#### ARLINGTON LEARNING IN RETIREMENT INSTITUTE



### **ALRI NEWSLETTER**

**SPRING 2011** 

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

www.ArlingtonLRI.org

#### **GMU Founders Hall Makes Its Debut**

ALRI members arriving at the new Founders Hall for their spring classes were quite pleased with the striking design of George Mason University's latest addition to the Arlington skyline. The seven-story glass and aluminum-clad structure uses stone extensively in the minimally landscaped plaza and within the building. With classrooms, offices, a 300-seat auditorium, multipurpose rooms, library,

bookstore, computer labs, and Einstein's Bagels cafe, Founders Hall also houses the GMU School of Public Policy and the Mercatus Center for research and economic development.

GMU provides classroom space to ALRI on the first and second floors of Founders Hall, easily accessible via the elevator lobby and via the open staircase in the center of the building. The classrooms provide the current "smart" technology for instructors with options ranging from VHS and DVD players to docu-

ment cameras used in tandem with PowerPoint presentations or live streaming from the Internet. Lapel and hand-held microphones are part of the audiovisual equipment in the larger classrooms on the first floor.

The new facility, built in the space formerly used as the campus parking lot, connects directly to Hazel Hall (the GMU law school) to the east and to the parking garage

of the Foundation Building to the north. The red brick Original Building (formerly Kahn's Department Store) on Founders Hall's west side is no longer in service.

The office of ALRI Executive Director Marjorie Varner has been moved from the Original Building to the Truland Building on the corner of Washington Boulevard and Kirkwood Road. Future campus plans call for demolition of the 1950s era Original Building, to be replaced with Arlington III in 2015.



GMU's Founders Hall opened January 2011

**June Elections** 

Fun + Prizes

What better way to welcome a summer hiatus than with a gathering that mixes business with pleasure! Put on your thinking cap and top it with your party hat for ALRI's annual meeting on Friday, June 10 at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street. Park with ease in the completed adjacent lot or on the street if you prefer. Coffee and pastries will be laid out by the ever-hospitable Membership Committee for your enjoyment beginning at 9 a.m. Socialize with other members and pick up your raffle ticket before the business meeting kicks off at 9:30 a.m. The agenda includes election of the ALRI board for 2011-2012, a presentation on the state of the institute and an overview of courses to anticipate for the fall semester. For purposes of the election, absentee ballots received by

(June Elections continued on page 9)

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#### **President's Note**

Are you aware that you can contribute to the ALRI scholarship fund to help graduates from Arlington County Schools attend college? Just note on your donation that it is for the scholarship fund held at the Arlington Foundation. This spring the second \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a student in need. It would be great if ALRI could increase the number and/or amount of these scholarships, so give it some thought and donate if you can.

The Academic Programs Committee has completed its work of developing ALRI courses for the fall term, and the lengthy process of putting together the catalog and finding/assigning classrooms has begun. You will be receiving your catalog in the latter half of August. A special board task force continues its work on finding a new ALRI name/logo. Preliminary work has also begun on creating a new website and finding a way to use Facebook effectively. Both of these, we hope, will improve ALRI's communications with members and potential members.

The Nominating Committee has completed a recommended slate of candidates for the upcoming board elections, for membership approval at the annual meeting on June 10 (see page 1). Plan on attending, voting, and meeting with your ALRI friends over refreshments.

— John Sprott

## SUCCESSFUL SPRING TERM



ALRI's spring academic season got off to a good start with the Course Preview on February 5 at Washington-Lee High School. Almost 150 participants spent the morning listening to brief instructor presentations designed to whet the appetite of po-

tential class enrollees.

The 28 spring course offerings in science, art history, literature, theater, medicine, politics, and other fields included both new courses and repeats of classes that proved popular in the past.

Repeat offerings included Estate Planning, African Conflicts, Writing About Your Life, The Washington Post: Behind the Headlines, and The U.S. Congress – Sausage in the Making. Entirely new classes included Introduction to Kant, Religion in Literature, and Outside/Inside: Short Stories of American Diversity.



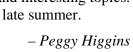
Seven classes filled to capacity. Among them were Global Hot Spots, The Gettysburg Campaign, A Naturalist's Tour, and The Large Hadron Collider. Global Hot Spots surpassed its own record for filling up fast. For the fall 2010 semester, class enrollment "maxed out" twelve minutes after enrollments opened. For this season, it filled up in five minutes!

Enrollments for all classes numbered close to 570. Unfortunately, low enrollment forced the cancellation

of a few proposed classes, including Foods From the Americas, Pilgrimage, and Photographing the Cold War.

The Academic Programs Committee has

just finished lining up courses for the fall semester. It's too soon to offer any specifics, but no doubt we'll have another roster full of varied and interesting topics. Look for the fall course catalog in late summer.







More pictures from Course Preview on page 10.

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#### **SPOTLIGHT ON INSTRUCTORS**



#### D. Ohlandt: Stage Producer and Teacher

For someone whose academic specialty is twentieth century drama, teaching about Edward Albee and simultaneously producing his plays was a unique opportunity. Dr. D. Ohlandt taught "The Educated Audience: Informed Appreciation of the Edward Albee Festival at Arena Stage" at ALRI during the spring term. At the same time, she served as the Albee Festival's producer.

As producer, she coordinated logistics for the works being performed. This entailed making sure that all involved (actors, stage crews, support staff, etc.) were "on board" with what needed to be done and that the production reflected the interests of the theater's artistic director. Considering that the event consisted of 26 readings by 17 differ-

ent theater companies, plus two main stage shows, this was no small challenge.

Dr. Ohlandt likes production work because she gets to work with a wide variety of people and make the most of what each of them brings to the production. This requires team building, a skill needed by any successful producer. In fact, in theater settings, team building is often done as a pre-production warmup.

Dr. Ohlandt has also taught outdoor team-building sessions where she worked as a small group development specialist to help participants learn to work together and solve problems. In these settings, she served as a facilitator, not a "dispenser of knowledge."

Dr. Ohlandt has taught two previous "educated audience" classes for ALRI. In those sessions, she focused on a selection of whatever plays were being performed in the D.C. area at the time. She loves teaching at ALRI because it affords all the best parts of teaching (such as having students who want to be in the class) without the burdens of preparing exams and determining grades.

— Peggy Higgins

#### James Giordano: They Shoe Horses, Don't They?

James Giordano's love of teaching started early. A black belt in judo by the time he was eighteen, he competed on the varsity team of St. Peter's College and instructed its club judo team. He was also a teaching assistant while an undergraduate and at various points taught swimming and aerobatic flying. Teaching high school for a year after graduation from college challenged and improved his skills at holding an audience. While in graduate school at the City University of New York (CUNY), Dr. Giordano also held a lectureship in physiological psychology. He links the joy of teaching to the pleasure that comes with acquiring knowledge: "It's a waste not to give back the information you have."



Dr. Giordano feels honored to teach ALRI classes, calling his ALRI students "the best students I have." He finds they "bring unique career and life experiences to the class conversations," ask profound questions, and are "engaged and engaging, interested and interesting."

Giordano lists three major factors that led him to his concentration on pain and neuroethics. He cites the special hold that scientists and technology had on Americans' imaginations in the 1960's when he was growing up and

(Giordano continued on page 4)

(Giordano continued from page 3)

remembers particularly the impact of watching astronaut Neil Armstrong walk on the moon. He was also captivated by the 1966 film "Fantastic Voyage" and its premise that scientists could discover and understand how the brain works and how thoughts are formed. Finally, as a graduate student, the serendipity of being "in the right place at the right time" kicked in when the discovery of endorphins raised the possibility of new insights into the nature of pain.

Giordano says that if he is thinking through an issue or creating a concept, he needs a three dimensional tablet of some kind to help him frame his points. The blank computer screen just does not work for him. He likes to use yellow legal pads, notebooks, old fashioned chalk boards, and dry boards. Giordano, the author of four books in print (with three more forthcoming next year) and more than 150 published articles, says it still helps him when he can refer to his hard copy tablets even years later, because the notes on the pages may evoke the mind set he was in when he first wrote them and may lead him in new directions.

Admitting that work is almost always on his mind in one way or another, Giordano notes that piloting airplanes is one hobby that compels him to concentrate solely on the task at hand. Despite the pleasures of flying, the press of work forced him to sell his plane about a year ago.

He has also had to give up -- at least for now -- the delights of riding horses with his wife, a nationally ranked equestrian. He still finds time to lift weights and is currently training for a competitive weight lifting tournament at the end of the summer.

Recently awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, Giordano will become a professor of neuroethics at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany for four months beginning in October 2011.

He suggests that his ALRI students would probably be surprised to learn that this instructor is a card-carrying union member. Although it's been a few years since he's forged a horseshoe or hammered a shoe onto a hoof, Giordano is a proud member of the American Farriers Guild. Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, he concludes that "There's just something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man." — *Mildred Patterson* 

#### Sarah Parks: Taking the Worry Out of Estate Planning



It's important to understand the big picture when planning one's estate, says Sarah Parks, who advises how to do this in her ALRI course "Estate Planning: Basics and Beyond."

Estate planning must take into consideration a lot of different aspects of law and life," says Parks: taxes, the probate process, and ramifications of different types of joint ownership and the survivorship features of each form. "Although you can 'do it yourself,' people underestimate the complexity of these issues and often end up with huge problems."

The emotion of family relationships may make it impossible to see clearly how to put a workable estate plan into place, Parks notes, so objective guidance and di-

rection from someone who has seen a similar situation before can be enormously helpful in untangling the issues.

Parks' teaching at the Fairfax Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and at the Widowed Persons Services of Northern Virginia led to an invitation to teach at ALRI, which she has been doing steadily except for a 2006-2010 hiatus while she was in Hawaii.

She finds ALRI students enthusiastic and positive, well-informed and thoughtful. "They present many different backgrounds—culturally, educationally," she notes. "I enjoy meeting them, learning from them and from their experiences, and educating them about subjects I feel are important to understand."

A native Virginian who grew up in Annandale, Parks graduated from W. T. Woodson High School and married a fellow student shortly thereafter. After moving around because of her husband's various jobs and having three children, she graduated from Randolph-Macon Woman's College. When her family moved back to Fairfax, she

#### Membership Committee Reaches Out

Members are the lifeblood of ALRI. At the heart of efforts to keep a strong member base is the Membership Committee, headed by co-chairs Joan Bertrand (below at left) and Ron Wise. This group of 17 ALRI volunteers organizes events focused on member recruitment and retention.



"Fortunately, we've had a relatively stable number of members over the past several years," Bertrand says, "but we need

to keep our eyes on the future. We know we need to always be thinking of new ways to attract members."

The Committee organizes three main events each year that are "ideal opportunities to connect with potential members and show them what ALRI is all about," Wise explains. The Committee coordinates planning, logistics and public relations for ALRI's annual meeting and the fall and spring semester course previews. The Committee also hosts an annual invitation-only social event to welcome new members and to recognize volunteers and instructors.

In January ALRI teamed up with the Arlington Arts Center to host a first-time joint event. Each of ALRI's seven clubs had a table staffed with members to explain club activities and answer questions; other tables were staffed by the Arts Center and the ALRI Membership Committee. A nice turnout of participants enjoyed mimosas, nonalcoholic drinks and pastries.

In addition, whenever ALRI co-sponsors a speaker at the Arlington Central Library, the Membership Committee has an information table at the main entrance to the auditorium. You'll find an ALRI table each summer



at the Arlington County
Fair. The
Membership
Committee is
also active at
the Fall Sen-

ior InfoExpo at the Ballston Common mall, and the Virginia Hospital Center's annual employee health fair. Add giving talks to groups



such as the retired teachers association, and writing articles for civic association newsletters, and you can see that the Membership Committee keeps very busy.

Committee members who make all of this happen are

Marge Alia, Priscilla Becker, Karen Cavanaugh, Pat Chatten, Marti Conlon, Millie Duffy, Helen Esserian, Doug First, Jackson Fray, Marjorie Hobart, Arlene Kigin, Nancy Palmerino, Grace Schmitt, Mary Schroeder and Margie Teed.



Ron Wise

Why would someone volunteer for all that work? The co-chairs both emphasize that

they see it as a way to give back to the organization. They have each taken some great classes and are members of ALRI clubs that they really enjoy. They say that if you'd like to give back to ALRI, you too should think about joining the Membership Committee. Its monthly meetings are open to all ALRI members. If you'd like more information, email Joan Bertrand at joanbertrand@msn.com or Ron Wise at wise\_guy@hotmail.com.



 $\stackrel{\wedge}{\Longrightarrow}$ 

# WELCOME

#### **New ALRI Members**

ALRI welcomes the following 86 new members who have joined between September 22, 2010 and April 6, 2011. They bring ALRI membership to 656.

Lynne Ackerman James R Beale Katherine Berry Samuel M Bradley Kathleen Brion Alice Buch Janice E Burke Eugene M Burns Jo A Burns Kenneth Cohn Elaine J Collins Robin J Denegal Mary Ann Dewey **Eleanor Dick** Cynthia M Fagnoni John P Flanigan Jeffrey C Foster Bonnie K Fowler Suzanne L Gill Marian Graham Madi R Green

Ruth Y Himes
Deborah A Hirtes
Frank L Huband
Reed Isbell
Eileen M Janas

Janice Jensen

Carole Hango-Hanlon

Ellen Hanson

Joe Junod Janet D Kiernan Mary H Knox Katharine E Koch Patricia Kuczkowski Paul Kuczkowski John M Lane Clodagh Lee Reese P Lewis Tse-Ning Liu Wu Marjorie Y McCarthy Judith McLaughlin Carol A Mercil Debra Militano Lynn G Myers Margaret Neuse Gerdine I Newstead Elizabeth Niederman Carol Paquette Bonny J Perez Bonnie L Pfoutz Sandra S Phaup Barbara H Phillips Susan Phillips Michael G Pilot John Pomeroy Carol A Poplin Beverly T Rawlings

William D Reilly

Kathryn S Richmond Alfred C Richmond Manfred K Rotermund Christel Schaffner-Smith Virginia Schneider Dawn B Schulz Nina Sebastian Susan Senn James Senn Kenneth L Setter Susan Shea Randolph C Sides Ann B Sides Marilyn Silver Allen H Sinsheimer Scott B Sitzer Judy K Strack Ann Symonds Susan M Tarr Ellen Thompson Robert E Tucker Steven M Umin Marjorie E Varner Martha A Walters Jeannette Washington Robert W Welsh Anne C Werner Katherine Wittenberg

#### **Site Insights: ALRI and Arlington's Community Centers**

A longstanding agreement between Arlington County's Office of Senior Adult Programs (OSAP) and ALRI has provided classroom and meeting space in those community centers that offer OSAP programs. ALRI clubs and committees have been meeting at the Lubber Run and Langston Brown centers for many years. At one time, ALRI offered courses in the



Walter Reed



This spring we expanded into offering a course at the Aurora Hills center in the Crystal City area. We await the evaluations from that course along with the demands for space for the new semester before determining the Aurora Hills site's best use for ALRI.







Aurora Hills



Lubber Run

#### Keep up with ALRI during the summer

Check for new special events and the status of the Fall Catalog at www.Arlingtonlri.org

## ALRIata Glance

#### **GENERAL INTEREST**

Friday, May 20 – ALRI Board Meeting, 10 a.m. CEC, Room 308

Thursday, May 26 – Spring semester ends.

**Monday, May 30** – ALRI offices closed for Memorial Day holiday.

Friday, June 10 – ALRI Annual Meeting, 9:30 a.m. Fairlington Community Center

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

*To register for special events*, go to ArlingtonLRI.org, call 703-228-2144 *or* email ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org

- **Friday, May 27 "Corridor" Art Exhibit.** Art Museum of the Americas, 11:00 a.m. Registration required. Free. Limited to 20 registrants.
- **Monday, June 6 Tunisia's Uprising.** Arlington Central Library, 3:00 p.m. No registration required. Free. All are welcome.
- **Thursday, June 9 The Language of Line.** National Portrait Gallery, 11:30 a.m. Registration required. Free. Limited to 20 registrants.
- **Tuesday, June 28 President Lincoln's Cottage.** Armed Forces Retirement Home Campus, 11:00 a.m. Registration required. Registrants pay \$10 at the cottage. Limit 15.
- **Friday, July 15 To Make a World.** National Museum of American Art, 11:30 a.m. Registration required. Free. Limit 20.
- **Friday, August 19 African Mosaic.** National Museum of African Art, 10:30 a.m. Registration required. Free. Limit 20.

#### **CLUBS**

- **Book Club.** Alternating months at Arlington Central Library, 1:30-3:30 p.m. For information contact Marge Alia (noting ALRI Book Club in subject line) at Malia04@comcast.net.
- **Breakfast Club.** Wednesdays, 8 a.m. at La Madeleine at Bailey's Crossroads, intersection of Columbia Pike and Rt. 7 (Leesburg Pike). Contact Karen Cavanaugh at kcavanaugh6@verizon.net.
- Bridge Club. Monthly on irregular schedule in members' homes. Contact Bernice Foster at fosterbf@aol.com.
- **Cinema Club.** Monthly on an irregular schedule. Contact Leanne Peters at peterslp@aol.com or Janice Yeadon at jnyeadon@hotmail.com for next movie date and details.
- **Current Issues Club.** Third Tuesday of every month, 1:30 p.m., Lubber Run Community Center. Contact James Walsh at 703-920-1709 or walsh22204@aol.com.
- **Ethnic Lunch Club.** Usually the last Thursday of each month. Call ALRI, 703-228-2144, and leave message for coordinator Arlene Kigin.
- **Travel Club**. Monthly on first Wednesday, 2:30 p.m., Langston -Brown Senior Center, 2121 N. Culpepper St., Arlington. For information contact Sharon Schoumacher at 703-522-9014 or sharon1006@verizon.net.

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graduated from George Mason Law School and earned an advanced law degree from Georgetown Law Center. She established her own practice, Custom Estate Planning, in Fairfax in 1995 and in 2005 began working with retired maritime attorney Bob Patton, who has added a lot to their practice.

Sarah Parks calls her most significant achievement successfully combining a career she loves with family, from raising her children to caring for her parents prior to their deaths. She also cites her use of estate planning to bring peace and harmony to her clients. "Being able to improve the lives of the people I serve makes me feel I am doing something meaningful."

Whatever spare time Parks has is spent with her family—including grandchildren ages 12 and 14 who live in Richmond—and photographing nature. She also began seriously studying metaphysics and natural healing in Hawaii and is a Reiki master, an ARCH Healing Master, and an Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) practitioner.

And when she retires, she'll have time to be an ALRI student too.

- Mike Leber

(June Elections continued from page 1)

June 9 will count towards the 20 percent quorum, but all members are encouraged to attend.

There will be no disco ball, but there may be dancing in the aisles once members elect the slate of candidates assembled by ALRI's nominating committee. Chair Jerry Greenwald and his team filled every open spot and added a couple more positions for good measure. On the ballot for a second vice-president position is Mike Morton; Art Gosling takes on the office of secretary; Bob Bemben is in the newly created co-chair position for Class Aides; and Karen Cavanaugh is the nominee for Membership co-chair. These candidates join the following incumbents seeking reelection to the one-year term:

- President: John Sprott
- Vice President: Jack Royer
- Treasurer: Henry Brown
- Registrar: Fred Fagerstrom
- ◆ Academic Programs Committee Co-Chairs: Robert Howe and Lee Nash
- ♦ Class Aides Committee Chair: Carolyn Gosling
- Community Advisory Council Chair: Richard Barton
- Information Technology Committee: Stephen Spangler
- Membership Committee Co-Chair: Joan Bertrand
- Publications Committee Co-Chairs: Richard Juhnke and Mildred Patterson

The meeting ends at noon with a raffle drawing. One lucky member will win a year's extension of ALRI



membership, and the other will win one free class registration for fall 2011. Members must be present to win!

#### **Class Aides to the Rescue!**



You've seen them in your classes – taking attendance, greeting speakers, distributing handouts and evaluation forms, and helping the instructor with audiovisual presentations. Class aides, invaluable to ALRI's success in presenting 25+ classes each term, either volunteer or

are recruited by the Class Aides Committee. In preparation for their duties, they attend an orientation session and receive a packet that gives them all the information they need to perform their job. In exchange for their services, they are given free parking if their class is in a location that does not provide it.

We always appreciate class members' volunteering to be class aides by ticking the appropriate box when they register for a class. But if nobody in your class volunteers, we also appreciate your saying *yes* when a recruiter calls you. Consider it your contribution to an organization whose lifeblood is volunteers.

For the current term, the class aide recruiters were Roberta Deihl, Inge Newstead, Doug First, and Carolyn Gosling. Their help was much appreciated. If you would like to volunteer to make class aide calls for a future term, please contact Carolyn Gosling at cgosling@verizon.net or 703-532-8453.

#### **Staff Corner**

#### **Summer Office Hours**

From June 15 through Labor Day, the ALRI office at the Clarendon Education Center (CEC) will operate on summer office hours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

On Tuesday, September 6, the office will return to its normal schedule. You may reach ALRI staff and volunteers this summer by either phoning 703-228-2144 or emailing us at ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org. Have a great summer!

– Marjorie Varner





Marjorie Varner Executive Director



Donna Banks Administrator









Instructors and members at the Spring Course Preview on February 5, 2011 at Washington-Lee High School







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#### Letter from the ALRI Board

#### A Closer Look at Class Cancellations

Every semester we have to cancel one or more classes due to under-enrollment. This spring term has been no different. The ALRI board understands the disappointment experienced by the members as well as our volunteer instructors. As board members we feel the same way.

The hardest part of our job is to provide a framework

for the class scheduling process and evaluate and adjust it as needed. Our Academic Programs Committee does a stellar job of identifying attractive courses and capable, willing instructors. Our Publications Committee puts in a great deal of effort to present the various courses in a comprehensive yet enticing format from a vast jumble of input. Instructors spend weeks and months developing their course material. Our Registrar and staff determine the course schedule while constrained by instructor needs and space realities. Class aides are solicited

from the registrants for each course and then receive detailed training to support their instructor and students. In other words, a great deal of work goes into the development of each and every course offered, so no one relishes the cancellation of all that effort.

As always, our goal is to provide ALRI members with access to a variety of great courses at reasonable times and locations. This is never, ever easy. A lot of logistical juggling is necessary to balance classroom availability and size. Many instructors can teach only during a limited window of dates and times, or they may request class size limits more restrictive than our standard limits. Some instructors are so popular that their courses fill almost instantly, causing consternation among those missing out. Some of our class locations are nicer, have better parking, and are just more attractive than others. We are fortunate to have access to these assorted sites but must negotiate for space given their differing availabilities and range of equipment. The fit isn't always perfect. Several of the larger class-

rooms in the new GMU building swamp our maximum class size of 50, but we have found that allowing enrollment to exceed our maximum severely limits the instructor-student interaction that many feel is vital to the ALRI experience.

These realities present a real balancing act to those of us who are responsible for making it all work. We've

> been at it for many years and have been able to hone our skills and establish working rules. We do learn from our experiences, good and bad. Our commitment to provide courses that the membership desires, within the real constraints we face, remains steadfast. With the exception of our two outstanding parttime staff, we remain a volunteer organization doing what needs to be done. We know apologies won't help, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions.



#### ALRI Newsletter

A publication of the

#### **Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute**

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> E-mail: ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org Website: www.ArlingtonLRI.org

We welcome your articles, questions, and suggestions.

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED** 

Don't miss the ALRI Annual Meeting on June 10th! Details on Page 1

#### 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 noncredit daytime courses, lectures, special events and activities to help meet the continuing educational and social needs of any interested persons over 50 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 Career, Technical and Adult

Education Program, Arlington County Office of Senior Adult Programs, Sunrise Senior

Living at The Jefferson, Marymount University, Elderhostel Institute Network