



Volume 24—Number 2

## News & Views

February 2020

### Wed., Feb. 5, LLI/NOVA Forum

#### Ernst Cultural Center (CE) NOVA Annandale Campus

Social Time at 9:30 a.m.

LLI/NOVA Announcements at 9:50 a.m.

Forum Speaker at 10:00 a.m.



#### LOOKING FOR LIFE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES: THE SEARCH FOR LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE

Dr. Harold Geller Explains It All  
at the February Forum

Martians invaded southern England in H.G. Wells' 1897 imaginative best-seller, "The War of the Worlds." Ever since, we have been on the lookout for green extraterrestrials. Does life exist outside of Earth? If so, what would life look like, and how would scientists discover and identify it?

Physicist Harold A. Geller might know. He'll let us in on his work at the February Forum, Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 10 a.m.

Since 2012, Dr. Geller has served as a Solar System Ambassador for the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Presently, he is Observatory Director and Associate Professor at George Mason University. He served as co-Investigator for the Vir-

ginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement, the largest educational grant ever awarded Mason, from 2011 through 2015.

In 2008, Dr. Geller, who served as associate chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Mason, received the university's Faculty Member of the Year Award.

In addition to teaching at Mason and at Northern Virginia Community College, Dr. Geller is president of the Potomac Geophysical Society; a tour guide and lecturer with NASA Goddard Space Flight Center; producer of educational multimedia CD-ROMs; a doctoral fellow of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia; and a lecturer/operator at the National Air and Space Museum's Einstein Planetarium in Washington, DC.

He also is the author of books, contributed to edited volumes, and has published more than 90 papers in education, astrobiology, astrophysics, and biochemistry. Dr. Geller has been interviewed or quoted in the USA Today, The Washington Post, Huffington Post, The Arts and Entertainment Magazine, Astrocast TV, WTOP News Radio, Newschannel 8, and The Skeptic.

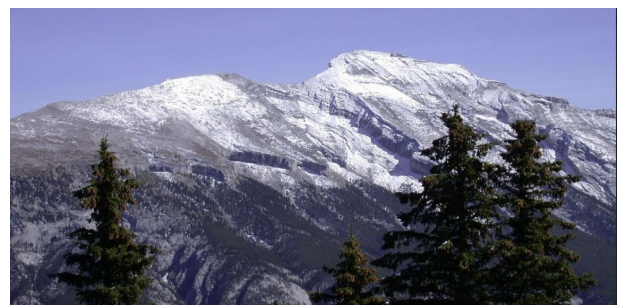


Photo by LLI/NOVA member Joy Meyer



## President's Message

### Senior Fusion Within LLI/NOVA

Our membership is open to those age 50 or older; however, the average member age is 73, based on our 2018 survey. Over time as we “cycle through” and due to attrition, the age range of our 365-plus membership will be broader than the years of our work careers, presuming a 40-year work career from age 22 to 62.

At our February 2019 Forum, Stan Corey discussed his book *When Work Becomes Optional*, noting the four stages of retirement: 1) Go-go years; 2) Slow-go years; 3) No-go; and 4) Exit. Obviously, these stages are not dictated solely by chronological age. Health, finances, and personal preferences also help determine these stages.

LLI/NOVA members align under three core tenets: intellectual enrichment, travel, and social interaction. So, as we focus on formulation and delivery, this breadth of membership warrants special attention in the way we attract, recruit, and retain members. This is especially so in dynamic Northern Virginia, where retirees come from a multitude of backgrounds and with unique experiences and skills. We hope to display an attitude of openness and welcoming that, over time, builds community.

Go ahead and exhale . . . we are not about to launch a new major operating model. On the other hand, we are requesting all (top-down and ground-up) to share their skills, interests, and pastimes to ensure consideration and representation. Our LLI/NOVA website provides almost countless options for such idea sharing and member engagement in an innovative and flexible manner (e.g., general comments, class presenters, volunteering, travel and SIGs). Please use it so we can serve you better.

As we grapple with the dynamics of change, exploring why people resist and how to overcome that resistance, we recognize that a diverse

membership warrants diverse events. Slightly more than one-third (120+/-) of our members have been with us less than three years! Many long-term members are open to meet-ups for coffee/snack or committee meetings. Yet many members in their early 60s prefer email/online communications. Conversely, things we did in the past -- member-hosted weekend meetups, for example -- may need to be revisited as well as trying new ways to commute to outings, such as trying Amtrak or carpooling for longer distances within three hours instead of hiring a van. Our options are many. Working together, we can embrace flexibility and informality.

***Please provide your suggestions and/or volunteer. I promise to share your input in next month's column.***

Best, Anna

## AFTER FORUM LUNCH BUNCH

At Pan Am Family Restaurant

Since the Forum and lunch were cancelled in January, we'll meet at Pan Am Family Restaurant, 3051 Nutley St., in Pan Am Shopping Center in Fairfax after the February Forum. The restaurant is known for its Greek cuisine, but there are also an American menu and a salad bar. Paul and Bonnie Hopley will host and will get a count at the Forum. Contact them with any questions.



Photo by LLI/NOVA member Joy Meyer



## Community Outreach

At the LLI/NOVA Forum on Feb. 5, the food collection will benefit NOVA's Annandale Campus Student Food Pantry. (The Forum collection for St. Mary's Catholic Church will be in March, due to cancellation of the January Forum.)

LLI/NOVA members are interested in assisting the NOVA Annandale students, so we asked Dr. Jacintha Jayatilake to tell us more. She is the faculty sponsor for the Rotaract Club, which focuses on the development of young adults as leaders in their communities and workplaces. Please read her interesting story.

"In 2015 the issue of 'food insecurity' among NOVA (Annandale) students caught my attention when several students confided in me about their inability to buy food towards the end of the month. I took it to the table for discussion at one of our Rotaract club meetings where we identified food insecurity as an all too common problem for many students. After many discussions, the Rotaractors decided to do something to bring the issue to the attention of the college administration. After meetings with the Dean of Students, Annandale Provost and the College President, the club members decided to open the Annandale Campus Food Pantry.

"The college assigned us a closet next to the Student Life office, which had to be mopped, scrubbed, painted and cleaned in order to store canned food items. With financial assistance from the Annandale Rotary Club and donations from faculty, staff and students at the Annandale campus, we opened the Annandale Campus Food Pantry in the Spring of 2016.

"We have been maintaining the food pantry to the best of our ability. On average we serve about seven or eight students per week. The Office of Student Life assists us in the distribution of food. It is now part of the College Financial Stability

Program.

"Our aspirations are to serve at least one hot meal twice a week (breakfast) consisting of bagels, cream cheese, muffins, milk and orange juice. The most needed food items are cereal, peanut butter, jelly, tuna, pasta and pasta sauce, canned fruits, vegetables and soup.

"Thank you so much for your continued interest and donations to the Annandale Campus Food Pantry."

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## Success Story: LLI/NOVA Scholarship recipient Wesam Elhawabri

In April, 2019, LLI/NOVA's scholarship program awarded a \$1,000 Leadership Scholarship to Wesam Elhawabri, a second-year student at NOVA.


Ms. Elhawabri moved from Egypt to Northern Virginia at age 18. She had graduated from secondary school in Egypt, focusing on science courses. As a young woman in Egypt, she was constantly reminded by relatives and friends that her path to happiness and success was marriage. Looking back, however, she reflects that "I found that being educated, being helpful in society, and being independent -- not relying on a man -- is my real target for success."

At NOVA, she initially had to concentrate on English as a Second Language courses, but moved on to a challenging course load including biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, and advanced mathematics. She earned a 3.84 grade point average. At the same time, she worked as a cashier in a local Ross store, tutored at NOVA in math and Arabic, volunteered in a hospital and dental clinic, and took leadership positions in the International Friends and Phi Theta Kappa organizations on the NOVA campus.

Ms. Elhawabri finished her two years at NOVA



shortly after receiving her LLI/NOVA scholarship and moved to Virginia Commonwealth University, where she is a Junior. She used her LLI/NOVA scholarship to help finance her first year at VCU. She is majoring in biomedical engineering with a pre-dental emphasis. Her career objective is to become a dentist and to be able to practice both in the United States and in Egypt. She is also hoping to demonstrate that an Egyptian woman can succeed and find personal satisfaction not just in the traditional marriage role but also as an educated professional.



## LLI/NOVA Automation

### Class Registration

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Spring semester classes have begun, but online registration will remain open until the end of the semester, so feel free to continue registering for classes.

If you are registered for a class and determine that you cannot attend, please let the class coordinator or administrator know as soon as possible. Almost 30 percent of our spring classes have a wait-list, so there likely are members who would like to attend the class if you cannot. If you are on the wait-list, please do not attend the class unless you are notified by the class coordinator.

January, February, and March can sometimes present issues regarding inclement weather. Remember that LLI/NOVA follows the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) policy on closing. If FCPS delay morning opening for two hours, our morning classes are canceled. If FCPS close two hours early, our afternoon classes are canceled, and if FCPS are closed for the day, all LLI/NOVA classes are canceled. As you know, this also applies to our Forums, so we had to cancel the January Forum due to weather. Our inclement weather [cancellation policy](#) is on our website (click the link).

When closures occur, we also will post a banner on the home page of our website and will usually send an email announcement to all LLI/NOVA members. If there is a closure or change that affects only a single class, however, we will notify registered attendees by email and put a notice in the News Alert section on the website home page.

### Volunteer Needed

The Automation Committee is looking for additional help to maintain the LLI/NOVA website. Do you have an interest in computer technology? If so, please contact us (see below). Only basic computer skills are required to start.

If you have a problem with or a question about our website, please contact us. You can send us an email at [admin@llinova.org](mailto:admin@llinova.org) or at [webmaster@llinova.org](mailto:webmaster@llinova.org). You also can contact us at the LLI/NOVA HelpDesk by clicking on HelpDesk in the Quick Connect Box on the home page, or you can call our LLI/NOVA office at 703-323-3746 and leave a message.



## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome, New Members: We hope you will participate in our classes and volunteer your time and talent.

Martha Bernardi	David Pollum
Stephen Beste	Christian Reed
Luu Nguyen	Elizabeth Reed

*[At any time, if you have established a member ID and password, you can go to the Member Directory to search for contact information for a current member. At the website [llinova.org](http://llinova.org) click on the "Member Area" and then "Member Directory."]*

## Travel Program

### 2020 -- What's Coming!

April 2 – A Day in Amish Country including a guided tour, a narrated ride on the Strasburg Railroad, and lunch hosted at an Amish farmhouse. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter. Registrations and payment are accepted immediately but are due not later than Feb. 28.

April 23 – Meet at the U.S. State Department for a 45-minute tour of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms. Check-in time is 10 a.m. and the tour starts at 10:30 a.m. Late arrivals will not be permitted to join the tour. The State Department headquarters is at C and 23rd streets NW, about a six-block walk from the Foggy Bottom Metro station. Tours are subject to cancellation at any time including the day of the tour. Space is limited. If interested, email your full name (as it appears on a valid ID) and phone number to Pat Harrison (pjharris80@msn.com or 703-550-5730) not later than Monday, Jan. 20.

May 4 – Meet at Heurich House Museum, 1307 New Hampshire Ave. NW in D.C., for a tour, then lunch at a nearby restaurant. Built in 1892, the museum is the city's best-preserved example of Richardsonian Romanesque residential architecture. More information is forthcoming.

June 4 - A day in St. Michaels, Md., a town on the Eastern Shore filled with shops, inns, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and a mix of Colonial and Victorian charm. The day will include a cruise along the historic Miles River, lunch, an on-your-own visit to the museum and time to explore on your own. More information is forthcoming.

July 13 – A visit to Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens with much to do and see. We have planned our visit when the famous water lilies and large lotus flowers bloom in the early morning until the heat of mid-day, when they close.

More information is forthcoming.

September or October – Harper's Ferry, W. Va. (Plans Pending)

September or October – Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center and Museum (Plans Pending)

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## SPRING IN THE AMISH FARMLANDS

Thursday, April 2

We are off to the Pennsylvania Dutch Country!

Our first stop in Lancaster, Pa., will be the Mennonite Center to pick up our guide and begin our narrated driving tour. The guide will talk to us about the Old Amish and Mennonite customs as we see farmers working crops and children going to school, and we will make a stop at an Amish bakery.

We will then board the Strasburg Railroad, a beautifully restored train car pulled by an historic steam engine on a nine-mile round-trip journey to Paradise, Pa.

Our lunch will be at an Amish farmhouse where the Stolfus family will share stories and answer questions about life and growing up in Lancaster. This will be a day to enjoy a hearty, delicious meal, learn about the Amish people firsthand, and welcome spring.

PRICE: \$158 per person includes deluxe motor coach transportation, train ride, lunch, guided driving tour, morning snack and driver tip.

SIGN UP: Registration and payment are accepted immediately but are due not later than Feb. 28. Make check payable to Excursionaire and mail to Maureen Cyron, 5205 Olley Lane, Burke, VA 22105. Include your phone number and e-mail address on your check. Friends and family of LLI/NOVA members are welcome.

DEPART: We depart from Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Please ARRIVE not later than 6:15 a.m. for a prompt departure at 6:30 a.m. The bus returns at approximately 6:30 p.m.

QUESTIONS: May be addressed to Excursionaire, Maureen Cyron at 703-323-9040 or cyronfam@aol.com; or Pat Harrison (LLI/NOVA Trip Manager) at 703-550-7530 or pjharris@msn.com.

CANCELLATIONS: Due to advanced reservation requirements in Lancaster, cancellations with a refund will be processed only if there is an available substitute.



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## Study/Travel

You still have an opportunity to join 29 other LLI/NOVA members (and friends and family) in about five months when we depart on our June river cruise, "Romance of the Rhine and Mosel." Detailed trip information, including how to register, is on the [Study/Travel program page](#) (click on the link). If you're a solo traveler, we have one member who is looking for a roommate.

Meanwhile, we are working on our travel selection for 2021. The members on our mailing list have indicated their preferences for Ireland and Australia/New Zealand. We are doing further research on these destinations and hope to send information to our members to make the final selection in February. You can read about our selection status on our program page (see link above). If you would like to get early notifications and vote on our trips, you need to join our email list by contacting Bob Huley at [studytravel@llinova.org](mailto:studytravel@llinova.org).

Interested in travel and getting involved with Study/Travel? Then join our committee. We need

help to evaluate destinations and tours for future trips and to provide the study classes for our destinations. No experience required, just an interest in travel. Let Bob know if you are interested.



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## Special Interest Groups



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## Favorite Books Club

Date/Time: Thursday, Feb. 20, 11:30 a.m.---1 p.m.

Location: Braddock District Governmental Center  
9002 Burke Lake Road  
Supervisor's Meeting Room (behind Kings Park Library)

Our selection this month is "The Color of Water" by James McBride, both an autobiography and a tribute to his white, Jewish mother, Ruth. Born in Poland and raised in Suffolk, Va., Ruth, who spoke no English, was the disabled daughter of an itinerant rabbi. At 17, she fled the South, landed in Harlem, married a black man in 1941, founded a church, was twice widowed and raised 12 children in New York City, all of whom went to college.



From Webpage

## Foodies & Friends

Please join Foodies & Friends for lunch on **Tuesday, Feb. 25**, at 12 noon at **21 Great American Bistro** in Fairfax. Self-described as "Open since July 14th, 2015, 21 Great American Bistro is family owned and run by two talented executive Chefs. Here our passion for quality ingredients, our love for food, and quality of service are our top priorities." The restaurant is rated high on Trip Advisor and Yelp and elsewhere. Check out the menu at

www.21gab.com. As always, separate checks will be provided.

21 Great American Bistro is located in the heart of the City of Fairfax at **10427 North St.** next to Woody's Ice Cream and across the from Bollywood Bistro and Ornerly Beer Company. There is free parking in the garage across the street that is accessible from Rt. 123 or University Drive. There is also a free parking lot at North Street and Lee Highway, about a block away. The restaurant is handicap accessible.

Please RSVP to Rita Daley (ritadaley@gmail.com) by Friday, Feb. 21. Hope to see you there!



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### Mystery Books

The Mystery Book Club will read "Hardcore Twenty-Four" by author Janet Evanovich and will be discussed February 3, 2020 at Mason District Government Center in the Small Conference Room. We begin at 10:00 a.m. Contact Pat Daniels at patdaniels63@gmail.com for further information.

On March 2 ,2020, we will discuss "In Bleak Mid-Winter" by author Julie Spencer Fleming. Same location, same time.



### Tabletop Games

We will be meeting on Feb. 28 at Kings Park Library in the District Manager's Conference Room from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our game this month is Trivia which should be a lot of fun, especially for people who know a little bit about everything.

## Visual & Performing Arts

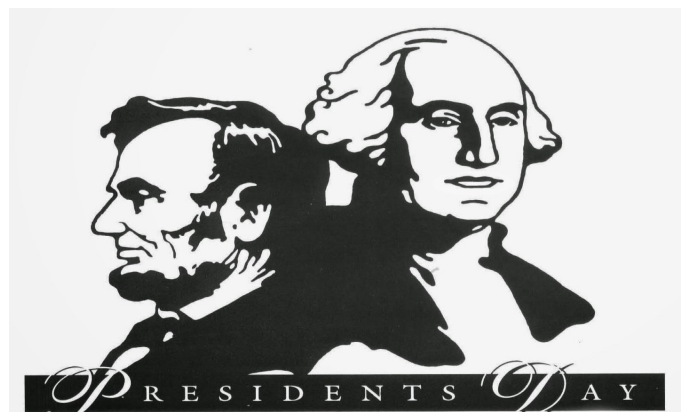
Discount tickets for performances at George Mason University's Center for the Arts include Virginia Opera's production of "Cinderella" on Saturday, Feb. 15, at 8 p.m. and NPR's "From the Top" on Saturday, Feb. 29, at 8 p.m. Click here for more information from the SIG webpage or contact Anna Dixon.



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### New SIGs

Members have expressed interest in establishing two new special interest groups. A German language SIG will be headed by a new LLI/NOVA member and will focus on conversational German. The Spanish language SIG is still in its infancy phase. This newsletter announcement is to help determine and solicit interest in either one of these SIGs. Please indicate your interest by responding to Patti Volz, the SIG coordinator, at pattivolz@verizon.net. We also will be announcing this at the February Forum and will have a sign-up sheet at the welcome table.



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