

Adventures in Learning Update

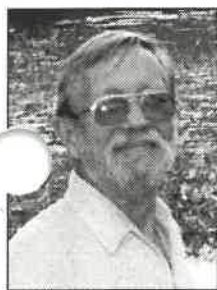
Spring 2005

COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE

LEARNING AMONG FRIENDS

Profile: Jim Bowditch

Jim Bowditch is remarkable! A man of many interests and talents, he also loves to teach. Of the 139 courses offered so far by Adventures in Learning, he has been the study group



Jim Bowditch

leader for ten and was also one of the lecturers in "The Renaissance" series. At times, he has led two different

courses in the same semester.

His classes usually deal with history or literature, but he also has led courses on "Ethiopia," "Eastern Religions," and "Colonialism in Southeast Asia."

He is currently the study group leader for a class on *Don Quixote*, Miguel de Cervantes' great classic novel.

Born in Cambridge, Jim spent his early years in the Philippines and Mexico, countries where his geologist father was working.

He received a B.A. from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in American Studies from Harvard and studied Oriental Literature in Japan while on a Fulbright

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Stimulating the Senses

The bus was ready to go precisely at 7:30 AM with 46 AIL participants eager to visit the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts. We were off to see three wonderful exhibits, all recently lauded in major newspapers: the China House, American Fancy, and the Chatsworth Treasures. Each exhibit was dramatically different and each represented three hugely variant cultures. We knew we were in for a real treat.

We arrived on time and broke into two groups each accompanied by knowledgeable docents. Our group slipped through a glass door and suddenly was in the quiet village of Huang Cun, China, facing the facade of the Yin Yu Tang House, the 200-year-old home of the Huang family. Through a miraculous cultural partnership, this structure was transferred to Salem and reconstructed to appear exactly as it was when last lived in by the Huang family in 1980.

We gazed up at the entrance gate named the "Hall of Plentiful Shelter." Panels and a portico carved with scenes from Chinese opera and nature were smashed and mutilated in places. The Huangs themselves did this in compliance to the Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution. Passing under the imposing gate, I touched the faded ribbons hung on the side to bring good luck. We gathered in the central courtyard, open to the sky and surrounded by a two-story wood structure. We looked up to see shutters open to the courtyard, the only access the upper story had to light and air. We peered into the small bedrooms, each with a wonderful enclosed bed, richly carved cabinets and chests, and filled with beautiful baskets. The tiny slippers and beds spoke of people not raised on multivitamins that spurred the growth of Westerners. In almost every room a poster of Chairman Mao replaced the ancestral portraits once worshipped by the Huangs.

Successful Huang men would spend months at a time in distant urban centers where they acted as pawnbrokers—moneylenders in actuality. The Huangs were a wealthy family, and the few exterior windows showed the need to be watchful for bandits that might attack when the men were away.



Taking a break in the atrium of the Peabody-Essex Museum were (left to right) Sally Southard, Janie Webster, Bonnie Guterl, Pat Stewart, Judy Bohn and Sue Little.

See Stimulating the Senses, Pg. 2

Stimulating the Senses, from Pg 1

Through one of these small apertures we gawked at the amazingly intricate interconnecting "horsehead" roofs and parapets. It seemed strange to emerge from the Yin Yu Tang house into the contemporary main hall of the PEM only to be plunged into a world of sensory overload.

We had arrived at the American Fancy Exhibition, the name of the decorative arts movement that swept the country

between 1790 and 1840. It was an exuberant period in the arts, a time when every item found in a household, whether common or elite, was filled with wildly colorful and detailed items used for everyday use. This was an "art" that was accessible to all, sold in "Fancy" stores where one could purchase a single mocha cup, mimicking the ceramic ware that came from ports in Yemen, or a kaleidoscope with its constantly changing prisms of color and light. In fact, the kaleidoscope in many ways represented the essence of this movement.

Spurred on by women's changing role, girls attending academies produced imaginative hand-painted small tables and chairs, sewing chests, and embroidered pieces. One spectacular starburst quilt was indicative of the sense of motion that seemed present in many works. Trompe l'oeuil entered the scene with deceptive fireplace screens. Indeed, the American Fancy Movement brought all of the senses into play.

We had one more exhibition to see: the Chatworth Treasures, a huge eclectic collection representing objects, often *outré* in nature, collected over 500 years by the Cavendish family, the Dukes of Devonshire, who lived in Derbyshire, England in the family estate known as Chatsworth House.

I was particularly taken by the incunabula, books published prior to 1501. There were glorious huge botanicals and atlases of a curious world not yet mapped. In addition there were parures, an entire set of jewelry that would be worn by some lucky gal when attending court, and the carved rosary of Henry VIII, who probably didn't use it enough. Enormous silver candelabra, uncut

gems, and a fabulous collection of Renaissance drawings were all brought to this one country estate by the long line of Cavendish men.

We passed through areas of different colors, each representing a different duke, and featured in each room was a magnificent portrait of that particular Cavendish. There were women also—the beautiful, sultry Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, her story told in a book of the same name. A smart, savvy, intelligent woman, she managed to live successfully in a *menage a trois*, a friend of "the other woman," an arrangement that would never succeed in today's media-hungry world.

Finally we met Bess Hardwick, 1527-1608, founder of the Cavendish family, looking imperious in her Elizabethan garb, and draped with pearls. She married often and produced the first William Cavendish during her second marriage. She believed in the strength of family, and began the tradition of collecting things to be shown and shared with others. Our docent, Shelby Hayes, described her as "smart, shrewd and astute." I thought that these were fitting words to describe the participants of this AIL trip, and indeed all of the good people in the New London area who take advantage of the AIL program.

We raided the gift shops and our day at PEM was over. This curious and sated group of travelers climbed back on the bus to head home. What a day! Three cheers for Dusty Logan and Jean McKee who did the advance planning, and kudos to Sharon and Laura who made it all come together. Once again, the buzz on the bus was "Where are we going next year?"

Sally Southard

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at Colby-Sawyer College**

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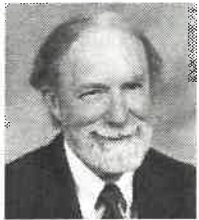
www.colby-sawyer.edu/adventures

Adventures in Learning Update, published three times annually, highlights the courses and happenings of the Adventures in Learning program at Colby-Sawyer College.

Preview of Spring 2005 Courses

Adventures in Learning is pleased to offer eleven stimulating courses for the spring term of 2005, which begins April 18 and continues until May 27 for six-week courses or June 10 for eight-week courses. The spring *Catalog* will be mailed during the week of February 7, and the registration period will open on February 22 and close on March 11. We will continue to accumulate all registration applications up until the end of opening day. At that time, if it is determined that more applications have been received for any of the courses than there are spaces available, the “first-day lottery” will apply for those particular courses only. In the event that an applicant does not gain entry into any of his/her first three course selections, the enrollment fee will be returned. Here is a preview of our course offerings for spring 2005:

Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religions: Differences and Commonalities



Dick Dutton



Richard Klein



Shahnaz Naeem



Charles Kennedy

In this six-session course, representatives from three religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—will discuss the beliefs and practices of their faiths and explore perspectives on God; the experience of worship; political and social ethics; and more.



Tom Vannatta

Backyard Astronomy

How much do you know about stars, constellations, and planets? Join Tom Vannatta in this novice-level astronomy course to learn some fundamental astronomy concepts and techniques of observation. Indoor discussion will be supplemented with outdoor observations of the night sky.



Morris Edwards

In Search of the Early Kings of England

Once again, Morris Edwards will lead an exciting journey into the past to learn about the lives and times of such real-life English kings as Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, and Richard the Lionheart and such mythical heroes as King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable and Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men.



George Tracy



Douglas Marshall

Greek Tragedy

George Tracy and Douglas Marshall will team up to study six short but powerful Greek tragedies—three by Aeschylus, two by Sophocles, and one by Euripides. The political, religious and personal questions that are probed in these great plays are still relevant today and should provide rich material for discussion.



Martin LeBeau

Classical Music Lives

Knowledgeable listening leads to better understanding of classical music. This course with Martin LeBeau will help participants sharpen their listening skills so they can better appreciate the classical music that is being performed in the concert hall today.



Joe Davis

The Far East Today

While our attention has been focused on the Middle East, a lot has been happening elsewhere. Joe Davis will lead a study of the Far East over the past 10 years. The emergence of China and India as economic powers, the rebirth of Japan, and the social challenges facing the citizens of this region are just a few of the subjects he will cover.



Ben Acard

The Spirit of "76"

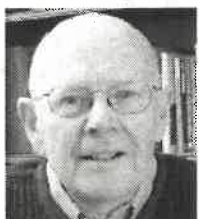
Under the leadership of Ben Acard, this course will look at "The Miracle at Philadelphia" that led to the founding of our nation. The class will review key documents such as the Federalist Papers and the Declaration of Independence and view some lectures on DVD by a distinguished professor.



Charlotte Spencer

Adapting Austen: Novel to Film

This course with Charlotte Spencer will read and discuss Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*, view the 1995 film and then ponder the issues involved in turning a written work into a film.



Art Rosen

Who Wrote the Bible?

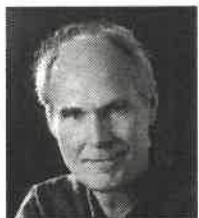
Have you always believed the first four books of the Bible were written by Moses or that the gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Come learn about the real authors as Art Rosen explores the history of the Bible and the mystery of its creation. Art has given this popular course a number of times at ILEAD and once for AIL.



Julien LeBourgeois

The Legacy of Napoleon

This course with Julien LeBourgeois will examine the life and career of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon's leadership style, his role as lawgiver, and his influence on the economy and education system in France will be just a few of the subjects covered.



John Goodlin

The Play's the Thing

Under the guidance of John Goodlin, artistic director of the Northeast Shakespeare Ensemble, this course will examine the play the Ensemble chooses to produce this summer. The play will be read aloud, and the class will consider how the play might be staged and other "directorial choices."



Bob Gray

Homer's *Odyssey*

One of the greatest epics of all time, the *Odyssey* of Homer describes the travails of Odysseus as he returned home after the Trojan War. The course will include lectures and class discussions under the leadership of Bob Gray.

Profile, continued from Pg. 1

scholarship. He taught at Ripon College in Wisconsin for eight years and became the head of a high school in Chicago. Jim then spent 26 years overseas with 11 years as headmaster of international schools including the America Overseas School of Rome, the ACAT School in Torino, the International School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and he was a professor of history and English at John Cabot University in Rome.

Wherever he was in the world, Jim always came back to Chocuroa, a little hamlet about an hour north of here, where for generations the Bowditches have had a summer house. Known for its

beautiful mountain and its tragic Indian legend, Chocuroa has always been for Jim "the hub of my wheel." He is currently working with an historical preservationist with the goal of getting the Chocuroa Basin on the National Register of Historical Places. His other big project concerns the slowing down of traffic on Highway 16 which goes right through the Chocuroa area.

Jim is also an author of four published works and twelve (!) unpublished novels. He really enjoys writing but is impatient with the process involved in getting anything published. His novels are usually based on

historical facts that have inspired considerable research.

The walls of his home have many beautiful intricate black and white line drawings, many done by Jim and some by his son, who is a professional artist. One daughter is a computer programmer; the other daughter is getting a degree in the performing arts. Jim's other son is a patent lawyer.

Jim has many ideas for future AIL courses and is willing to do two at a time, but not during the fall semester. That time is reserved for Chocuroa.

Heidi Beckwith

Writers' Encore

Following is the story of some AIL members who were so inspired by a study group that they decided to continue meeting. If there are any other groups that have grown out of a study group, the newsletter would be delighted to hear about them.

Three years ago, thirty adult learners gathered eagerly and nervously in the cozy meeting room of Tracy Memorial Library to begin a journey with Dr. Rachel Mills. Her course "Journal Writing" was one of many offered through AIL at Colby-Sawyer College. In eight weeks we overcame personal obstacles in writing to learn how to capture memories, create family stories and reflect on the intricacies of our lives in new ways. Dr. Mills created an environment of comfort and acceptance in a masterful way. She was inspirational and an exciting teacher. In fact, many of us were so enthralled with the course and her ability to expand our skills that extra sessions were added.

Two years later, four of us who had been in Dr. Mills' class met in another AIL course and during a break decided to continue our writing sessions. Now we are a group of six and have modified the model to suit our busy lives by meeting monthly. Our focus is open-ended, although for some the writings are part of a continuum of stories about family members and personal history. These legacies will be given to children, grandchildren and other family members. For nearly three hours each month we read our writings and poems, discuss content and style and offer support and suggestions. We laugh and sometimes cry as our discussions are often lively and filled with an enthusiastic range of emotions. As we have come together, our level of trust has intensified and this has led us to try new writing styles and adopt new techniques.

Our group sponsored an exciting event on October 2, 2004. Inspired by one of our members who had attended a seminar with Dr. Kendall Dudley of Lexington, MA, we invited him to lead a whole day workshop. Dr. Dudley teaches at Tufts University, Lesley College and other schools in Massachusetts. Eighteen of us settled into a large room at the Tracy Memorial Library to learn specialized journal writing methods adapted for use in travels as well as daily life. Enhancing our writing styles with art, stimulating observations of life, and experimenting with writing styles were a few of the important topics presented by Dr. Dudley. It was a very enjoyable and meaningful experience for us and provided us with new tools to use in our writing efforts.

Eleanor Angoff



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SAVE THE DATE
for
ADVENTURES IN LEARNING'S
6th Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 2005
4:00 to 6:00 PM

Wheeler Hall, Ware Campus Center
Colby-Sawyer College

Business meeting held from 4 to 5 PM,
Followed by hors d'oeuvres and wine from 5 to 6 PM