



News & Views

Volume 29—Number 2

February 2025

Wednesday, February 5

LLI/NOVA FORUM VIA ZOOM

Social Zoom: 9:30 a.m. Announcements: 9:50 a.m. **Forum Presentation: 10:00 a.m.**

(Click the link in the upcoming email announcement)

Living on Alcatraz Island



As a young boy, our speaker Michael Stewart was fascinated by the stories of his grandfather, who was a warden at the infamous Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary in San Francisco Bay. From these stories, he learned much about the “island of many mistakes.” Join us on Zoom to hear him share his perspectives about the “Rock” – inmates, staff, families, escape attempts, and more.

Beginning in 1854, this small rocky island was first used as a site for a lighthouse and later for a military prison. In 1934, this was converted to become the Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary, one of the most notorious prisons in American history. The location was known for its strong currents, cold water temperatures, and near-impossible escape. The prison was closed in 1963 and is now a major tourist attraction.

Mike Stewart has a lifetime of rich work experience. By the age of 12, he worked as a “trapboy” at a shotgun range, and later, he worked in a number of other jobs that built both character and a good work ethic. This provided a strong foundation for his 28-year career with the U.S. Army, and subsequent 15-year career in industry.

During his military career, Mike served around the world and in many prestigious assignments, including as Chief of Staff of the Military District of Washington. In industry, Mike performed many business development functions. He also successfully identified efficiencies, saving millions of dollars annually. He currently serves as advisor to a disabled veteran-owned small business, Powder River Industries, LLC.



Mike believes in giving back to the community. He has developed and presented classes for several adult education forums. ***Join us for this fascinating Forum on Zoom!***

President's Corner



It's already been an eventful year:

- We are delighted to have filled the vacant Board secretary position. Bill Tuceling, an active but relatively new LLI member, has graciously agreed to serve at least until the June elections. See the next

article to learn more about Bill. Thank you, Bill!

- Although we are still searching for a permanent chair for the Study/Travel Committee, we have a trip planned for May (see page 5). This trip is thanks to Derick Malis, whose daughter is a trained yoga and Pilates instructor who sponsors trips focusing on those two disciplines. This trip to the small Greek island of Amorgos sounds absolutely wonderful. Do consider it. Also, if you are interested in working with the Study/Travel Committee, please let me know (pvolz63@gmail.com), and for questions about the committee, contact Rod Dyck at rd2222@aol.com or 703-328-1660.

- The Forum Committee is finalizing the 2025 season and is also looking for new members. We can thank LLI member Ellen Soroka for recommending and helping us line up an expert on George Washington to speak to us at our November Forum. The committee loves receiving recommendations.

- Last, our Survey team, under the leadership of Patricia Brennan, has concluded its evaluation of the LLI Survey, which was conducted in November. A summary of their findings is on page 7. Many thanks to all who participated.

Donation From AARP

I am very pleased to report that in late November, LLI/NOVA received an unsolicited donation of \$500 from AARP. In his letter to me, Jim Dau, the AARP Virginia State Director, notes, "Your organization's work to provide continuing educational and cultural opportunities to individuals of all backgrounds and income levels who are 50 years of age or

older is important to those you serve. We hope that you will use this money in furtherance of this effort." In response, I sent a letter of appreciation and assured him that the money will be spent appropriately. I hope everyone realizes that this means we are doing something that matters, that makes a difference, and that shows what we can accomplish in the future. Again, we always need volunteers because we are a nonprofit, volunteer organization. My thanks to all of you for your support. **Remember: Our strength is our members!**

Patti Volz
President, LLI/NOVA

New Board Secretary

We're delighted to have Bill Tuceling volunteer to fill our vacant secretary position on the LLI Board of Directors. He's been a member of LLI since June 2024, and has been very active in attending classes and taking excursions. He is a retired U.S. Government Accountability Office librarian who specialized in military and international affairs research. He has lived in Northern Virginia since 1978 and likes to garden, swim, read, sing, and travel. He also volunteers at Fairfax City history sites.

[Cancellation Policy \(Inclement Weather\)](#)

(click link above for full details)

Summary: LLI/NOVA follows the lead of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):

- If the FCPS close, there will be no IN-PERSON classes or Forums.
- If the FCPS delay morning opening, the IN-PERSON LLI morning classes and Forums are canceled.
- If the FCPS close early, the afternoon IN-PERSON classes are canceled.
- HOWEVER, scheduled Zoom classes will be held if the instructor is available. If registered, be sure to check your email.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Thursday, February 6, and Wednesday, February 19, 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, February 20, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL

"The Good Lord Bird" by James McBride (fiction).

POC Lynne Smaldone, lynne.smaldone@gmail.com

Foodies & Friends – Monday, February 10, 1:00 p.m. See article on page 4 for details.

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

Our February book (rescheduled from January) is "Elevator Pitch" by Linwood Barclay. For March, we will be examining the book "The Silent Patient" by Alex Michaelides. Please join us for a lively discussion. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Photography – Friday, February 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, February 25, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL.

We will be playing Double Ditto, a game that accommodates many players.

POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Visual and Performing Arts –

LLI/NOVA members can go to the [Visual and Performing Arts](#) section of the LLI website and use our specially designated code to purchase \$15 tickets to the following performances:

- [The Peking Acrobats](#) – Sunday, March 9, 1:00 p.m.
- [Shakespeare's "The Tempest"](#) – March 29 and 30, and April 4 and 5, 2:00 p.m.
- [Cirque Mechanics: Pedal Punk](#) – Saturday, April 5, 2:00 p.m.
- [Virginia Opera: "Loving v. Virginia"](#) – Sunday, May 4, 2:00 p.m.

Encore Learning; online via Zoom

Dear Miss Perkins: Author Talk with Dr. Rebecca Brenner Graham

Monday, March 3, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Details are available [here](#).

No registration required.



Our newest members:

- Delores Bailey
- Deborah Watts
- Leslie Wilson

Did you miss a Zoom class?

Recent Zoom classes have been recorded for members to view on our website [here!](#)

Community Outreach



Last month, we suggested you support [FACETS](#), one of the primary nonprofits that helps coordinate the Fairfax County

Hypothermia Prevention Program. This month, we ask that you consider continuing to support this endeavor. Temperatures have been bitterly cold, and we had more snow in January than we have had in several years. The hypothermia shelters are a way to give unhoused people a warm place to stay for the night and a good, warm meal.

FACETS works with faith congregations and the Fairfax County government to provide an alternative to spending the night outdoors in the cold. Between December and March, congregations sign up for a week at a time to provide overnight shelter and to feed the homeless.

Donations can be made [online](#) or mailed to FACETS; 10700 Page Ave., Building B, Fairfax, VA 22030.

If your congregation is a hypothermia shelter site, please support them with donations and your time. Sometimes, listening to another's story makes a big difference for both parties.



Also: If you see someone who is unsheltered and appears to be at risk of hypothermia, call the Fairfax County non-emergency police phone at 703-691-2131. A police officer will respond and conduct a wellness check. If the individual is in distress, call 911.

– Betsy Pugin and Susan Jagen

Foodies & Friends

Monday, February 10, 1:00 p.m.

[Yayla Bistro](#),

2201 North Westmoreland St., Arlington



Join Foodies & Friends as we discover the vibrant flavors of the Mediterranean at Yayla Bistro. Turkish chefs prepare fresh, traditional dishes daily at this pleasant bistro. The menu features a diverse selection of items, from fresh seafood to hearty kebabs and savory stews, and utilizes high-quality ingredients including fresh herbs, olive oil, and aromatic Mediterranean spices.

There is free garage parking in the building next door (The Point at Falls Church, located at 2121 N. Westmoreland Street). The restaurant is accessible and separate checks will be provided. Our host is Rita Daley. RSVP to her by February 6 at ritadaley@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

LLI/NOVA Board of Directors

President: Patti Volz	Members:
Vice Pres: Patricia Brennan	Richard Ackerman,
Secretary: Bill Tuceling	Mary Alexander,
Treasurer: Richard Sigman	Cathy Becker, Andy Butler,
Past President: Derick Malis	Debbie Cohen, Steven Cohen
Administrator: Janice Viola–	Fritz Ernst, Carol Fagnani,
Contact at admin@llinova.org	Richard Martin, Ed McKnight

LLI Newsletter Committee

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

Study/Travel Program

Spring in Greece! Beginners Yoga Retreat May 2 – 9

Picture yourself basking in the warm Greek sun as you gaze out over the Aegean Sea and diving into the rich culture of the stunning island of Amorgos, famous for its blue water. This yoga retreat is about invigorating your body and



soul while connecting deeply with the local traditions. It will be led by Allie Malis of [Yoga Beyond the Studio](#).

Besides yoga, there will be so much to enjoy on this trip – the culture, history, scenery, hospitality, food, and the people you will meet.

No yoga experience is required to enjoy this trip. The yoga will be adapted to fit your specific needs, regardless of age, size, injuries, or mobility. Yoga is for every BODY! Each day offers one or two optional yoga or Pilates classes. While some participants attend many classes, others attend none at all. Relax and stretch as you gaze out over the sea, **or** spend that time reading by the pool. The choice is always yours.

This trip is not exclusively for LLI members. However, the majority of the participants on this trip thus far are in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, so LLI members are sure to fit in.

The trip includes a Greek cooking class, a boat tour with lunch on the water, a private massage, and access to the pool, spa, gym, and hammam bath. There are two beaches and a small village within walking distance (transportation can also be provided). The five-star accommodations include a private balcony with sea views and a resident chef who prepares breakfast and dinner feasts.

[Click here](#) to see a glimpse of what to expect on this trip. Full details may be found [here](#).

Contact Allie Malis (alliemalis@gmail.com or 703-307-3488) if you would like more information. Coordinator is Derick Malis (derickmalis@gmail.com).



Study/Travel Program Committee chairperson needed

Are you interested in travel and helping to choose LLI's trips? Our Study/Travel Committee is looking for a new chairperson. More information about the committee and its responsibilities may be found [here](#). If you are interested in taking on this fun and rewarding opportunity, please contact Patti Volz at pvolz63@gmail.com. For questions about the Committee, contact Rod Dyck at rd2222@aol.com or 703-328-1660.

Greeting Cards to our LLI Friends

Do you know an LLI member who might appreciate receiving a greeting card with get-well wishes, sympathy, "thoughts of you," or other supportive words from LLI?

If so, contact our "card lady," Arlene Gribben (arlenegribb@aol.com or 703-569-0357).

Cultural Excursions

Register for these excursions as you would for an LLI class (see links below). If you are interested in carpooling or sharing an Uber, please contact the tour leader to get names of others who may want to participate. Send trip ideas to Carol Fagnani (contact info online).

Valentine's Day Tea

Thursday, February 13, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

By popular request, we are returning to [Café Renaissance](#) for a lovely afternoon tea to celebrate Valentine's Day together. The cost is \$52 per person (includes tax and gratuity). There is space for 25 guests. You can register on or before February 4, but your payment to Bonnie Hopley by cash or check by February 6 is your confirmed registration. Register [here](#).

David Taylor Model Basin

Thursday, March 20, 10:00 a.m.,
Carderock, MD

Details and registration for this trip may be found [here](#). This is a meetup and is limited to members only because the maximum number of participants is 10. There is no cost. Trip Leader is Patricia Brennan.

Chocolate Tasting and Tour

Saturday, March 29, 2:00 p.m., Chantilly

Purchase your ticket at your earliest convenience on the venue's website at <https://www.riverseachocolates.com/> to ensure it's not sold out. On their website, select **Tasting Flight and Tour** for \$25 for March 29 at 2:00 p.m. After purchasing your ticket, register on the LLI website [here](#) so we may get a head count. Maximum of 16 for this tour. Trip Leader is Ellen Soroka.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tour

Wednesday, April 30, 1:00 p.m.
Bristow

Rippon Lodge Historic Site Tour

Tuesday, June 10, 1:00 p.m., Woodbridge



Cultural Fashion Show

Friday, March 7, 11:30 a.m.
NOVA Annandale campus
Black Theater (CC115)

The Community College Initiative (CCI) Program and LLI/NOVA are hosting a Cultural Fashion Show. The event will begin with a networking lunch with international exchange students from 11 countries and will continue with a fashion show spotlighting students' diverse cultures and traditional attire. The [CCI Program](#), sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, brings exchange students to the U.S. for a year of study and cultural exchange.

LLI NOVA members are also invited to walk on the stage. You can wear cultural attire and share *your* culture! Or dress up for Women's History Month, as March is Women's History Month. Please get in touch with Min Jun, mjun@nvcc.edu, if you are interested in walking on the stage.

LLI Tech Team

The following LLI/NOVA members are available to assist with tech issues:



- Susan Bigman, Apple devices: stbigman@gmail.com, 703-862-9323
- Luis Granados, Android devices: granadoskerry@yahoo.com, 202-460-1270
- Andy Butler, available evenings and weekends: dtvandy4@gmail.com, 703-451-5834
- Fritz Ernst, a Mac specialist: fritz_ernst@msn.com, 703-569-3898
- Steve Malone: steven69m@icloud.com, 202-494-3773

LLI Member Survey

In November, LLI/NOVA members were asked to complete a survey, adding comments and suggestions to make the organization even better. Forty-one percent of the membership -- 110 of you -- did so.

The survey team (Patricia Brennan, Fritz Ernst, Carol Fagnani, Richard Sigman, and Janice Viola) presented their analyses at the January Board meeting. LLI members are welcome to read the complete report, as well as a more detailed review of the survey responses, by clicking [here](#).

Executive Summary

The survey collected data from LLI/NOVA members through a web-based questionnaire, allowing both closed- and open-ended questions. Survey links were disseminated via the November newsletter, the LLI/NOVA website, and reminder emails.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Question 1: Interest in Classes

High satisfaction with classes, minimal dissatisfaction.

Recommendations: Offer a wide range of topics, but always include the popular history, art, and science classes; encourage class participation, and review cancellation procedures.

Question 2: Preference for Class Format

Mixed preferences for in-person and Zoom. Long-term members appear to prefer Zoom; more recent members like in-person classes.

Recommendations: Continue both formats and consider hybrid classes.

Question 3: Monthly Forums

More than 60 percent of respondents said they attend regularly or occasionally; venue is satisfactory but needs improved amplification.

Recommendations: Use microphones. SIG and committee chairs and officers could wear

identifiable badges to facilitate interaction with members.

Question 4: Participation in Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Low participation rate.

Recommendations: Evaluate existing SIGs, consider new SIGs, and promote SIGs through the newsletter and forums.

Question 5: Winter Luncheon

Two-thirds support continuation of the luncheon, but there also is interest in more and diverse social activities.

Recommendations: Continue luncheon and consider additional social events.

Question 6: Study/Travel Suggestions

Interest in various travel destinations, with a focus on North America and national parks.

Recommendations: Incorporate member suggestions. Establishing co-chairs might enable easier planning for both domestic and international trips.

Question 7: Local Outings or Overnight Trips

Diverse interest in local and overnight trips, as mobility of participants allows.

Recommendations: Engage interested members in planning trips, based on their suggestions.

Question 8: Communications

High satisfaction with communication.

Question 9: Monthly Newsletter

Well-received, with a majority of members reading it.

Question 10: When Did Members Join LLI/NOVA?

More long-term members answered the survey than recent members, resulting in potential bias in some findings.

Recommendations: Length of membership may come into play for specific questions.

In Memoriams

Marianne Moerman – LLI member from 2003 to 2024, died January 14. She was a class coordinator and very active in the Poetry group, Foodies, and the Favorite Books group. Her cheerful presence was enjoyed by her classmates at the innumerable classes she attended. A celebration of life will be held in the spring, and LLI will be advised when the date is decided.



Doug Johnson – We have just learned of his passing and will include a full in memoriam article in the next newsletter.



Tetons; Photo by Steve Brown, LLI Photo SIG member

Medicare Card Scam Alert

One of our LLI members wrote this tip to help our readers avoid enabling a scammer to use their Medicare account to fraudulently bill for services not provided.

“If you receive a phone call from a person indicating he is from Medicare and is calling to let you know that Medicare is issuing new cards in plastic to replace the paper ones we currently have, IT IS A SCAM! HANG UP.

“Remember – Medicare NEVER calls you unless you first initiated a contact with them, requested a call-back, or they have told you they will follow up by phone on some issue.”