

# Horizons

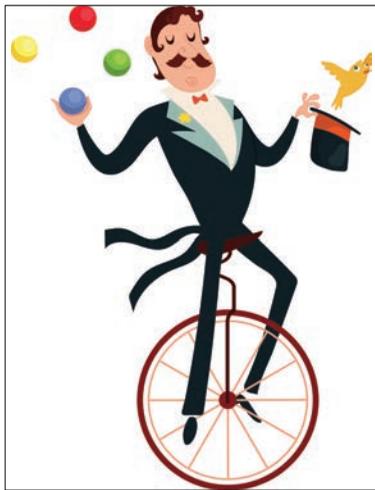
*Learning Later, Living Greater*

*Fall 2020*

## **How to Plan a Course in the Covid Era**

The mission of AIL is “to provide a lifelong learning experience for adults....” For the Curriculum Committee and its chair, Nancy Marashio, the Covid world has provided a multitude of opportunity. It has been a balancing act between what is allowed and what is not; what is comfortable and what is not; what is technically possible and what is not. Throughout the planning experience for this year and next, the paramount concern has been that AIL deliver on its promise of “intellectual growth in an informal setting.”

First there were no spring or summer courses while all of the world sorted out its next steps, but AIL was eager to welcome back its students. So they tried an experiment – the live broadcast “Bessie’s Story: Watching the Lights Go Out” – a story about new learning, adaptation and fortitude. It was a hit. So the planners tried “New Hampshire is Changing” – a three-part virtual presentation on the impact of climate change in the Granite State. Another hit... and largely because of the Q&A format. The committee had the full support of Colby-Sawyer College – as long as they stayed within health guidelines, they were good to go. So they had a direction. Courses could be offered face-to-face, or virtually, or somewhere in between.



*... Zoom just takes practice!*

But what about the study leaders and the students? They had to learn a new skill – how to use Zoom. How to adapt a class intended for significant interaction face-to-face, to a more remote interactive format. Class size had to be smaller because of the technology and social distancing. Students – on different platforms that all look different from one another on screen – also had to learn how to use Zoom. Not everyone was comfortable with the new format. Health considerations also played a role. And not all classes lend themselves to a Zoom format. But many study leaders who thrive on student interaction were willing to give it a go – maybe not immediately, but in the next term.

Virtual learning also means that one does not need to be in New London to take a course – or to offer one, for that matter.

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*When asked what learning was the most necessary, he said,  
“Not to unlearn what you have learned.”*

**Diogenes Laërtius**

## President's Letter

Dear AIL Friends,

Although I'd love to be seeing you in the "old" way, I'm certainly happy to be seeing many of you in our new venue, Zoom. Six of the eight courses offered this fall are on Zoom and two are in person, back in our Lethbridge classroom. Just so you know how nimble we are able to be, it turns out that one of our stalwart Study Leaders gave a class from a vacation retreat in Maine and several members have been able to join their classes from other places far removed from Lethbridge Lodge. And that's very good news during this time of not much good news! The Curriculum Committee and our Study Leaders have put together an exciting and excellent array of classes this fall with more promised for the winter term. Kudos and bouquets to Nina and Abby who have been orchestrating all of the classes, been on tap to fix any technical glitches (there have been a few but, blessedly, remedied quickly) during the classes, training all of us in the use of this new medium while also managing to get the myriad other business of AIL accomplished. Miraculous!

On an entirely different note, you should all know that our request for donations to AIL during our membership renewal campaign has met with extraordinary success and we are most grateful to so many AIL members who have expressed their support for what AIL means to all of us. As of this writing we have heard from 103 members who have donated more than \$13,000 (see the list of donors on page 5) to support the programs that we offer. During this year in particular, having had to cancel both spring and summer courses, our course revenue has been greatly reduced so that your support is crucial to our successful operations. I'd also like to remind you that a gift to AIL in honor or in memory of a fellow AIL enthusiast is a lovely way to remember our AIL friends. And please know that every single gift to AIL is very much appreciated and will be put to good use for the benefit of all of us.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and "learning-ful" fall and look forward to the time when we can be together in person once again,

– Mary Doyle, President



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## Two Champions

Little did Katrina Wagner know in 2019, when she took on her position as chair of the Lunch & Learn program at AIL, that not only would this program benefit the community in general, but that it would take on a very special meaning in her own life and that of her daughter, Jenny.

Lunch & Learn is a program that is open and free to all; there is no requirement to join AIL. It does provide an opportunity to become acquainted with AIL and the education and camaraderie that comes with membership.

Tom Farmen, a retired headmaster and a Special Olympics of New Hampshire Board member, was scheduled to be the speaker at the April 27 Lunch & Learn in the AIL classroom, which was postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. When he was asked to give the program on Zoom, he readily agreed. Tom has given many talks related to his experience with Bessie, his chocolate Lab, her voyage into blindness, her many accomplishments and the life lessons she has taught him, but he had not done one remotely before.

Katrina's daughter, Jenny Harrington, was living with her in New London temporarily during the pandemic and they watched the program together. Both Katrina and Jenny were moved by the story and emailed Tom expressing an interest in buying his book, *Bessie's Story: Watching the Lights Go Out*. Katrina added in her note: "We both pricked up our ears hearing of your involvement with Special Olympics. Jenny is a swimmer and won gold for Massachusetts at the Special Olympics National Games in 2014 and at the World Games in 2015. She is now 51 and despite her learning disabilities, I'm very proud to say she has been like Bessie all her life."

Tom brought Bessie when he delivered the books. It was love at first sight for Jenny when she met Bessie. (Having seen the two together, I can attest to the affection that flows in both directions.) Tom told Jenny that he was



Ashley and Tom Farmen with Jenny and Bessie and (below) Bessie wearing Jenny's gold medal

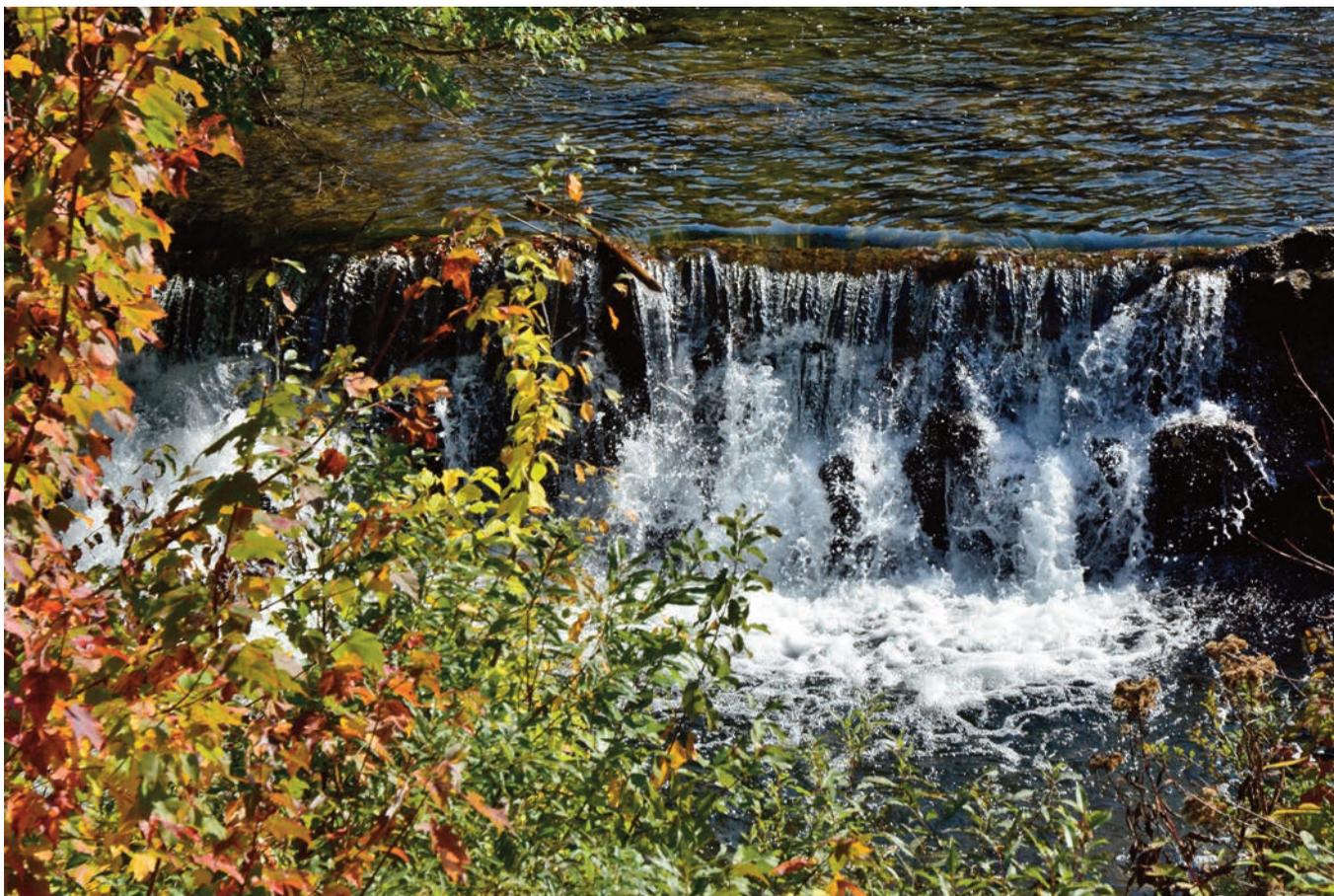
honored to meet her; he had never before met an Olympic Gold medalist.

After this visit Jenny and Katrina contacted Tom and told him that Jenny wanted to give her gold medal to Bessie, another champion. And she sent it. Tom responded by email: "Dear Jenny, Thank you for sending the GOLD MEDAL to help honor Bessie's spirit and resilience. It takes a champion to know a champion and you are a CHAMPION. ... We appreciate your kindness, Jenny. You are inspirational! Thank you again. Tom and Bessie."



Meeting new friends in the pandemic environment is almost impossible, but not quite. Katrina, Jenny, Tom, his wife Ashley, and Bessie have formed a meaningful and very special connection. They have plans to get together in the future for hikes and to stay in touch. The secondary gain that these champions and their families have experienced is what makes Lunch & Learn such a valuable component of AIL.

– Susan Lynn



*Falls by Joan Eaton*

## ***How to Plan a Course in the Covid Era***

*continued from page 1*

Wherever your computer is, there is your classroom.

So the committee was able to bring a smaller array of courses to students this fall – eight were offered in various formats. This is just the beginning of the term so the jury is still out on how well the options worked.

The remaining challenges? First, it takes much longer to plan and implement a Zoom course, especially when it is a transformation from face-to-face. And it takes testing those formats – some get jettisoned immediately and others are an instant success. Second is that AIL needs to offer more classes. Another area that will just take a bit of time as both study leaders and students become more comfortable with the delivery mechanism. Finally, is the need for the technical support that makes it possible for teachers to concentrate on content and format while someone “behind the scenes” worries about sharing documents or polling or breakout rooms. It is all just a matter of time and teamwork.

With plaudits from all those who have participated so far, the Curriculum Committee is moving ahead with plans for the winter term, committed to “offering a diverse array of stimulating courses and programs” for all who want to experiment with this new learning format.

So with more than 100% of support from all involved, AIL continues to evolve.

– Maggie Ford



## Thank You!

In 2019, AIL received seven unexpected donations from members. Gifts were inspired in different ways: as a thank you for courses and events offered year-round; as a gift in honor of or in memory of a member of our community; and as an offer of help with regular expenses. Naturally, as far as expenses (literally, keeping the lights on), we're grateful for our strong partnership with Colby-Sawyer College.

In June 2020, when it was time for the annual membership appeal, the Board and Membership Committee took a new step for AIL: members were invited to make a donation with their renewal. Although that option had been available on our online membership form (a box to fill in for a donation), this was a specific request.

**Gifts can be made in honor of  
or in memory of someone special. AIL  
has received gifts this year in memory of  
John Roberts and Les Norman.**

The response has been phenomenal. This vote of confidence in AIL's programs, study leaders, guest speakers, volunteers on the Board, committees and staff is sincerely appreciated. We continue to aim for a smooth transition as courses and lectures are adapted to an online platform.

Donors who have made gifts so far are listed below. A complete list of donors will be published in our 2020-2021 AIL Annual Report.

– Harry Tether, on behalf of the Board

### 2019 & 2020 Donors

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Maria Dahlman	Ralph D. Hough	Timothy Norris	* Multiple gifts
	Elizabeth Howell	Alice D. Nulsen	^ Deceased

## Study Leaders in Action: Fall 2020

This fall, six courses are being offered online via Zoom and two are in the AIL classroom. Prof. Lynn Garrioch's course will begin in late October. Study leaders have led their Zoom sessions from wherever they are that day.



*Sage Chase with John Turco and guest presenters via Zoom*



*Scott Rapoport*



*Joanna Henderson*



*Julie Machen*



*Liz Tentarelli*



*Jamie Hess*



*David Bashaw*



*Nancy Marashio*



*Brenda Watts*



*John Peterman*



*John Ferries*

## Looking Forward to Winter Courses

AIL will offer 11 courses this winter, three in the AIL classroom and eight on Zoom. An introduction to severe mental illness and its treatment with new study leader Paul Gorman is the only carryover from Spring 2020, when all courses had to be rescheduled.

Ace Eaton's in-person course will focus on the history of skiing in New England. The vision of resort founders combined with innovations that improved everything from equipment to lifts to snowmaking helped spur New England's success as a skiing destination.

Kent Hackmann will lead the second in-person course on Medieval Europe, a round-table discussion focusing on five topics. The third course on campus will be led by Nancy Marashio. This exploration of Native Nations poetry will be guided by the work of our current U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo, who is also the first Native American to receive that honor.

From the vast expanse of Siberia traversed by the famous railroad, to the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany and its lessons for democratic citizenship, to the founding of a small Utopian community in Massachusetts in 1843, the history courses offered this winter are all excellent. All of the following courses will be on Zoom:

Bob Koester returns by popular demand with his history of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and the 6,000-mile journey by train that he took with a friend. Tom White will delve into the history of the Nazi party and its effect on democracy in Germany and beyond, including in the United States. Joanna Henderson will lead her course on the Alcotts: Louisa May her sisters, and the peripatetic Bronson Alcott and his wife, Abigail. Their self-sufficient community in Harvard, Mass., was ambitious but short-lived.

Scott Rappeport is also bringing back a course by popular demand: an in-depth look at mega-volcanoes and their impact on civilization. He describes this subject as the intersection of history, climate and geology. The U.S. Constitution had a bumpier start than some may realize, with essential changes made to the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. Jim Bays will lead this investigation of what had to change to keep the union together.

Larry Crocker will lead a discussion of criminal cases and criminal justice from his own practice and public records to literature by Shakespeare and Stephen King. John Peterman will offer another entertaining course with his tribute to entertainers born in 1920.

The Winter 2021 catalog will be mailed in late October with registration open from Wed., Nov. 11 through Fri., Dec. 11.

### Fall Programs on Zoom

**REGISTER IN ADVANCE** at colby-sawyer.edu for **STAY-AT-HOMECOMING Zoom links** for these live events on Oct. 16 & 17:

**Oct. 16, noon: *State of the College*,**  
Pres. Sue Stuebner

**Oct. 16, 4:00 p.m.: *Influenza and Covid-19: Mother Nature's Weapons of Mass Disease*,**  
Paul Etkind, DrPH

**Oct. 17, 12:30 p.m.: *The 2020 Election: Searching for a Precedent*,**  
Prof. Eric Boyer

**Oct. 22, 5:00 p.m.: SCIENCE PUB  
*Cannabis 101: A New Look at An Old Book*,**  
Corey Burchman, M.D.

**For the SCIENCE PUB Zoom link, call or email the AIL office.**



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## ADVENTURES IN LEARNING

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Adventures in Learning's *Horizons* highlights  
the activities of the lifelong learning program  
at Colby-Sawyer College.

### Winter Term at a Glance

*Classes begin the week of Jan. 18 unless otherwise indicated*

#### MONDAYS

- 🌐 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **History of New England Skiing** / Ace Eaton
- ❖ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. **United States Constitution: The Great American Mulligan** / Jim Bays

#### TUESDAYS

- ❖ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **An Introduction to Understanding Severe Mental Illness and its Treatment** / Paul Gorman
- ❖ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **A 100th Tribute to Entertainers Born in 1920** / John Peterman (*starts Feb. 23*)
- ❖ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. **Mega-Volcanoes, Environmental Shocks and Civilization – Reprise**  
Scott Rapoport

#### WEDNESDAYS

- ❖ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Opening a Continent: Siberia and Her Railroad – Reprise** / Bob Koester
- ❖ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. **The Rise of the Nazis: Lessons for Democratic Citizenship** / Tom White
- 🌐 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. **Exploring Five Topics in Medieval Europe, c. 900-1100** / Kent Hackmann

#### THURSDAYS

- ❖ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **The Alcotts** / Joanna Henderson
- 🌐 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. **Native Nations Poetry: Coming Through** / Nancy Marashio

#### FRIDAYS

- ❖ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. **A Criminal Case Sampler** / Larry Crocker

🌐 **In-person course**  
❖ **Online via Zoom**