

# Horizons

*Learning Later, Living Greater*

*Fall 2021*

## **New Study Group Leaders**

*All study group leaders are volunteers who contribute their time, their knowledge and their love of a particular subject by leading a course. They are reimbursed not by money but by the pleasure of leading members on new intellectual adventures. Some have had careers in the subjects their groups study; others have read widely in a field for their own enjoyment; still others are skilled facilitators willing to explore new fields in a group setting. All are highly qualified to lead groups in the subjects they offer.*

*It is always exciting to introduce new study group leaders who open doors to new avenues to explore.*

## **Bill Balsam**

I had the good fortune to speak with a new study leader for winter '22, Bill Balsam, a few days before he traveled to Minneapolis for his second exhibition of a Digital Picture at the Praxis Gallery. The featured picture titled "Waves in the Sea of Sand" was taken in the Great Sand-downs National Park in Colorado.

Bill, a graduate of St. Laurence University, received his MSc and PhD in Geology from Brown University. During his career as a geologist he traveled extensively, and spent a year in China with 3 months in Xian where the terra cotta warrior figures were discovered. Bill is currently an adjunct professor of geology in the Department of Earth Sciences at Dartmouth.

So where does digital photography fit in?! Bill's interest in photography began as a teenager when he had a pivotal experience in China where he had



taken the first flight allowed after 9/11/2001! He took a picture of a mother with her baby, and the mother was intrigued and wanted a copy. At that time there were no digital cameras in China. The mother did not understand why Bill couldn't make her a copy. When Bill returned to China four years later, digital cameras had made a significant presence there!

Bill retired from his geology life in 2007 and moved from Taos, New Mexico to Warner, New Hampshire in 2011. He could then focus literally on his photography! He has since exhibited at The Fells and most recently at The Natural New England Art show in Sunapee. His first AIL venue will be this winter leading a course in digital photography in which he will "demystify the digital camera by going back to basics by moving from auto mode to manual mode."

The class will be limited to 12 participants. Sounds like a great way to experience winter while learning new skills. And hopefully we will get to see some of the results in a future AIL communication! Sign up and enjoy!!

Janie Webster

## **David Click**

David Click is a man of many interests. Professionally a tax attorney for 35 years, he is obsessed with classical music. So obsessed, in fact, that he is writing a book on English music. And his research has taken him to the primary sources, the British Library - one of the world's largest libraries and a major research institution - and the



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*"We are not what we know but what we are willing to learn."  
— MARY CATHERINE BATESON*

## President's Message

*Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.\**

Robert Frost's lines speak to fleeting nature and the seasons. And our lives. Fortunately, as we enter fall, Adventures in Learning remains steadfast, having survived successfully twenty months of COVID-19.

Our August membership gathering under the Barn Playhouse tent was a joy-filled act of renewal...a sort of convocation. We celebrated seeing each other again in person. For the first time since the fall of 2019, all of our fall classes will be in person. AIL is excited to refresh learning and teaching experiences with a wonderful line up of fall courses. These in person classes are precious. However, they are also precarious and we will follow Colby-Sawyer's campus guidelines to remain safe.

During the summer several AIL members, comprising the 2026 Vision Task Force, worked on a five-year strategic plan. Committee chairs, former board presidents, CSC President Stuebner, senior staff and faculty were interviewed and provided helpful input to guide our way forward. The future of Zoom, Curriculum Committee support, and AIL presence on campus and in the community will be addressed. I expect the board will consider the report at its October meeting. If approved the findings will be communicated to the membership with action on priority items to follow. Stay tuned....

In the meantime, be well and stay safe.

Harry Tether

\* From Robert Frost's series of poems about NEW HAMPSHIRE (1923)



## ADVENTURES IN LEARNING

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## To Zoom or Not to Zoom

*The pandemic brought change to all of our lives from the personal to the professional. AIL was no different from the rest of the world - at first not holding classes and then moving into the Zoom world. It was not an easy transition and one that required flexibility on the parts of all participants - the study group leaders and the students, and behind the scenes.*

*Every action has both its supporters and detractors. We wanted to take a measure of just how successful (or not) Zoom has been for AIL offering its courses exclusively through Zoom, as a hybrid, or the old-fashioned way - face-to-face in the classroom. In this issue you will find the pros and cons from each of the perspectives - study group leaders, staff, and administration (behind the scenes.). It is our hope that, as a result, you will better understand a part of the dynamics that go into deciding which courses will be offered when and how.*



### From the students . . .

It seems like today almost everything I consume has 'made in China' in fine print on the label, ranging from the ball point pens I used to compose this piece to the active ingredients in the pharmaceuticals I consume to manage my various age-related conditions. Now it turns out even the software I use to join AIL classes is the brainchild of a Chinese entrepreneur, Eric Yuan, now an American citizen, who was born and educated in eastern China. He conceived of the idea of video telephony in 1987, so he could 'visit' with his girlfriend while on a ten-hour commute to university. Thirty-six years later, Zoom was launched from his company's San Jose, California headquarters where Eric and that same girlfriend, now his wife, lived.



Thanks to the COVID pandemic, in 2020, Zoom had hosted 45 billion minutes of webinars with 350 million subscribers, including students in 90,000 schools and employees in 470,000 busi-

nesses. Eric became a billionaire, because, according to millions of subscribers, Zoom beat its competitors due to its ease of use.

Ease of use? Even for a befuddled seventy-eight-year-old like me? My first Zoom course was Jamie Hess's "Practical Guide for Renewable Energy." Now, Jamie has an engineering degree with plenty of experience in energy-related products and computers, so the course went off without a hitch, and participants gave it very high marks. Participants in the other five Zoom courses in the fall 2020 term went well after some initial set-up glitches and with assistance and training from the AIL office (Nina and Abby – thanks!). Nancy Marashio's Writing Workshop was originally a hybrid, utilizing Lethbridge for some participants and a camera for Zoom remote learning by others. The hybrid idea didn't work, so Nancy ended up giving two classes, one at Lethbridge and a separate one over Zoom. Our present hybrid technology is inadequate for now, but we are looking into ways to improve that delivery method.

Since the resumption of classes in fall 2020, AIL has offered eighteen Zoom classes to nearly 700 registrants. This fall no Zoom classes are being offered and so far in winter 2022 only two will be via Zoom. The tailing off of remote classes is, of course, a consequence of the vaccination of our members and the safety of in-person meetings. We are also guided by Colby-Sawyer College's guidance; the college has ceased delivering classes on Zoom for this academic year.

For many AIL members, the return to in-person meetings is welcome, even though 80% of us are by now very comfortable with Zoom. But some prefer Zoom because they like the ease of viewing visuals, the better audio control so speakers can be heard and the convenience of being at home during the worst days of the pandemic. Most of the initial problems with remote delivery, such as use (or not use) of the mute button, managing gallery views, confusion about camera views on mobile devices and multi-tasking while in class have been minimized by now as our members have become familiar with the mechanics and courtesies in the use of the Zoom application.

Like many organizations and schools, Zoom has allowed us to resume operations with a minimum of inconvenience and adaptation for our members. Depending on the course of COVID, we may resume remote learning or adopt a partial Zoom/live hybrid as we find situations where Zoom provides us with a better experience and gives study group leaders wider scope for their delivery.

Sheldon Boege

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## From the Study Group Leaders . . .

In order to learn the instructor's point of view, I interviewed two seasoned teachers/study group leaders: Eric Boyer and Julie Machen. Eric is a Professor of Political Studies in the School of Business and Social Sciences at Colby Sawyer, where he has taught for 14 years. Julie has been a study leader at AIL for the past 17 years. She arrived in New London 19 years ago after a long career teaching English and History, most recently at Greenwich (CT) high school for 20 years.

Both Eric and Julie prefer teaching in-person classes when there is a choice. Eric describes himself as "Zoom reluctant." His method of teaching is very interactive using many simulation experiences. For instance, when teaching a course on the Constitution, he assigns roles to the students and asks them to redesign the document. This requires a great deal of interaction, bargaining and compromise which cannot be done online. He sees Zoom as the opposite of politics, which he describes as exciting and open ended.

Julie emphasizes the social aspect of in-person learning which allows the students to interact and the study group leader to meet more people and make them feel more a part of the learning experience. In a classroom she can read faces to see comprehension and reactions. She finds it particularly difficult when on Zoom, students turn off the video and she cannot see their faces. Julie says that she as the teacher gets energy from the students.

As to the benefits of Zoom, Julie mentions that just as the students can participate from anywhere, so can instructors. She has the potential to invite guest speakers who are not local, and there are no cancellations due to weather. Eric sees Zoom classes as efficient, but he does not want education to be efficient. He believes that he has too much power with Zoom

especially related to his experiential way of teaching. He does not want to be running the show or being the only one who can mute others. He does believe that Zoom works better for other disciplines such as business where the faculty is more tech savvy and the subject matter lends itself more to the online mode.

Julie does not find the course preparation to be very different in either format. Because of his teaching style, Eric says preparation for a Zoom course is more onerous because there is less student participation and he is more "center stage." Finally, both Julie and Eric feel that having an extra person is extremely helpful to manage the chat, fix technical problems and allow the study leader to concentrate on the lecture without checking the screen at the same time.

How fortunate we are to have faculty who are flexible in these uncertain times.

Susan Lynn

## Behind the scenes . . .

Zoom . . . click a button and you are in! That is the general experience of an AIL member taking a Zoom course, but did you know that there is a team behind the scenes? A team made up of the AIL Office, a study leader and a co-host.

The AIL Office adds one half hour to both the start time for troubleshooting and to the end time, so that participants can have the opportunity to chat at the conclusion. A two-hour course becomes a three-hour commitment on the part of the AIL Office and in many cases the study leader.

Did you know that each Zoom course has a co-host, assigned by the AIL Office, to assist the AIL study leader? These co-hosts can be an AIL staff member, AIL member volunteer or a CSC staff member. Having co-hosts with Zoom experience is crucial; oftentimes these co-hosts meet with a study leader several times before the course even begins. Among their responsibilities, co-hosts can admit and mute participants, as well as enable the study leader to share his/her screen so that course participants can see a PowerPoint presentation, video or other graphic. Without a co-host, most AIL study leaders would find it a challenge to lead a course via Zoom.

So next time you are on Zoom, consider what is going "behind the scenes." It's just not a study leader presenting but a team bringing you a virtual classroom experience that allows you to learn about and discuss new topics.

Nina Tasi



## AIL's 2026 Vision Task Force

Last spring, incoming AIL President Harry Tether formed a long-term planning committee to review and develop a forward looking, five-year plan for AIL. As fashioned, the Vision Task Force committee (VTF) consists of six members of the board of directors and one administrative aide. The members are Derek Hunt (Chair), Abby Hutchinson, Ginger Milord, John Peterman, Dick Showalter, Harry Tether, and Katrina Wagner.

In 2016, a similar committee, the 2021 Vision Task Force, was created by then President John Ferries to review the activities of the organization and explore ways by which its courses, operation and service to members and the community at large could be improved. The current 2026 Vision Task Force was asked to undertake a similar charge. Specifically, the committee was charged with developing a five-year plan with objectives for consideration and possible implementation by the board. The objectives include but are not limited to ensuring the organization's future viability and excellence while providing lifelong learning opportunities to the Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee community. This will be accomplished by offering a diverse array of stimulating courses and programs that will (1) broaden a member's understanding of our world and its peoples; (2) enrich the lives of its members by offering experiences that explore the world of ideas and support their intellectual growth; and (3) provide a congenial, social environment in which its members can interact. Further, the task force will examine modern, instructional methods and programs and explore new ways through which AIL will continue to be a

valued resource to the people of the Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee area.

During the summer the committee met weekly to gather data, opinions, and recommendations from various constituent groups. These included past AIL presidents, study group leaders, the chairs of AIL's standing committees and the president and vice-president of Colby-Sawyer College. Equally important, ideas and opinions have been solicited and gathered from AIL members via a survey and are an integral part of the VTF's findings.

In late summer and early fall the committee reviewed the gathered materials, discussed its conclusions, and is preparing its report for the AIL board, recognizing that above all, AIL must continue to develop and implement a business model that assures future financial sustainability.

Derek Hunt



Some of the study group leaders who have offered 10 or more courses in their careers with Adventures in Learning, easily recognized by the gold name tags! From left to right: Bill Tighe, Maureen Rosen, Art Rosen, Julie Machen, Morris Edwards, Betsy Boege and Joanna Henderson.

Photo by: Joan Eaton

## Collaboration - AIL and Osher

Group Leader Larry Crocker suggested an idea new to Adventures in Learning (AIL): offering both AIL and Osher students a shared Zoom course. Larry explained two benefits: 1) more specialized or demanding courses could be offered; and 2) low enrolled classes that might have been cancelled would add students from the other program and the class would run. No policy or precedent exists to guide our deliberation, especially as Zoom is such a new medium for AIL.

How would it work?

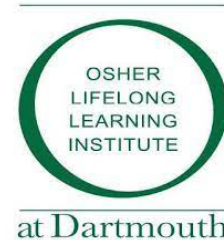
AIL and Osher would each register their own students. AIL's Curriculum Committee would assess the proposed course, assuring that it meets our expectations.

Zoom would be delivered by whichever program offered to share the class. In Larry's case, that means Osher would run the Zoom and would handle any Zoom issues for all the students in the class.

Larry's class, "Numbers: From Slashes on Bones to Transfinite Arithmetic," was enthusiastically accepted by the Curriculum Committee. Since the class begins in October, there is time for AIL to offer the opportunity to register to AIL students, who would join the nine Osher students already enrolled.

We look forward to both AIL and Osher offering occasional future Zoom classes that are unique to each program, enhancing the range of choices for all.

Nancy Marashio



## David Click

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Royal College of Music - one of the world's great conservatories, founded in 1883.

David will bring the fruits of his passion to his course on "The English Musical Renaissance" through music

streaming and discussion of six British composers who flourished at the height of the British empire, marked by the passage of Queen Victoria, the women's suffrage movement, the fight for British Home rule, and the Great War.

## Eric Boyer - AIL Faculty Liaison

Eric Boyer joined the AIL board in 2021, filling a slot that had been held by Randy Hanson for several years. At the time he joined, the Curriculum Committee was considering changing the role of the faculty representative, based on Randy's experience.

Today, that role is faculty Liaison (FLA) - a change that better utilizes the faculty member's status within the college while moving the FLA away from the daily concerns of AIL. The FLA's job description is focused on enhancing collaboration between AIL and the wider college community. The FLA might participate in or lead courses, facilitate both student participation in AIL programs as well as AIL member involvement in college events. Eric will not be required to attend regular board meetings but instead interacts with a member of the Curriculum Committee on an ad hoc basis. So a win-win situation for both Eric/FLA and AIL!



## Late Summer Celebration

From the greeters to the speakers - just a few of the many who enjoyed the ALL member celebration under the Barn Playhouse tent on the Colby Sawyer College campus!





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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 January 17<sup>th</sup>, unless otherwise noted.

#### MONDAYS

- ⊙ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.      **Unsung Civil Rights Heroes** / John Peterman **The**
- ⊙ 1:30 – 3:30 pm.      **English Musical Renaissance** / David Click An ALL
- ⊙ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.      **Sampler** [starts Feb. 21]

⊙ In - person Course  
◆ Online via Zoom

#### TUESDAYS

- ◆ 9:30 – 11:30 a. m.      **Women Who Made a Difference** / Moderator: Joann Henderson
- ⊙ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.      **Consciousness, Selves and Souls** / Larry Crocker
- ⊙ 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.      **Fistful of Faculty** [starts Feb.22]

#### WEDNESDAYS

- ⊙ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.      **Digital Photography**/ Bill Balsam
- ⊙ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.      **Navajo Literature** / Nancy Marashio

#### THURSDAYS

- ⊙ 9:30 a.m. – Noon      **Three French Films – A Reprise** / Ginger Milord
- ◆ 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.      **The Writing Workshop I** / Larry Carle

#### FRIDAY

- ⊙ 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.      **Richard Straus, “A First -Class, Second -Rate Composer”** / Bob Koester