



News & Views

Volume 28—Number 5

May 2024

Wednesday, May 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.

Underground Railroad Quilt Codes



Join us for a fascinating story about how the Underground Railroad may have used codes embedded in quilts to guide the enslaved to freedom. For many years, Black History Quilt Maker/Textile Artist **Sharon Tindall** studied the theory of quilt codes. This is the idea that the enslaved on Southern plantations sewed patterns into their quilts for other enslaved to use as maps of the Underground Railroad. For example, a flying geese pattern might have indicated they should follow birds so they could keep walking north by day. Many historians do not agree, but

Sharon and others believe these were truly embedded messages. She has even created such quilts herself, incorporating code, to test their possible validity.

Sharon received her professional training from Montclair State University, NJ. She is now executive assistant to the provost at NOVA Community College and is an advocate and educator of African American history. In 2013, Sharon was awarded a grant enabling her to travel to Liberia to study patterns and coded messages in fabric, as well as the history of cotton. She gives presentations on "From Cotton to Quilts" explaining how the enslaved could have deciphered from quilts whether they were close to freedom. Sharon was interviewed for "Underground Railroad Quilt Codes" for the Smithsonian's Folklife Magazine, March 3, 2019. Sharon will have several of her quilts hung in the Forum room for us to view.



After-Forum Lunch

Join fellow LLI members for lunch and conversation over Japanese cuisine at Ariake, at the NW corner of Little River Tpke and Prosperity Ave. (8708 Little River Tpke, Fairfax), a few blocks west of LRUCC. Separate checks; cash is welcome. Opens at 11:30 a.m. Patricia Brennan will host.



Please make sure to check out the election supplement on the last four pages of this newsletter. Elections for our Board members for our July 2024 to June 2025 fiscal year will be held **NEXT MONTH** at our June 5 Forum.

President's Message



In about a month, we'll be holding LLI/NOVA's 2024 Annual Business Meeting prior to our June Forum. As required by our by-laws, this important meeting is to be announced to members 30 days in advance. Please mark your calendars to attend.

2024 Annual Business Meeting

Date/time: Wednesday, June 5 at 9:45 a.m., followed by Forum speaker at 10:15 a.m.

Place: Usual Forum location, LRUC
8410 Little River Tpke, Annandale

Agenda:

1. Elect officers and members of the Board of Directors. (Read about the candidates in the **Election Supplement** on pages 7 to 10 of this newsletter.)
2. Present the Board-approved budget for the next fiscal year.
3. Provide a statement of financial condition prepared by the Budget and Finance Committee.

On a personal note, by the time this newsletter is posted on the LLI website, my wife, Inta, and I will be on a long-anticipated trip to Greece and



Turkey. We expect to be touring the Parthenon, the Acropolis, and other historic sites in mainland Greece, before flying to the Greek island of Mykonos and then ferrying to Santorini and Crete. Then, we're on to Istanbul before flying home. My next message will let you know how the trip went!

Derick Malis
President, LLI/NOVA

Tech SIG/Service



LLI/NOVA's new and evolving Tech SIG/Service begins this month with five volunteers who have agreed to help fellow members with their technology problems on various devices.

If you don't know how to transfer photos from one device to another, add names to your phone's address book, delete your browsing history, or deal with the hundreds of technical problems that bedevil you – here's your chance for personal instruction.



You can call or email one of the following LLI volunteers. They may be able to help you by talking you through your issue. Or maybe you'll want to arrange to meet at a mutually convenient time and place.

As this SIG/Service evolves, we plan to offer Zoom presentations and possibly group meetings. Let Patricia Brennan (patriciaabbrennan@cox.net) know what you would find helpful. If you'd like to volunteer your tech expertise for this project, please do so.

The Fabulous Five Volunteers:

- Susan Bigman, who can help you with Apple devices: stbigman@gmail.com, 703-862-9323.
- Luis Granados, who specializes in Android devices: granadoskerry@yahoo.com.
- Andy Butler, available evenings and weekends: abutler@pbs.org, 703-451-5834.
- Fritz Ernst, a Mac specialist: fritz_ernst@msn.com, 703-569-3898.
- Steve Malone: steven69m@icloud.com, 202-494-3773.



Welcome to our newest members:

- Gilbert Bowman
- James Judson Millard

Community Outreach

When you come to the Forum on Wednesday, May 1, please bring an item (or more) for the food pantry collection. The people you see at the church door with the food cart are LLI members who organize a food collection each time the Forum meets.

The May food collection will be delivered after the meeting to [ECHO](#) (Ecumenical Community Helping Others). ECHO has been serving the needs of people in the Springfield area since 1968, when it was formed by area religious congregations. Today, there are about 26 congregations and over 400 volunteers who assist in collecting for ECHO.



Items most needed at this time include canned meat and fish, juice and tea, peanut butter, oil, canned fruit, baked beans, cereal, pancake mix and syrup, instant coffee, and canned tomatoes. Also needed are personal care and laundry items and diapers (sizes 3, 4 and 5).

Last month's collection went to Food for Others, for which we and they are truly grateful!

- Betsy Pugin

Children's Book Drive **Reminder**



LLI is once again supporting [Read Early And Daily](#) (R.E.A.D.) with its book drive. Bring your new board books for infants and toddlers to the Forum on Wednesday, May 1. The book wish list is available by clicking [here](#). Contact Lynne Smaldone (lynne.smaldone@gmail.com) with any questions.



Fritz Ernst - Tjeldsund Bridge, Norway

A Look Through the Lens



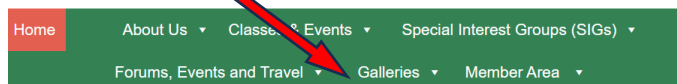
Doug O'Boyle-CY2023-Kayak emerges from water Great Falls

LLI's Photography Special Interest Group (SIG) meets monthly to share members' pictures taken based on an assigned "theme of the month." The group selects what it considers to be the best photo submitted by each person. These are posted to the web site by Buck Myers, the SIG's leader, for all our LLI members to enjoy.

The group members take some wonderful photos and cover a variety of subject matter: e.g., nature (water, trees, sky, flowers); animals (cats, dogs, squirrels, horses); structures (houses, bridges, castles, barns). The pictures are taken locally, nationally, and on worldwide travel. Each person brings his/her creativity and interpretation to the monthly theme.

The current monthly photos are easy to find. From the LLI [home page](#), scroll down the right-hand side column to the "Quick Connects" section to "Photos of the Month."

To see the library of current and past photos, click on "Galleries" at top of the LLI [home page](#)



Then select a year, and then "Photography SIG Images." These postings began in 2014 and have since been refined to include photographers' names and the theme.

So, why not take a look at what the LLI photographers see through their lenses?

Foodies & Friends

Monday, May 13, 12:30 p.m.

[Busboys and Poets](#),

4251 S. Campbell Ave,
Arlington



Please join Foodies & Friends for lunch at Busboys and Poets in Shirlington. Busboys and Poets is a restaurant, bar, bookstore, book club, and community gathering place. It is a cultural hub for artists, activists, writers, thinkers, and dreamers. In addition to its regular, creative menu, the restaurant offers a wide array of vegetarian, gluten-free, and vegan dishes. There is metered street parking and garage parking (free, but check signs on each level). The restaurant is accessible and separate checks will be provided.

RSVP for this event to our host, Loren Brandman (loren.brandman@gmail.com), no later than May 11.

Study/Travel Program - POC Rod Dyck (rd2222@aol.com or 703-328-1660)

The Study/Travel Committee is excited about two remarkable upcoming trips tailored for LLI/NOVA members, friends, and family:

Grand European River Cruise – June 20–July 4, 2024. Explore picturesque landscapes and rich cultural heritage aboard a luxurious Viking river cruise.



Australia and New Zealand – January, 2025. Embark on a captivating exploration of the stunning landscapes and vibrant cultures of Australia and New Zealand with Grand Circle Travel.



See the [LLI/NOVA Study/Travel Program webpage](#) for full details on these trips.

Community College Initiative Cultural Fashion Show



LLI/NOVA collaborated with NOVA/Annandale's Community College Initiative (CCI) on a cultural fashion show on March 22. The show served as a platform to celebrate diversity and promote cultural exchange through the lens of fashion. It featured dances, brief presentations highlighting cultural fashion items and traditions, and poetry readings. Attendees embraced the opportunity to learn about different cultures as represented by Annandale NOVA's CCI students from Ukraine, South Africa, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Ghana, Indonesia, India, Côte d'Ivoire, and Bolivia. Before the show, LLI members enjoyed lunch with the students, providing an opportunity to further engage with them. A student-compiled video and pictures from the event are on our website [here](#).

The CCI Program provides participants from underserved areas and underrepresented groups with a one-year, non-degree academic program at a U.S. community college. The program is designed to build participants' technical skills in applied fields, enhance their leadership capabilities, and strengthen their English language proficiency. It also provides opportunities for internships, service learning, and cultural exchange through community engagement activities. The CCI Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The NOVA CCI 2023/24 program has 18 students from 11 countries.

Stay tuned for CCI hosting opportunities with next year's cadre, which will begin arriving in July. We are already planning for a similar event next year!

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Wednesday, May 8, and Thursday, May 23, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center. All levels of player are welcome. For more info, click [here](#).

POC Bob Huley, roberthuley@cox.net

Favorite Books – Thursday, May 23 (note date change), 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL
"Hamnet" by Maggie O'Farrell (historical fiction).

POC Lynne Smaldone, lynne.smaldone@gmail.com

Foodies & Friends – Monday, May 13, 12:30 p.m. See article on previous page for details.

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

Our May book is "The Inner Circle" by Brad Meltzer. On June 3, we will be reviewing "Independence Square" by Martin Cruz Smith. The group will not meet in July and August; it will return on September 9 to examine the book "Skinny Dip" by Carl Hiaasen.

POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Photography – No meeting in May. Our June meeting will be on Friday, June 21, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at KPL. New members are always welcome. Cell phone cameras are fine. Meetings are normally the third Friday of every month. POC Buck Myers, hbm@hbmphoto.com

Tabletop Games – Tuesday, May 28, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL. It has yet to be decided what we will play. This fun group loves having games where we all can play together. There can be as many as 11 gamers at one meeting, so if anyone knows of games that fit those dynamics, please feel free to share that with me! POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Tech – See article on page 2 about LLI's newest SIG/service. POC Patricia Brennan, patriciaabbrennan@cox.net.



Mary Lu Bednarsky, Photography SIG member. See article on page 3.

Cultural Excursions

Detailed information is available on the [LLI website Cultural Excursions page](#). For each excursion, you will need to register as you would for a class so we can get a head count. Send your trip ideas to Carol Fagnani (contact info online).

May 2: Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, MD – 10:30 a.m., \$14



[Ladew Gardens](#), deemed “the most outstanding topiary garden in America” by the Garden Club of America, and featured as one of “ten incredible topiary gardens around the world” by Architectural Digest, is located in the Maryland countryside 20 miles north of Baltimore. At the gardens, you may purchase a ticket for a docent-led tour of the home for \$7. Leader is Carol Fagnani.

July 15, 2024: [National Inventors Hall of Fame](#), Alexandria – 11:00 a.m., free

Experience the past, present, and future of American ingenuity as you are introduced to more than 600 world-changing inductees and are immersed in stories of passion, perseverance, and progress. The guided tour will last approximately 30 minutes. Following the tour, lunch (credit cards only) may be purchased at the Patent and Trademark Office cafeteria.

This event will take place at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), 600 Dulany St., Alexandria. The building is fully accessible and there are benches throughout the museum.

Transportation is on your own or via carpool. There is parking in the East Garage at 551 John Carlyle St. (\$3 per hour; daily maximum of \$10). The USPTO is a short walk from both the King St. Metro station (yellow and blue lines) and the Eisenhower Ave. Metro station (yellow line). Leader is Ellen Wallace.



Thanks from LLI Scholarship Awardee

Thank you so much to all who are a part of this LLI Academic Scholarship Program and chose me as a recipient for this award. I am beyond grateful. The scholarship will provide me many opportunities to further my education and to pursue it with the resources and financial stability necessary. I am so touched that you have found hope and success within my education and in me so that I would be chosen for this award.

Gabriella Beck

Please make sure to check out the election supplement on the following pages.



Elections for our Board members for our July 2024 to June 2025 fiscal year will be held NEXT MONTH at our June 5 Forum.

LLI/NOVA Board of Directors

President: Derick Malis	Members: Richard Ackerman, Mary Alexander, Cathy Becker, Andy James
Vice Pres: Patricia Brennan	Butler, Debbie Cohen, Steven Cohen, Fritz Ernst, Carol Fagnani, Richard Martin, Paul Massell, Patti Volz
Secretary: Gina Trapp	
Treasurer: Richard Sigman	
Past President: Anna Dixon	
Administrator: Janice Viola	

LLI Newsletter Committee

Chair: Cathy Becker, cz.becker@verizon.net
Loren Brandman, Patricia Brennan



ELECTION SUPPLEMENT



Plan to attend the **Wednesday, June 5 Forum (9:45 a.m.)** to vote for our LLI/NOVA Board of Directors! The LLI/NOVA 2024 Nominating Committee is pleased to announce an outstanding slate of officers and board members for our July 2024 to June 2025 year. The Nominating Committee was comprised of Anna Dixon (Chair), Gina Trapp, Patricia Brennan, Ellen Wallace, and Phyllis Liner.

Our Board of Directors is made up of 15 members elected by the membership. Board members serve a three-year term, with five members' terms expiring annually. If a position becomes vacant, a new member is elected to complete the unexpired term.

The slate of candidates for the Board is as follows:

Board candidates for three-year terms ending June 30, 2027

- Mary Alexander
- Steven Cohen
- Carol Fagnani
- Derick Malis
- Ed McKnight

LLI/NOVA has four officer positions elected by the membership from among the Board members. Officers serve a one-year term. Expiration of three-year Board term is indicated after each name:

- President Patti Volz (2026)
- Vice President Patricia Brennan (2026)
- Secretary Gina Trapp (2025)
- Treasurer Richard Sigman (2025)

Short biographies for candidates are provided below

Patti Volz – President

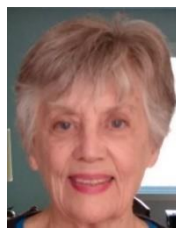


Patti joined LLI/NOVA in May 2013 after a 33-year career with the Central Intelligence Agency, serving in a number of rotational assignments throughout the Intelligence Community focusing on

management, collection and requirements, and public affairs. Patti has served on the Board since 2016, serving as vice president for four years. Serves as chair of the Foodies & Friends Special Interest Group, and is a member of the Scholarship Committee. She earned her Bachelor's degree at the University of Virginia and her Master's in International Relations at Georgetown University, with an emphasis on the Soviet Union and China. Patti is a recipient of the CIA's Career Intelligence Medal, awarded for a cumulative record of service reflecting exceptional achievements that substantially contributed to the mission of

the Agency. Patti believes strongly in education and has helped teach adults to read through the Literacy Council. She is an avid scuba diver and enjoys travel, reading, and growing herbs.

Patricia Brennan – Vice President



Patricia Brennan has been an LLI/NOVA member for a decade, serving first as Hospitality co-chairman with Mary Purdy, then copy editing the Newsletter with the late Mary Jablonski and now

with current editors Cathy Becker and Loren Brandman. She has served on the LLI/NOVA Board and served as Vice President since 2023.

She grew up in Bloomington, IN, earned her bachelor's degree at Indiana University, and wrote and edited for the Indiana Daily Student, the Bloomington Herald-Times, the

Indianapolis Star, and The Washington Post. In Honolulu, she taught English and journalism to juniors and seniors at Punahou School. She also earned a master's degree from the University of Virginia, ushered at the Barns of Wolf Trap, and was a part-time contractor for U.S. Investigations.

She and her late husband lived in Honolulu, San Francisco, Seattle, and Ankara, Turkey, before moving to Northern Virginia. She has five children and nine grandchildren.

Richard Sigman – Treasurer



Richard Sigman grew up in Billings, MT, and has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Colorado State University. He arrived in the Washington, D.C. area in 1971 to work for the Navy as a mathematician. This led to his completing a master's degree in mathematics, with a concentration in statistics, at the University of Maryland at College Park. After graduate school, he worked 40 years as a statistician at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Census Bureau, and employee-owned Westat, and then retiring from full-time work in 2017. In retirement, he works part-time at George Mason University teaching statistics and participates in citizen-science data collection projects organized by Earthwatch and Adventure Scientists. Richard joined LLI in 2022 and was soon appointed the LLI Assistant Treasurer. In 2023, he was elected LLI Treasurer and a member of the Board. Richard lives in Kingstowne with his wife, Andrea Nygren (and in the summertime with numerous tomato plants).

Gina Trapp - Secretary

Gina Trapp has been a member of LLI since 2004 and currently serves on the Board as Secretary. A graduate of Misericordia University in Dallas, PA, she taught high school

English for a year before moving to Northern Virginia. She then worked for 30 years for the Inspector General at the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a writer/editor. She was a speechwriter for the Inspector General and was in charge of reports to Congress that highlighted instances of fraud, waste, and mismanagement of government funds. Gina was introduced to LLI by a former member who gave her a year's membership dues as a retirement gift. She has been grateful for that gift ever since.

Gina became active in LLI shortly after joining. She became a member of the Curriculum Committee in early 2005 and served on that committee for 13 years, two as Committee Chair. In 2005 she joined the LLI Board of Directors and served as Secretary for three years. She later served two additional terms on the Board. She was one of the original members of the Automation Committee in its early years and has served three times on the Nominating Committee. Gina has also volunteered at the Animal Welfare League of Arlington helping to "socialize" cats and arranging for adoptions.

Mary Alexander - Board



Mary Alexander has been a member of LLI/NOVA since 2019, serving on the board, and chairing the Membership Outreach Committee since 2021. She has presented LLI classes on the Oregon Trail and nature, including on spring flowers, trees, insects and butterflies. She also has participated in the yearly Great Decisions discussion group, the Bridge SIG, and the Foodies SIG.

She is a roving interpreter for the Fairfax County Park Authority and advocates on behalf of EcoPeace Middle East, a regional environmental peacebuilding organization

focused on water and sanitation issues. Her work as a naturalist is her second career after 35 years working on international trade policy in the U.S. Congress and for an economic thinktank and a major electronics company. Mary served as President of Women in International Trade (WIIT) in Washington, D.C., chaired its educational arm, and received the first WIIT Lifelong Achievement Award.

She has a degree in History with a minor in Education from Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA. She has earned a Natural History Field Studies certificate from the USDA Graduate School and is a Virginia Master Naturalist and an Arlington/Alexandria Tree Steward. Since retiring, Mary has worked at a number of Virginia and Maryland nature centers and parks. The summer of 2015, she and her husband served as interpretative rangers at a state park along the Snake River in Idaho, and the following summer she served as an interpretive ranger at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. She has had a long-time interest in butterflies, teaching classes on Lepidoptera and guiding field trips to find butterflies, especially in the Washington Metro area and at Sky Meadows State Park, Delaplane, VA. Mary enjoys nature and the outdoors, traveling the world, playing the piano with a monthly performance group, and spending time with her husband, two sons and two grandchildren. She enjoys offering new perspectives to the LLI/ NOVA Board of Directors and feels honored to be nominated to continue serving on the Board.

Steve Cohen - Board



Originally from Rochester, NY, Steve attended both undergraduate and graduate school at Cornell University where he earned his DVM with distinction degree in 1975. After practicing small animal medicine in Rhode Island for a year, and then

Buffalo, NY, for three years, he and wife Debbie, along with their two cats, moved to Northern Virginia in 1979. The next year he established the first full-time veterinary house-call practice in the Commonwealth (Mobile Veterinary Services of Northern Virginia) and ran it until his retirement in 2010. Steve was active in the D.C. Academy of Veterinary Medicine, serving as program chairman, president, and then on its board from 2003-2013. He is also a past president of the Northern Virginia Veterinary Medicine Association.

Since retiring, Steve has been able to devote more time to his scuba diving and underwater videography hobbies. His videos have won awards in various competitions and have been shown multiple times at the San Diego Underwater Film Exhibition. He also uses them for presentations to LLI/NOVA, Osher LLI, and the LLI group at Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg. Besides his underwater hobby, Steve enjoys reading, watching hockey and Netflix, and is a first alternate for the 2024 Olympic napping team. Steve has served on the Board for the past three years and is on the Curriculum Committee, where he serves as a class coordinator and IT advisor for our zoom meetings. Also, he currently chairs the Forum Committee. Steve and Debbie live in Annandale with their cat, Knuble.

Carol Fagnani - Board



Carol is a Board member and the Chair of the Cultural Excursions Committee. She joined LLI in 2019. She enjoys the wide range of class offerings that LLI offers its members. Carol also enjoys traveling,

country western line dancing, and walking in our local parks.

She has been in the area since 1984 when her husband, Frank, was transferred to the area by

the Air Force. Carol retired from the federal government where she held senior level positions in acquisitions and supply management. She is a Certified Professional Contracts Manager. At the United States Postal Service, Carol was the Manager of Information Technology and Telecommunications and responsible for managing a \$1 billion annual spend. She was an Executive Business Advisor at the Department of Education where she managed major information technology initiatives.

Derick Malis – Board



Derick Malis joined LLI/ NOVA in 2018 and has served on the Board as its president since 2021. He was born and raised in Northwest Indiana and graduated from Indiana University with an AB Degree in

Anthropology and Political Science. He taught three years of high school, then moved to the Washington metropolitan area in 1974 and began a 27-year career with the YMCA. Derick served in many capacities at the YMCA including: Outreach Director, Program/Aquatic Director, International Director, Drug Free Zones Director, Associate Executive and Executive Director of three branch operations. Derick initiated a youth sports program in Arlington that exceeded 300 participants. He administered programs that served a variety of community needs, most prominent of which were childcare and day camp services in the Green Valley Community of South Arlington.

In 2002, Derick became the field organizer for the effort to bring Major League Baseball to Northern Virginia. In 2003, he became the fundraising manager for Vanguard Services Unlimited, a substance abuse treatment agency serving the Washington Metropolitan Area. Derick retired in 2012.

Derick is married to Inta Malis and has one grown daughter. He is an avid basketball fan

who still plays (pre-Covid), enjoyed attending his daughter's games, and officiated local games for many years. He is a history buff who loves to travel. He has heated his house with wood for the last 30 years, doing all the chopping, splitting, sawing, and chimney sweeping this entails. He is a fairly avid reader and enjoys most games and sports.

Ed McKnight – Board



Ed McKnight has been a member of LLI since 2006 and has been active in adult education for most of his adult life. He holds an MA degree in Modern European History and an Education Specialist degree in

University Administration and the Adult Learner. Ed retired from the Army after more than 20 years where, among other things, he taught three years on a university campus and with the University of Maryland, Overseas Campus, on three continents. For several years he participated with others in the creation of a series of courses for professional development of Army officers. Upon retirement, Ed held several civilian positions including construction support in Egypt, advisor for fuels support in Haiti, and the development and deployment of a fuels management program for the Department of Defense.

Ed was elected to the LLI Board in 2009 where he served as a Board member, Vice President, President, and ex officio President, leaving the Board in 2016. He has taught and coordinated classes for LLI, served on the Curriculum Committee, Nominating Committee and the Scholarship Committee, each for a number of years, and even served on committees that no longer exist such as mailings and Spring Picnic.