



News & Views

Volume 27—Number 11

November 2023

Wednesday, November 1 -- LLI/NOVA FORUM

LOCATION: Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale
Socializing starts at 9:30 a.m. Announcements: 9:50 a.m. Forum Presentation: 10:00 a.m.

The Hidden History of Fort Hunt Park

Daniel Blier of the National Park Service (NPS) will take us back into the little-known history and legacy of Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria. Every summer, Fort Hunt Park hosts fish fries, barbecues, festivals, birthday parties, and celebrations of every stripe. It is frequented by bikers and dog walkers seeking a relaxing place to exercise and enjoy life.

But this bucolic park was a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp during the Great Depression, and then played an even bigger, and a highly secretive, role during World War II. Incredibly, Fort Hunt was the site of several critical, war-associated activities:



- A top-secret military intelligence installation where high-value German captives were interrogated.
- An escape and evasion program whose mission was to prepare U.S. servicemen to evade capture by the enemy and, if captured, to escape (critical for the U.S. Army Air Forces, the major land-based aerial warfare service component of the U.S. Army and de facto aerial warfare service branch of the United States during and immediately after World War II).
- A debriefing site for German scientists who came to the U.S. rather than go to the Soviet Union.



Fort Hunt was declared surplus in November 1946, and the Army Corps of Engineers removed dozens of temporary wartime buildings. The property was returned to the NPS in January 1948 and converted to a park. Few knew the importance of what had occurred there until the 1990s, when secret information was declassified. Even now, more of

this previously classified information is slowly coming to light. Fort Hunt's rich history has rightfully landed it in the National Register of Historic Places.

Daniel Blier has been employed by the National Park Service since 2020. He has been stationed at Fort Hunt, Great Falls, and Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial. Outside of work, he loves reading and writing about philosophy and literature. Be sure to join us to hear him speak of the secret history of Fort Hunt!

After-Forum Lunch

Join fellow LLI members for lunch and conversation at [Kilroy's](#) restaurant, 5250A Port Royal Road, Springfield, in the Ravensworth Shopping Center. Paul Hopley will host.

President's Message



I'm sorry to announce the passing of long-time LLI member Lynda Brittain. Please see the In Memoriam for Lynda in this newsletter.

We had a great turnout for our October 4 Forum on "Freedom to Read," which addressed a growing trend of a small number of people challenging certain books in school and public libraries. The banning of books for prejudicial reasons is currently of wide concern, as further exemplified in a front-page [Washington Post article, "A Brigade of Objectors,"](#) published on October 9. Forum attendance was the best since the Covid pandemic and since our change of venue from the Ernst Center to the Little River United Church of Christ (LRUCC).

Why did we move our Forums to LRUCC? Cost initially drove our decision, when we learned of a large post-pandemic rent increase at Ernst. As you may know, the Ernst Center is no longer tied to NOVA but operates as an independent enterprise. Despite efforts to negotiate with Ernst, the price increase (including coffee) was prohibitively expensive for a nonprofit organization like ours.

After a considerable search (which included libraries and government centers), a small team of Board members discovered LRUCC, where we have held some LLI classes. Its location (directly across Route 236 from NOVA), as well as its amenities and significantly lower fees, made it a good fit for us. It is completely accessible (no stairs), and there is ample free parking. Remarkably, we can hold three Forums at LRUCC for the cost of one at Ernst!

The church staff have been tremendously welcoming and accommodating. For example, they set up and take down the tables and chairs for us in the sunny room with its long windows looking out into the woods. Also, LRUCC wants to start listing our Forums in their bulletins,

which could result in attracting new LLI members. While this venue might lack some of the "formalities" of the Ernst Center, our Forum and Hospitality Committees have made this transition pleasant. At the end of the day, we are still the same friendly and sociable folks we always were and we look forward to seeing you at the Forums!

That said, we hope to see you at LRUCC for our November 1 Forum. The topic will be "The Hidden History of Fort Hunt Park" and it is the **last in-person Forum until April**, as we will hold the winter Forums online via Zoom.

Finally, I urge you to register for our Winter Luncheon on December 6. It is LLI's only social event of the year open to our entire membership plus friends and families. It's a lot of fun, with decorations, entertainment, a delicious meal, and a chance to visit with other LLI members.

Derick Malis
LLI/NOVA President

Winter Luncheon

Wednesday, December 6
Country Club of Fairfax



11:00 a.m. Reception/cash bar, with a local guitar duet, *The Recall*, playing folk, blues, and country rock.

12:00 noon: Lunch
This event is special! Enjoy camaraderie with fellow LLI members over a lovely sit-down lunch (choice of entree).

We'll continue our tradition of collecting new, unwrapped toys for children (1-10 years old) under the care of [Bethany House](#).

Register and pay online [here](#) for yourself and your guests before the **November 20** deadline!

Questions? Contact JoAnn Ackerman, joannackerman22@gmail.com

Community Outreach

At our Forum on November 1, we will be collecting food and cleaning supplies for [ACCA](#), Annandale Christian Community for Action, a coalition of churches providing services to low-income families in the Annandale/Bailey's Crossroads area. Please bring items such as soups, cereal, canned chicken, canned fruit, canned tomatoes, and cleaning supplies such as dish soap, bar soap, laundry soap, and paper towels. If you are not attending the Forum and would like to help, checks can be mailed to ACCA, 7200 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003.

Carol Weber has graciously volunteered to deliver our items. Let's fill her car with a huge collection for ACCA. Thanks for your continued generosity helping those in need.

Joyce Pomeroy and Betsy Pugin,
Community Outreach Coordinators



Encore Learning is offering the following free online events to LLI members. No advance registration is required. Click [here](#) to join these events.

- Monday, October 30, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
**Public Art in Arlington VA:
Present, Past and Future**
Speaker: Angela Anderson Adams
Details are available [here](#).
- Monday, November 13, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
**Post-COVID-19 World:
A New Economic Order**
Speaker: Dr. Amel Ben Abdesslem
Details are available [here](#).



Welcome to our newest members:

- Aldona Affleck
- Allen Coffin
- Skip Kaminsky
- Ellen Wallace

Record-breaking Donations for NOVA Scholarships!

LLI members more than **doubled** last year's donations for LLI scholarships to be awarded to deserving NOVA Community College students. **Thank you, contributors!** Next month's newsletter will inform members about the number and kinds of scholarships that will be awarded.



Study/Travel Program

Because of the overwhelmingly positive word-of-mouth feedback received on Viking tours, for 2024 the Study/Travel Committee has planned an exciting trip through the heart of Europe on Viking's Grand European Tour. Cruise along the picturesque waterways of Europe and immerse yourself in the rich history, culture, and beauty of the continent. With Viking's world-class service, meticulously designed itineraries, and exquisite cuisine, you can relax and enjoy this iconic trip that embarks from Amsterdam on June 20 and disembarks in Budapest on July 4, 2024.



See the [Study/Travel Program website](#) for full information.

These trips are very popular and fill up early, beginning with the highest cabin categories.

Contact Committee Chair Rod Dyck (rd2222@aol.com or 703-328-1660) with any questions or comments.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

KPL = Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Rd., Burke

POC = Point of Contact



Bridge – Wednesday, November 8, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center. All levels of player are welcome. For more information, click [here](#).

POC Bob Huley, roberthuley@cox.net

Favorite Books – Thursday, November 16, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL

"As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow" by Zoulfa Katouh (Young Adult fiction).

POC Lynne Smaldone, lynne.smaldone@gmail.com

Financial Discussion Group – Discontinued until new leader is found.

Please consider volunteering. Contact Derick Malis, derickmalis@gmail.com

Foodies & Friends – Friday, November 10, 12:30 p.m. See article on page 6 for details.

Mystery Books – Monday, November 6, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL

"The Midnight Line" by Lee Child. Please join us to discuss another good book by this prolific author. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Photography – Friday, November 17, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at KPL

New members are always welcome. Cell phone cameras are fine. Normally meets the third Friday of every month. POC Buck Myers, hbm@hbmphoto.com

Tabletop Games – Tuesday, October 24 (Swoop), 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL

Many can play, and this is a fun game to learn and share!

POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Visual and Performing Arts – Outings below are both from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at the National Gallery of Art. We will meet in the East Building (4th St. & Constitution Ave. NW) lobby at 10:00 a.m. and begin the tours at 10:15 a.m. Attendees can have a light meal in the main cafeteria after the tour. **Participants are encouraged to carpool or take the Metro to these in-person sessions.**

Thursday, November 2: The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Art by Native Americans. This will be part two of an LLI class (session one is Thursday, October 26, via Zoom – register [here](#)). Members may participate in one or both sessions. National Gallery of Art docent Anna Dixon will provide an in-person gallery walk-through focusing primarily on the [exhibition](#). It highlights artworks by nearly 50 living Native artists and powerfully visualizes Indigenous knowledge of land, landbase, and landscape. Register [here](#) for this in-person event.

Wednesday, November 22: 20th Century Works ... Amusing, But Is It Art? This will be part three of an LLI class (sessions one and two are Wednesdays, November 8 and 15, via Zoom – register [here](#)). Members may participate in one, two, or all three sessions. National Gallery of Art docent Anna Dixon will provide an in-person gallery walk-through exploring how and why rules of painting and sculpture changed radically throughout the 20th century. Through close examination and conversation, we'll observe how artists departed from traditional materials and subject matter while grappling with the modern world. We will discuss further who determines if a new contemporary piece of art is good or bad and where and why it fits into the modern art story. Register [here](#) for this in-person event.

Visual and Performing Arts: Discounted Tickets at GMU Center for the Arts

Another season of great deals on tickets for LLI members and their guests is about to start! For \$15.00 (plus a \$4.00 service fee) per seat, LLI members may purchase tickets for any available seat at selected performances at George Mason University Center for the Arts. (Note that tickets may also be purchased in person at the box office, where no service fee is charged.) If attendees are interested, we will have a pre- or post-performance meetup in the lobby.



Very shortly, our LLI VPA SIG website updates will be done, and you will be able to click [here](#) to find details about the shows and to purchase tickets online. You will login with your LLI member ID to find the special LLI/NOVA code. When you click on the link for the show, enter the code in the “coupon code” box. Choose any available seat from the seat map, order your tickets, and pay for them

online. These are the shows and dates for which this discount applies:

[Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra with Christian McBride](#) – October 28, 8:00 p.m.

[Christian McBride](#), one of the most prolific and well-known figures of jazz, joins the audience-favorite Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra led by founder, artistic director, and virtuoso saxophonist Jim Carroll, in an unforgettable night of bravado, improvisation, and jazz swagger.

[A Mariachi Christmas: Mariachi Herencia de México](#) – December 10, 3:00 p.m.

A vibrant group of Mexican American musicians propelling the art and traditions of mariachi music to new heights. Add some love, light, and mariachi to your holiday this season with Mariachi Herencia de México’s joyful music.

[Hamid Rahmainian's Song of the North](#) – January 27, 4:00 p.m.

With more than 500 handmade puppets and an original score by renowned Iranian composer Loga Ramin Torkian, you'll be transported to a magical and ancient landscape, rich in history and lore in this epic love story. The performance combines state-of-the-art animation with the age-old art of shadow puppetry to showcase a collection of ancient Persian legends and Iranian national treasures.

[Virginia Opera: Sanctuary Road](#) – February 4, 2:00 p.m.

Based on the life and writings of William Still, an African American leader on the Underground Railroad, *Sanctuary Road* transforms daring stories of courage, perseverance, and sacrifice into an enthralling historical oratorio.

[A.I.M by Kyle Abraham](#) – February 17, 8:00 p.m.

Kyle Abraham’s contemporary dance company aims to create a body of dance-based work that is galvanized by Black culture and history. The Center presents his visionary works using various dance and music styles to uncover the relationships between identity, history, and geography.

[Jubilee/Mnozil Brass](#) – February 25, 3:00 p.m.

Known as the Monty Python of the music world, Austrian septet [Mnozil Brass](#) seamlessly combines slapstick comedy with virtuosity. Hailed as one of the world’s premier brass ensembles, the group blends classical, jazz, folk, and pop with sketch comedy, silly songs, and sidesplitting buffoonery on their trumpets, trombones, French horn, and tuba.

[Small Island Big Song](#) – April 20, 8:00 p.m.

Right before Earth Day, join [Small Island Big Song](#) for a moving concert experience combining music, spoken word, and stunning projections to showcase unique oceanic grooves and soulful island ballads, while shining a light on the devastating effects of global warming on 16 island nations.

Foodies & Friends

Friday, November 10, 12:30 p.m.

Mama Tigre, 10443 White Granite Dr., Oakton



Join Foodies & Friends as we return to one of our favorite restaurants, [Mama Tigre](#), for Mexican food “remixed” with exotic spices, some from India. Chef and owner Renu Prakash and her team love the freedom that comes from unleashing creativity. Her web page proclaims “Mama Tigre is ultimately Chef Prakash’s freedom to express the divine feminine spirit of nurturing through her play with spices; nourishing and calming, yet bold and exciting.” She focuses on bringing different cultures, flavors, and spices to food that feeds mind, body, and soul. With the base of

native Mexican comfort cuisine, she infuses an array of exotic and complex spices, making the ordinary extraordinary and exciting. Separate checks will be provided, and the restaurant is totally accessible. Plenty of parking is available. Our host for this lunch is Edie Berman. Sombreros or Mexican attire welcome! Please respond to Edie at ediebe@aol.com, and phone number, 703.534.5565 by November 8. Hope to see you there.



NoVA Annandale Campus Pottery Sale: CA First Floor Patio Outdoors.
Wednesday, November 8, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

All pottery by students and faculty. Bargain prices for artisan ceramics! Sale proceeds are donated to the Annandale Ceramics Program.

In Memoriam



Lynda Brittain



Long-time LLI member Lynda Brittain passed away on October 4. Lynda received her B.S. in Nursing from the University of Tennessee. She worked as a nurse for the Army, stationed in Korea. She ultimately went to work at the former National Orthopedic Hospital in Arlington (now the Anderson Orthopedic Clinic) followed by the Lincolnia Adult Day Health Care Center in Alexandria.

Lynda, along with her late husband Terry, joined LLI in January 2004. She and Terry thoroughly enjoyed both the local and overseas travel opportunities offered by LLI.

As a very active volunteer, Lynda served as the newsletter editor for many years and was a member of the Holiday Luncheon Committee. Most recently, she was a member of the Nominating Committee, helping to choose a slate of candidates for the June 2023 Board of Directors elections. Lynda was an enthusiastic bridge player and a member of the LLI Bridge Special Interest Group. She also enjoyed knitting, and joined her fellow LLI members in the knitting group. Some of Lynda’s other interests included cooking, genealogy, and stamp collecting. She was also an avid reader and an enthusiastic sports fan. Like many of her friends in LLI, Lynda was also a cat lover. There will be a service for Lynda at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined.