

Learning in Retirement Newsletter October 2010



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President's Column

Hello LIR members,



Members of your LIR organization and our liaison personnel in Continuing Education recently attended a leadership conference of the Wisconsin Association of Lifelong Learners (WALL) in Sturgeon Bay. The group included Mary Bayorgeon, Dick Branigan, Doug Jirovetz, Roberta Messer, Brianna Obright, Judy Lloyd and myself. I came away with three major impressions and ideas regarding our organization.

First, we can take pride in our UW-Oshkosh Learning in Retirement. We offer what I believe is the most diverse and interesting curriculum. We have a website that contains more information than any other LIR in the state. We are financially sound. We have not found it necessary to create a large bureaucracy to manage our organization. And, we have as much fun doing it as any LIR in Wisconsin. Second, the group picked up several ideas which we can put in place to make our LIR even better. For example, we received several ideas on how to approach our "no-show" problem. There is a story in this newsletter on this perennial subject. You will also hear more in the future as we attempt to improve this situation. Third, that periodic meetings with similar organizations are a good way to find solutions to problems and to gain new ideas to improve our LIR. WALL has agreed that another conference will be held in the fall of 2012. I'm pleased to announce that UW Oshkosh LIR will be the host. We will start the planning process soon. Please consider becoming involved with this opportunity to make our organization even better.

I would also like to welcome Brianna Obright who has taken a year-long position as a program manager in Continuing Education. She will be our liaison to the university. She has previous experience with Learning in Retirement, having filled in at various times for our administrative assistant. She has helped us resolve several situations which have occurred since she has been on board.

Again, welcome Brianna.

Sincerely,

William (Bill) Mattes
President

Administration / Finance

Those of us who just attended the WALL conference in September are feeling quite energized about LIR and our goal of fostering life-long learning. In our organization the Administration/Finance Committee has the role of supporting those committees who actually produce our product (Curriculum) to meet the learning opportunities desired by our customers (Membership). We deal with the mundane: policies, procedures, financial oversight, website management, updating bylaws and working out systems in collaboration with our Continuing Education support staff. We are currently looking for new committee members. If you are the kind of person who likes working behind the scene to make an organization function smoothly, this is the committee for you. Please consider joining us. Just let any committee member, officer or Continuing Education staff know that you are interested and we will get in touch with you.

Roberta Messer, chair

Membership and Promotion

Greetings to the 264 current members of LIR—those who renewed their memberships for the 2010/11 program year and those of you who are joining us for the first time. We hope you have an interesting, enjoyable and intellectually stimulating year. Although we have set a goal of 300 members this year and have a way to go, we are encouraged that we have more new members at this point in our recruitment year than ever before.

Thank you to all LIR members who have helped us in our efforts to gain new members. According to data provided by Eileen Leinweber, 56 percent of the new members who joined last year indicated they learned about LIR through a friend who was a member. Please continue to “Share the Experience” with your friends and acquaintances by inviting them to be your guest at an LIR program or class session. It pays off, not only for the potential new member who will benefit from all our fine programs and activities if they join, but also for the hosting LIR member. We will again be holding a drawing at our annual meeting for a free LIR membership from the names of those who have brought guests during the year. A copy of the guest pass is at the end of this newsletter for your use.

Call Judy Lloyd at 424-1129 if you need informational packets mailed out to a friend.

We also need your help with another matter. Please call the office if you know of any current or recent member who has passed away, so we do not make insensitive or inappropriate contacts while doing committee or office work.

Reminders—continue to wear your nametags at LIR events so we can get to know one another, especially our new members, and be known as a friendly, welcoming organization.

The Membership/Promotion Committee will be meeting bimonthly this year: September 16, November 4, January 6, March 3 and May 5. Meetings are held from 10:15 a.m. until noon at Evergreen Retirement Community. All LIR members are welcome to attend any of our meetings.

Mary Bayorgeon, chair

Curriculum

We are in the homestretch as far as collecting new sessions for our spring 2011 menu; 50 sessions and 5 bus tours so far. We've had two of our three scheduled meetings already this semester, with most of our work done individually, and results brought to the table at these formal meetings.

The only minor arguments we have is when two committee members (we have 22) need the same calendar square for a certain presentation. Amiable shifting and compromise keep the calendar clear of conflicts. Aside from the popular Soup and Sandwich events, and Flawed but Famous sessions, there are several medical talks on knee/hip replacement, lung cancer and pathological diagnosis. Also, Language and Linguistics, Jazz in the Afternoon, Mozart, a Churchill series, World War II Memories, and several bus tours. We will be at the PAC to see *Mark Twain Tonight* and *Jersey Boys*.

Be sure to read an article in this newsletter titled “Suppose You Gave a Party and Nobody Came?” It addresses an ill that has plagued the operation of our organization for years. You most likely already know what it is. Read it anyway. And do what you can to ease the situation.

Dick Branigan / Paul Janty, co-chairs

Membership Profile

Gil and Sharon Roderick

They say life is an adventure, and few people can point to as many adventures as Gil and Sharon Roderick have had before and since their retirement.

The couple have gone on 20 Elderhostel trips since retirement, exploring Australia, Bolivia/Peru and New Zealand. They have taken four grandchildren on intergenerational Elderhostels that have introduced the children to the joys of outdoor activities such as horseback riding, canoeing and rock climbing.

Employment offered opportunities to expand Gil and Sharon's horizons as well. Gil taught civil engineering at URI and then at UW-Milwaukee, where he was also an associate dean of the College of Engineering & Applied Science for three years. Once their son and daughter were in school, Sharon returned to work half time as a library assistant. Many of Gil's colleagues came from other countries, so they enjoyed learning the cultures and cuisine of Korea, India, Pakistan, etc. During this time they participated in the usual parents' activities – Boy and Girl Scouts leaders, band, the PTA – while answering the call to adventure in the summer. Then they would load up the kids and camping gear and take off for hiking in the parks of the US and Canada.

Sharon's volunteer work brought a new type of adventure when their children reached high school age. Their daughter introduced them to American Field Service (AFS); first they became an aunt and uncle family and then the host family for a girl from Bolivia. In the meantime, their daughter spent a summer as an AFS student in Australia. Gil and Sharon still maintain close ties to their AFS daughter and have spent time with her and her family in Bolivia. They also met their daughter's host family when they toured Australia. Sharon's volunteer work helped extend the AFS adventure for many others. She served as Volunteer Coordinator for five suburban and three Milwaukee high schools, helping to keep things running smoothly for host families and students. In the 15 years she was involved, Sharon worked with over a hundred students from 35 countries, some of whom still keep in touch with her.

Retirement brought another kind of adventure in addition to their many travels: the move from Shorewood to Oshkosh. They had decided they did not want to retire in a big city, so when the health of Sharon's father began to fail, Oshkosh seemed the logical choice. The city was familiar to Sharon, of course, having grown up here. Gil had long since shed his roots – born and raised on a farm in Iowa, he had been drafted into the army and spent 18 months in Korea. He used the GI bill to study civil engineering at Iowa State. That's when he and Sharon met on a blind date that wasn't supposed to take place: Gil's roommate was scheduled for the date. Sharon had earned her master's at UW and was a librarian at ISU. After a year of working in Colorado and Arizona, Gil returned to ISU to earn his MS and Ph.D., and to marry Sharon. The rest, as they say, is history.

So Gil and Sharon now call Oshkosh home. They joined LIR soon after moving here. In their usual style, they did not just sit back to enjoy its benefits, though both are quick to point out there are many, but volunteered to serve as well. Gil is a member of the Administration and Finance Committee and served as its chair for two years. Sharon joined the Membership Committee and chaired it for three years. A few years ago Sharon presented a series on ancient civilizations of the Americas, a subject she began exploring after a trip to Mexico several years ago.

With Sharon's mother about to turn 98 in October, and children and grandchildren in Milwaukee and New Brighton, MN, Gil and Sharon's roots remain firmly in the Midwest, but the call to adventure – through travel and LIR sessions – is sure to lure this active couple to explore other places.

Suppose You Gave a Party and Nobody Came?

OK...we won't claim LIR sessions are a party, though they are entertaining. LIR members, as well as outsiders, volunteer their time to prepare sessions. Some of these gracious folks have even opened their homes to conduct classes. Imagine the disappointment of a presenter when only a fraction of those who have enrolled show up.

Last minute conflicts do come up: a trip planned after sign-up, out-of-town visitors, doctor and dentist appointments, bad weather, illness. *Those* reasons are understood. We *do* sign up well in advance of the event, and the class selections are inviting. We select freely...and there is no penalty for not showing up.

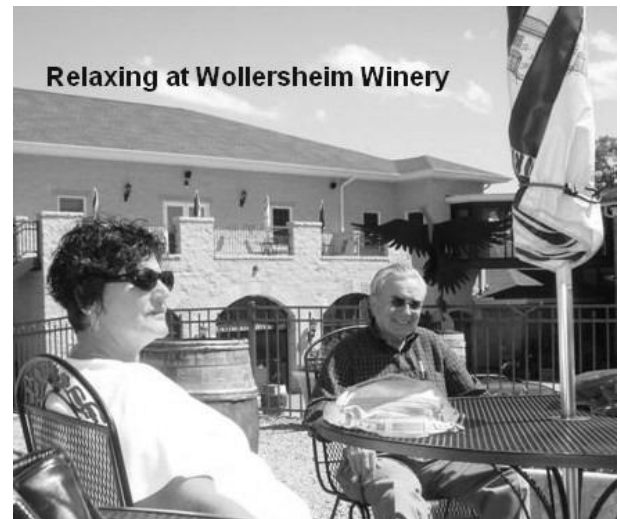
But, gentle readers – to borrow an expression from Miss Manners – there are costs associated with no-shows. Room sizes are assigned on the basis of the number of registrants. We are charged rent in some cases based on size needed. If we reserve a room for 75 and only 60 percent show up, it costs the organization money. To say nothing of the cost in good will. There have been courses where 50 have signed up and only 20 have come. Will the disappointed presenter volunteer to do another session for us? No-shows hurt.

If you find you cannot keep your original sign-up commitment, call the office at 424-1129. It's the neighborly thing to do. This small effort helps make our enrollment figures much more accurate... to say nothing of all the good will we create by letting the host or hostess—our presenters— know that the party will be smaller than originally planned.

LIR Fall Course Locations

- ◆ Reeve Union – UWO Campus
- ◆ Coughlin Center – 625 E County Rd Y, Winnebago
- ◆ Park View Health Center – 725 Butler Ave, Winnebago
- ◆ Evergreen Community – 1130 N Westfield, Oshkosh
- ◆ Oshkosh Senior Center – 200 N Campbell Rd., Oshkosh
- ◆ Menasha Library – 440 1st Street, Menasha
- ◆ Franciscan Courts – 815 S. Westhaven Dr., Oshkosh
- ◆ Touchmark – 2601 Touchmark Drive, Appleton
- ◆ FVTC Oshkosh Campus – 150 Campbell Road, Oshkosh

Photo Gallery



Relaxing at Wollersheim Winery



State Capitol Tour
June 9, 2010



Fall Luncheon

The Membership & Promotion Committee of Learning in Retirement is inviting all of our members to *share the experience* of being an LIR member with someone else.

Share
the experience



Learning in Retirement

sponsored by the UW Oshkosh
Office of Continuing Education and Extension

(920) 424-1129 • (800) 633-1442
lir@uwosh.edu

Help us spread the word about our great organization by inviting friends and acquaintances to LIR activities and learning sessions.

Learning in Retirement *Guest Pass*

Thank you for taking advantage of our Guest Pass! Please complete this form and give it to the moderator of the program you choose to attend or any Membership and Promotion Committee member. You can also email your information to lir@uwosh.edu or call (920) 424-1129 or (800) 633-1442.

Guest Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

How did you hear about this session?

Host LIR Member _____ Newspaper/Media LIR Website

Session Attended _____ Date _____

