

# Adventures in Learning Update



Spring 2004

COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE

LEARNING AMONG FRIENDS

## Profile: Barbara Stearns

If one were to rank Adventures in Learning enthusiasts according to their level of participation, Barbara Stearns would surely be near the top.



Barbara, 91, has taken not one but *two* classes almost every term since the beginning of

AIL—in subject matter ranging from Shakespeare to DNA. “I also love to cook,” she says, “and I take a cooking course whenever one is offered.” AIL helps to keep her busy and “keeping busy keeps me going.”

A native of New Hampshire, Barbara was brought up in Manchester. She first went to the Colby School for Girls and then to Colby Junior College, graduating in the class of 1932. She went on to Connecticut College. In September after her 1934 graduation, she and Richard Byron Stearns, also a Manchester native, were married. Dick’s work with Union Carbide took them to many places—Alabama, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Fairfield and Westchester counties in the New

*See Profile, Pg. 2*

## An Adventure in Boston

Early morning November 4<sup>th</sup>...it’s dank, dreary and drizzly outside. What a perfect day to go museum hopping in Boston! Forty-four eager AIL adventurers convened at the Lake Sunapee Country Club parking lot to board a Dartmouth Coach bus for a trip to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Well, almost 44 souls; this hapless stray, who had wrongfully told the Faughnans we were meeting at St. Andrews, was wandering around New London looking for the meeting place after failing to read her directions carefully. Fortunately, we all ended up in the right place.

Most of us had been well prepped on the museum on October 27<sup>th</sup> at Dusty Logan’s lecture at Tracy Library. At one time, Dusty headed the Textiles Department for this collection. She still considers the museum a “second home.” More than well versed on her topic, Dusty used slides and interesting facts to enlighten us on the intriguing life of the fabulous Mrs. Jack (Isabella Stewart Gardner).



Among the AIL members who enjoyed a day at the Gardner Museum were (from left to right) Jackie Dunning, Ann Lang, Natalie Davis, Pat Stewart, Sally Southard, Janie Webster.

After arriving at the museum, we split into groups of 15 for a tour of the Gardner’s masterpieces. Imagine our delight to discover that our docent was the daughter-in-law of New London’s Nell and Dick Leach! We started with the magnificent *El Jaleo* by John Singer Sargent, dramatically displayed in the Spanish Cloister. We learned that Mrs. Gardner had personally designed the setting to lure the painting from the previous owner, who, upon seeing it so displayed, had to admit that it highlighted the dramatic colors and vibrant action of the work. We then entered the charming courtyard filled with blooming seasonal flowers and statuary from many historical periods. In her European travels, Mrs. Gardner had been particularly taken with the architecture of Venice and had an Italianate villa constructed, with the interior four-story enclosed courtyard built with artifacts collected from Venice. We continued from there to Sargent’s controversial portrait of Mrs. Jack. Accepted by her after eight previous attempts, the provocative portrait set the tongues of Boston society wagging, and her husband forbade it to

*See Adventure, Pg. 2*

*Profile—Barbara Stearns, cont'd from pg 1*

York area and back to Manchester. When Dick retired in 1981, they moved to New London. They had two children—a boy and a girl—and Barbara today has five grandchildren and two great grandsons.

Colby-Sawyer College is very important to Barbara. A trustee for many years, she now is among the Trustees Emeriti. Knowing how much the college means to her, Barbara's husband, father and

friends furnished a student government room in her name on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her graduation. Every year on Family Weekend, the Barbara Stearns Leadership Awards are given to an outstanding young man and young woman on campus. "I still keep in touch with several of those award winners from way back," she says. In 1999, the college honored her with the Colby-Sawyer Town Award in recognition of her many activities and contributions to the college and the community. There is also a Barbara Stearns flower fund for plantings on campus.

Locally, Barbara has always been involved with the New London Historical Society and served on the board for many years. "I always seemed to be in charge of the social committee, which involves getting volunteers to make and serve goodies for the art show, holiday open house and dessert socials." She is a member of the First Baptist Church in New London and has been active in the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust. In Manchester she was president of the YWCA and on the boards of trustees for the Manchester city library and the city historical society.

Today, she quilts once a week at the Council on Aging and has her knitting friends in every Thursday. "If I couldn't knit I'd go crazy," she says. Her days are full and satisfying. She has a great zest for life and a gift for friendship with people of all ages. "I've been blessed with good health, and I think it's important to stay involved. You know, if you don't keep up, you get left behind."

Heidi Beckwith

*An Adventure in Boston, cont'd from pg 1*

ever be shown again during his lifetime. Today it hangs in a prominent setting in a well-lighted corner, as if Mrs. Gardner is greeting every guest to her museum. There are too many beautiful masterpieces to mention, but everything is exactly as Mrs. Gardner placed it herself, never to be changed or added to. It would require many visits to take in all the wondrous objects on display, for the Gardner's interests were vast and varied and included art from the Far East as well as Europe.

After our tour, we were free to stay on at the museum, have lunch at our leisure and shop. Tickets to the special Rembrandt exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts were available, so many grabbed lunch quickly at the cafeteria and took advantage of the opportunity to see this special collection, mostly a detailed display of Rembrandt's etchings. Speaking personally, when attending a comprehensive exhibit of large and small works of any artist, I pass over the small etchings and drawings to see the more dramatic and colorful works. We were all able to see, using magnifying glasses when possible, the exquisite work of Rembrandt's etchings and drawings.

How quickly the day passed. We were all in our places when the bus departed for New London at 3:30 p.m. Overwhelmingly, the buzz on the way home was, "When can we do something like this again? Can we go to the Peabody in Salem? How about the Atheneum in Hartford, CT?" Clearly, these AIL-sponsored trips are popular, so stay tuned for news of a future adventure.

Sally Southard

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at Colby-Sawyer College**

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*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 2004 Courses

Spring is just around the corner! Once again, Adventures in Learning will be offering an exciting group of courses designed to appeal to the varied interests of the adult community. Our spring term begins April 19 and continues through May 28 for six-week courses or June 11 for eight-week courses. The spring *Catalog* will be mailed the second week in February, and the registration period will open on February 23 and close on March 12. Because the “first-day lottery” policy implemented last year has been effective, we will continue to follow the practice of accumulating all registration applications received prior to the opening of registration as well as those received on opening day. At the end of the opening day, 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 sneak preview of our course offerings for spring 2004:



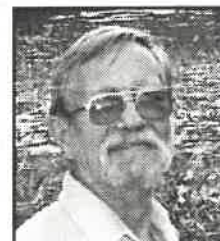
James H. Moore

### ***New Hampshire's Geology***

Study leader James H. Moore will begin this course with an explanation of the plate tectonics theory that has revolutionized the science of geology and given us a coherent picture of the dynamic earth through time. Through lectures and discussion, Moore will explain how North America, New England, and New Hampshire fit into this picture.

### ***The Short Fiction of Henry James***

In this course, Jim Bowditch will lead discussions of selected short stories and two novellas (*Daisy Miller* and *The Turn of the Screw*) by Henry James. The focus will be on James' major themes and the art of fiction, of which James was an acknowledged master.



Jim Bowditch



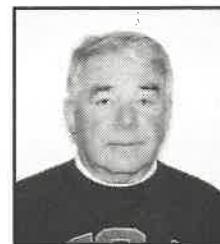
Charles Chamberlain

### ***American Comedy: Chaplin and his Contemporaries***

Comedy as it was portrayed in silent and early sound film is an important part of our culture. With the help of leader Charles Chamberlain, participants will study the “greats” of the 1910s and 1920s—Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd—and learn about producer-directors Mack Sennett and Hal Roach and such comedians as “Fatty” Arbuckle, the Little Rascals, and Marion Davies.

### ***Sherlock Holmes – An Introduction***

Jim Bowditch and Ben Acard will conduct a study of the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, and the life and times of his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The class will also examine Holmes' London, his biographer Dr. John Watson, and some of Holmes' most famous cases.



Ben Acard



Hilary Cleveland

### ***The Evolution of the American Presidency***

The modern American presidency has evolved over the years into a branch of government that the framers of the Constitution probably wouldn't recognize. Hilary Cleveland returns to examine the factors that contributed to these changes and to analyze which presidents made the biggest difference. These and other questions about the presidency will be discussed in a round-table format.



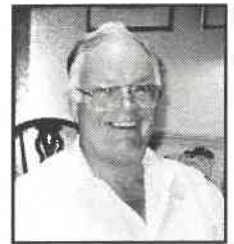
Douglas Marshall

### ***James Joyce's Ulysses***

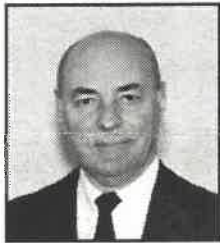
James Joyce's masterpiece *Ulysses* traces the lives of its protagonists during one day—June 16, 1904—in Dublin, Ireland. As the centenary of that momentous yet perfectly ordinary day approaches, participants will read this complex and brilliant work under the guidance of study leader Douglas Marshall.

### ***The Early Years of the Jesus Movement***

Stirred by the events of the first Easter day, a movement developed. This course with Les Norman will examine the first 100 years of the Christian faith through primary texts, biblical and other, using the tools of sociology and literary and historical analysis.



Les Norman



Joe Kun

### ***Intelligence***

Under Joe Kun's guidance, this course will offer a way to better understand the role of intelligence in today's conflicts. It will clarify the role of the U.S. intelligence community and present a brief history of other intelligence organizations, including the Russian, British and German services.

### ***Aspects of Medieval Europe***

Western Civilization was created in Medieval Europe. Our forms of thought, forms of government, methods of commerce and banking, educational systems, literary structures and religious views stem from this period. According to study leader Anne McNamara, the aim of this course is to delight, appall and awe the participants as they explore this often violent, yet fascinating period.



Anne McNamara



Ellen Winkler

### ***Interior Design***

Led by New London interior designer Ellen Winkler, this course will cover multiple design principles including space planning; lighting concepts; color theory and the psychological impact of color; Feng Shui; and art, accessories and ornamentation. The course will include a field trip to a local site.

## We Did it Right!

Do we know what a treasure we have in Adventures in Learning at Colby-Sawyer College? A recent article in *The New York Times* titled "Grandparents are Returning to College, to Retire" speaks of college-based retirement communities that offer condominium type living residences, so called "college-linked retirement communities."

As a resident, you have access to adult educational offerings at the college. Kendal at Dartmouth is cited in the article. Another is in Ann Arbor. Prices at the Ann Arbor facility run \$300,000 to \$600,000, but eligibility requires a tie to the University of Michigan such as being an alumnus or a former employee. The crown jewel under development in Palo Alto, California, near Stanford University. Units will cost \$600,000 to \$3,900,000 plus monthly maintenance fees.

This "college-linked" concept strikes me as an expensive and overblown commitment just to have access to a fun-based adult learning

experience. Don't we enjoy comparable educational opportunities from AIL right here in our community? Palo Alto can keep its platinum prices, quarter acre building lots, crowded streets and "California size" taxes. I'll take a pass on Ann Arbor, too.

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*What a wonderful addition to our community AIL has become! During the past five years we have offered well over 100 courses to hundreds of interested students.*

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Think of what we have here in our green and pleasant town. Little traffic, no stop lights, the services of New London Hospital, the VNA, Tracy Library and access to the Colby-Sawyer gym and library. We enjoy opportunities for service and sociability through organizations such as the Council on Aging, the

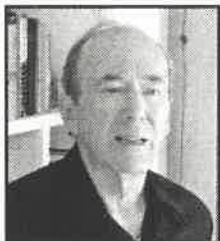
Historical Society, Habitat for Humanity, the Sargent Land Trust, Summer Music, our churches...and Adventures in Learning.

There is an old saying: "You better know what you want, because you will most likely get it." I see the people of our community as discerning folks who know very well what they want. Hence AIL was born six years ago out of a keen desire for locally available continuing education. What a wonderful addition to our community AIL has become! During the past five years we have offered well over 100 courses to hundreds of interested students. We have participated together to enjoy the fun of teaching and learning. With support from Colby-Sawyer College, we have organized and administered AIL with an enthusiastic group of volunteers...and we have kept it simple and affordable...and fun.

Dick Cogswell

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## Everything's Up-to-date at the AIL Web Site



Brian Faughnan of Colby-Sawyer College is the new AIL webmaster.

Have you visited the AIL home page on the Colby-Sawyer web site? If not, you should give it a try. You will find it at [www.colby-sawyer.edu/adventures](http://www.colby-sawyer.edu/adventures) (you may want to bookmark this site). From the AIL home page you can navigate to a variety of pages containing all the material in the latest printed catalog: courses offered, schedule, profiles of instructors, as well as forms and information for course registration. Soon, we hope to have a "News" page listing upcoming events and other news. The site was originally designed by the college's public relations specialist, and I have recently taken on the task of webmaster. Suggestions for improvements are welcome.

Brian Faughnan



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**SAVE THE DATE**  
*for*  
**ADVENTURES IN LEARNING'S**  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 20, 2004  
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Wheeler Hall, Ware Campus Center  
Colby-Sawyer College

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