbert Howells.

4 p.m., Calloway Chapel of Episcopal High School, 3901 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Limited to 25 participants. Discounted tickets (\$10) will be reserved for those who register and will be available at the concert, where payment is to be made directly to the Alexandria Choral Society. Reservation deadline: March 7.

Friday, March 30 – Tour of Arlington Cemetery

ALRI member and professional tour guide Herb Schaefer will lead a tour at 10 a.m.

Wednesday, April 11 – Father of the Atom Bomb

Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin, authors of the Pulitzer Prize-winning 2005 book *American Prometheus, The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, will discuss Oppenheimer's life and times from his early career to his role in the Cold War. No registration required.

3 p.m., Arlington Central Library. Free, all are welcome, no need to register.

Thursday, April 19 – National Symphony Orchestra Open Rehearsal

Jiri Belohlavek will conduct the National Symphony Orchestra with Christian Tetzlaff on violin. Selections include works by Dvorak, Mozart, Smetana and Janacek.

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall. Guests should arrive by 9:30 a.m. and *must* be in their seats by 9:45 a.m. Limited to 25 participants.

Friday, April 27 – Celebration of the ‘Real’ George Washington

Join ALRI on an introductory tour of the Donald W. Reynolds Museum and Education

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Volunteers: ALRI's Backbone



When you register for an ALRI class or special event, you're able to do so because volunteers organized the curriculum, offered to teach the courses, found an event that would interest many, and developed the technology for online registration. You learn about classes and ALRI activities through catalogues and newsletters produced, labeled, and mailed by volunteers, and you find up-to-date information on the volunteer-run ALRI website.

Since ALRI has only one paid staff member--a part-time administrator--many of the responsibilities of running the organization fall on those willing to commit themselves to help. Nearly a third of ALRI's members volunteer. Their roles are essential for the voluntary organization.

How did ALRI volunteers serve in 2006?

- Fourteen members served on the Board of Directors, meeting regularly to coordinate and direct the organization.
- Volunteer instructors taught more than 50 classes during the year.
- Some 54 members served as class aides in the fall and 41 in the spring, providing administrative assistance and serving as liaisons.
- Nearly 150 others worked on committees, helping with bulk mailings, hospitality, curriculum creation, information technology, office work and management, finance, organization, publications and special events.

Eighteen community leaders served on the newly established Community Advisory Council.

"As ALRI grows, we have a continuing need for more volunteers, not only for the increased workload, but to ensure that current volunteers are not overworked," said John Sprott, ALRI president.

If you're interested in becoming an ALRI volunteer, these committees need assistance:

Office Management Support Committee.

Provides assistance at ALRI's CEC office with general office work for three hours, one day a week. The committee needs an additional volunteer so that the office can open five days a week from noon to 3 p.m.

Academic Programs Committee. Helps find courses and instructors, develops course descriptions for the catalog, reviews course evaluations. The committee urgently needs some new volunteers if it is to continue providing a large and varied course selection each term. Eight to 10 two-hour meetings March-June for fall term, and August-November for spring term.

Information Technology Support Committee. Develops and maintains the ALRI data base and web site; processes membership applications and course registrations. Some computer skills required, especially knowledge of MS Windows. Three to four data entry sessions of two to two-and-a-half hours each, twice a year during class registration.

Membership Committee. Implements all aspects of recruitment, sets up the annual membership meeting and the semi-annual open house, provides hospitality for all public ALRI functions and social events, oversees volunteer services, and facilitates organization of clubs. One one-hour meeting per month, plus additional time on specific activities, such as hospitality, clubs, the farmers' market, the county fair, etc.

Organization Committee. Oversees organizational governance documents; reviews proposed contracts; oversees the content of the annual membership meeting.

Publications Committee. Coordinates and produces all printed materials for ALRI (catalog, newsletter, brochures, flyers, articles). A committee chair, catalog editor, general copy editors, newsletter editor and proofreaders are needed.

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Treasurer's Report: Progress and Concerns

ALRI's financial activities and accomplishments since the June 2006 treasurer's report:

- Further automated the overall information process to enable downloading of all available account information. Over 60 percent of members' payments are now accepted online, with increased speed, safety, accuracy, and instant member feedback. In addition, significantly less volunteer time is required.
- Established the Finance Committee (comprised of Mary Anne Kanter and Don Stoufer) to aid and advise the treasurer and board on such issues as data capture, analysis and reporting, budget preparation and tracking, and tax documentation required for nonprofit corporations.
- Accepted the Finance Committee recommendation of QuickBooks instead of Quicken for monthly financial reports. The new software will save time in dealing with six different accounts as well as budget tracking for each of 15 board positions. The changeover is under way.
- Worked frugally over the last 2½ years to develop a reserve fund that could help meet future demands, such as an eventual need to lease space or hire additional paid staff. (The slackening of the real estate boom and its impact on the county budget could affect ALRI's CEC office space and classrooms leased by the Arlington public

school system; leased space is presently under scrutiny.) The current reserve balance of about \$110,200 (held in cash and certificates of deposit) serves as a fund for emergencies, including the need for space. While this sounds like a relatively large sum, these reserves would quickly dwindle if used to lease space.

- Authorized operating costs, which include printing of catalogs and newsletters, postage for publications, parking for instructors and volunteers, copying, occupancy costs at CEC & GMU, donations to the CEC's Janet Gentry Scholarship Fund, social events, administrator's wages, office supplies, and equipment purchases (two computers, software, furniture).
- Recorded outlays from July 1 to December 31, 2006, that slightly exceeded \$24,000 and anticipated January charges by CEC of approximately \$5,000. For our fiscal year (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007), costs are predicted to be in the \$50,000 range. ALRI's year-to-date income approaches \$44,000
- Prepared, submitted, and received IRS approval for our FY05 Form 990.

You are welcome to attend any and all board and finance committee meetings. If you are interested in joining the Finance Committee, attending meetings or have comments or questions, please contact me, Henry Brown, at ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org.

—Henry Brown, Treasurer

ALRI Financial Report FY 2006

Revenue		Expenses	
Membership	\$27,871	Payroll	\$21,742
Tuition	42,033	Grants	1,500
Donations	1,265	Occupancy	8,111
Interest	903	Printing/Pubs	4,790
		Administrative	9,401
Total Revenue	\$72,072	Total Expenses	\$45,544
FY06 Addition to Reserves (Revenue - Expenses)			26,528
Previous Years' Reserves			63,586
Cumulative Reserves (6/30/06)			\$90,114



CLUB NEWS



Connect to an ALRI Club

ALRI's six clubs are available to provide members further opportunities to explore their special interests. Clubs usually meet monthly.

Travel Club – First Wednesday of the month, 2:30 p.m., Langston Senior Center. Contact Sharon Schoumacker at (703) 522-9014 or sharon@earthwave.net.

Cinema Club – Monthly movie date set to accommodate members' schedules. Contact Judy Yavner at jyavner@mindspring.com.

Current Issues Club – Third Tuesday of the month, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run Community Center. Contact James Walsh at (703) 920-1709 or walsh22204@aol.com.

Bridge Club – Monthly on irregular schedule in members' homes. Contact Bernice Foster at fosterbf@aol.com.

Book Club – Usually the second Monday of alternating months at Arlington County Central Library on N. Quincy Street. Recent books include *Collapse*, by Jared Diamond, and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Science*, by Tom Bethall. Contact Marge Alia (noting ALRI Book Club in subject line) at Ma-lia04@comcast.net.

Ethnic Lunch Club – Usually last Thursday of the month at local ethnic restaurants. Contact ALRI, (703) 228-2144, choose option "5" (clubs) and leave message for coordinator Arlene Kigin.

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community – include Ellen Bozman, former Arlington County Board member; Virginia Delegate Robert H. Brink; Joseph B. Bruns, chief operating officer, WETA; James Bundschuh, president, Marymount University; former state delegate Karen Darner; Barbara Favola, member, Arlington County Board; David Foster and Frank K. Wilson, members, Arlington School Board; Delores Leckey, [senior fellow](#), Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University; Scott McGeary, area manager, Washington Gas; Michael Morton, director, Career, Technical and Adult Education, Arlington Schools; Robert G. Smith, superintendent, Arlington Schools; Alfred O. Taylor, president, Nauck Civic Association; Stanley Taylor, vice president, George Mason University; Richard E. Trodden, Arlington Commonwealth Attorney; State Senator Mary Margaret Whipple; and Dr. Joseph Wholey, former chair, Arlington County Board, and professor of public administration, University of Southern California. Marjorie Varner, ALRI administrator, is the council administrator.

—Diann McCormick

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Special Events Committee. Develops, coordinates and implements two to three events each six months. The Committee seeks those with ideas about and/or connections for possible venues, exhibits, lecturers, authors, etc. One two-hour meeting each month, plus 10-30 hours total per year setting up events.

For more information or to join a committee, contact Ann Kellernan, volunteer liaison, at Kellerann@juno.com or (703) 931-8528.

—Jody Goulden

Don't Forget

You can register for ALRI courses and special events so long as your ALRI membership doesn't expire before the start of the course or event. For your convenience, starting with this issue of the newsletter and the spring catalog, your membership expiration date is printed on the address label.

Fall Courses Earn High Marks

Members generally gave high marks to the 22 courses ALRI offered this past fall, sprinkling their evaluations with comments like “outstanding,” “excellent,” and “the best course I have taken in ALRI.”

In fact, six courses received outstanding ratings from all students: “Beating the Odds,” taught by N. Thomas Connally; “Ancient Carthage and North Africa,” Tom Wukitsch; “Lee’s Hollow Victories,” Robert Stone; “Political Islam,” Stephen F. Dachi; “Naturalist’s Tour of Arlington,” Martin Ogle; and “Enneagram Personality Types,” Marilyn Williams.

Total fall enrollment was nearly 500. About half the fall courses were completely new, with the remainder being either repeat courses or new courses offered by previous instructors. Courses with the biggest enrollment were all new ones: “NPR: The Inside Scoop,” with 66 students; “Ancient Carthage and North Africa,” 58; “Passages Through India,” 52; and “Political Islam,” 46. Many of the other courses might have attracted more but had to limit enrollment due to space or other factors.

“We owe much to the dedicated group of instructors who repeatedly develop and present courses of quality and inspiration,” said Bob Howe, co-chair of the Academic Programs Committee.

—Bob Howe

Committee Reaches Out To Prospective Members

ALRI’s growth to its current 600 members didn’t come by sitting back and waiting. The Membership Committee took many proactive steps in 2006 to interest area residents in ALRI.

Some 120 civic and community organizations were sent information and asked to tell their members about ALRI. A well publicized open house in February provided a venue for welcoming prospective members and providing information for members to share with friends. Board members also made presentations to local organizations.

In August, an ALRI table at the Arlington Farmers’ Market produced 26 names of potential members, and a booth at the Arlington County Fair added 75 more. Later in the month committee members met with members of the Ballston Common Mall walking group. At the Arlington Senior Information Fair, held at the St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Clarendon, ALRI representatives found a good reception among attendees and added 10 prospective members to the mailing list.

Gary Lee and Jim Mayer head the committee, whose 27 members make it one of ALRI’s largest volunteer committees.

—Gary Lee

Social Welcomes New Members

ALRI’s New Members’ Social, November 17 in the Monticello Room at The Jefferson at Ballston, drew some 65 attendees. They enjoyed conversations as well as cookies, coffee and tea catered by the Jefferson.

The 138 ALRI members joining between March and October 2006 were invited to the social by email or regular mail. Those who did not respond within 10-14 days were contacted by telephone.

The November event was the latest of the twice-yearly receptions for new ALRI members, arranged by the Membership Committee. Each spring and fall these events give new members the opportunity to meet and mingle in an informal setting, to learn more about ALRI from other members, including Board members, and to get information on ALRI-sponsored special events. The gatherings also help make new members more aware of the myriad volunteer needs and opportunities in ALRI.

The next New Members’ Social will be at **xx p.m., month (spelled out)/day at, location).**

—Margaret Christie



Notes from the Administrator

The new office in Room 304 at the Clarendon Education Center continues to provide ALRI volunteers with the space and equipment to service our members.

The addition of lumbar-supporting task chairs, filing cabinets and a whiteboard rounded out our workplace furnishings, and ARLI operating materials continue to filter in from team leaders' homes. You should see the grins on members' faces as they drop off each load of posters or hospitality supplies or reams of paperwork. But what will they do with all that reclaimed space in their houses? Nature abhors a vacuum...

We have a new office management support volunteer who will begin training in late January and another couple may begin training after their winter travels. Our reception hours remain the same for now: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from noon to 3 p.m. We encourage you to contact us during those posted hours for a "live person," but phone messages and emails are always welcome.

I would just add that your support during this move has been appreciated. Your understanding of all the effort involved in performing this job has made each day here rewarding.

— Marjorie Varner

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Center at George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate. Art, artifacts and newly developed interactive exhibits and films present the father of our country as an individual whose life and attributes are relevant to the 21st century.

10 a.m., Mt. Vernon, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway. Limited to 20 participants.

Saturday, May 5 – The Metropolitan Chorus

Hear The Metropolitan Chorus and the Columbia Flute Choir perform both classical and new works in their spring concert.

8 p.m., Mount Olivet Methodist Church, 1500 N. Glebe Rd. Registration required and limited to 30 participants. Tickets will be reserved for ALRI members who register, and reserved seating will be arranged. Payment (\$15) will be made directly to The Metropolitan Chorus at the concert. Reservation deadline: April 30.

ALRI Newsletter

A quarterly publication of the
Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute

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We welcome your articles, questions, and suggestions.

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Help Us Avoid Course Cancellations

Each semester ALRI is forced to cancel one or more courses due to under enrollment. These decisions are always difficult as we must balance early notification to registrants and instructors against the possibility of a late enrollment surge. Please help us by registering for your classes of choice as early as possible, whether you register online or you choose to mail or drop off your form and payment. Course registration begins on February 15th at 9 am. Courses not meeting their minimum are subject to cancellation approximately ten days before the class start date.

Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute
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HELP US AVOID
COURSE
CANCELLATIONS!
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ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY

As a learning organization, ALRI subscribes to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) principle of Academic Freedom: "All views should be respected regardless of their conformance with generally, or currently, accepted views."

Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute

ALRI offers 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, Sunrise Senior Living at the Jefferson,
Elderhostel Network