



# News & Views

Volume 29—Number 4

April 2025

## Wednesday, April 2 -- LLI/NOVA FORUM (in person)

**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.



### Waiting for the Raptor!

If you love watching Northern Virginia's eagles, owls, falcons, ospreys, and hawks majestically sweep and dive in the sky, then join us for our first in-person Forum of 2025. We will welcome Josefina (Jo) Doumbia, a certified Virginia Master Naturalist. She will talk about the spring return to our region of raptor birds of prey and the important role they play in our ecosystem. Raptors possess amazing hunting skills as they swoop to capture prey, including mammals,

reptiles, fish, and other birds. She will introduce us to different species of raptors in our area and how to identify them, and she will highlight the characteristics and skills of raptors that allow them to hunt other animals.



Jo is not only a Virginia Master Naturalist (Fairfax Chapter), but a Wildlife Sanctuary Program Ambassador, and an active volunteer at Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Plant NOVA Trees. After a 25-year career with the World Bank focusing on environmental sustainability,



she is now utilizing her global expertise as a board member with various local environmental groups, including the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society), and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. A Colombian native, she is particularly interested in outreach to Spanish-speaking communities, where she thinks there is a particular need for more information on the natural environment. She lives with her husband and two sons in Annandale where she cherishes the native plant sanctuary she has created in her backyard.

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**After-Forum Lunch:** The after-Forum lunch will be at Pho Hot, a Vietnamese noodle restaurant that has been doing business for 20 years at 7442-A Little River Turnpike, Annandale (Little River Shopping Center). This restaurant was to have been our November lunch choice, but in October, a car crashed through the restaurant's plate glass window. Repairs have been made and the restaurant is happy we rescheduled our reservation to come.

Pho Hot -- a light, hot noodle soup -- is the restaurant's specialty. The manager was pleased to say that four busloads of Vietnamese tourists recently chose the restaurant for their own meal. You may check the menu in advance: <https://phohotva.com/>

## President's Corner



Before I continue to highlight our Special Interest Groups (SIGs), I want to tell you about the delightful CCI Cultural Fashion Show that I attended March 7 at the Annandale Campus. The Community College Initiative (CCI) is sponsored by the

U.S. Department of State, bringing exchange students from underserved areas and underrepresented groups to the U.S. for a year of study and cultural exchange. This non-degree academic program builds technical skills in applied fields, enhances leadership capabilities, and strengthens English language proficiency. It also provides opportunities for professional internships, service learning, and cultural exchange through community engagement activities.

This event began with an informal lunch with the students from **11 countries** and continued with a diverse student presentation showcasing their cultures through their colorful native dress,



poems, songs, dance, and brief narratives and videos about their country. LLI member Anna Dixon was a cosponsor and, in the absence of the Provost, I was asked to open the program.

Over lunch, I talked with two Brazilian students about their country and their pride in being selected from among hundreds of applicants. The students' presentations were energizing and were received with unabashed enthusiasm by the attendees. Hopefully, this event will

continue next year with a new crop of students. If it does, do come and enjoy!

**Bridge SIG:** This SIG normally meets twice a month, on a Wednesday or a Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., usually at the Mason District Governmental Center. The dates, times, and locations are published on the [Bridge SIG website](#) and advertised in this newsletter. The group plays social (not duplicate) bridge. Players of all ability levels are welcome. No need to bring a partner. Partners are rotated every few hands. The coordinator sends out email invitations to interested players several days ahead of each game, giving date, time and location. To get on that list, contact: Martin Stutsman [4business2stutsman@cox.net](mailto:4business2stutsman@cox.net) or June Chalou [chaloujune@gmail.com](mailto:chaloujune@gmail.com).

**Photography SIG:** Anyone with an interest in photography is welcome. Monthly meetings are normally on the third Friday at the Braddock District Government Center (Kings Park Library), Braddock Hall Meeting Room, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. According to chair Buck Myers, “the goal is to improve our individual skills while expanding our horizons in the world of capturing images of things around us, whether it is people, landscapes, wildlife, architecture, reflections, or other objects.” Each month, the group has a specific topic or theme to provide a focus for images presented at the meeting. Members offer a portfolio of images for discussion by the group and one image from each member is selected for display on LLI's website. There is no requirement for expensive, or even dedicated camera gear. Use what you have, including cell phone cameras. The goal is simply to have fun with your photography. Meetings often include a short instructional video and discussion to address subjects such as shooting techniques, composition of images, or tips on gear for a particular photographic experience. Questions? Contact Buck at [bm@hbmphoto.com](mailto:bm@hbmphoto.com).

Patti Volz  
President, LLI/NOVA

## NOVA Annandale Lyceum 2025 Spring Speaker Series

### Climate, Chaos, and Keats: Poetry in the Eras of Uncertainty

Professor Nicole Tong,  
Inaugural Poet Laureate of  
Fairfax County  
Tuesday, April 1, CA 302,  
1:00 p.m.



### Zoom Class Links are MOVING — Affects All Zoom Classes — Please Read

Due to recurrent problems with members accessing links to Zoom classes, the Curriculum Committee has developed a modified way to access the Zoom class links **beginning April 1**. Administrator Janice Viola will continue to send out two email notices prior to each class, but rather than give a link to the class itself, she will provide a link to “Online Class Materials” where you’ll see a box for “Zoom links.” You will be prompted to login, and will then see Zoom links for classes, which will be available at least three weeks in advance of each class. This new system will allow access to the Zoom class links in the event that a member doesn’t get a notice from Janice, loses the link, or forgets to register for the class. Also, you will be able to copy the link and add it to your home e-calendar. Therefore, in addition to solving the “lack of link” problems, this modified approach will have other benefits.

There will also be a link on the LLI/NOVA website ([llinova.org](http://llinova.org)) home page entitled “Recorded Classes and Zoom Links” which will take the member directly to the “Online Class Materials” section. Again, login is required. Prior to April 1, recorded Zoom classes may be accessed [here](#).

## LLI Donates to NOVA Foundation to thank our Forum speakers

Figuring that our Forum speakers probably have enough mugs and bookmarks, we have come up with a new thank-you gift to express our appreciation to them for speaking. We are now donating \$50 to NOVA’s Student Success Emergency Fund in honor of each speaker. This is announced at the close of each Forum, and has been well-received by our speakers and by the college, as evidenced by a glowing letter of thanks LLI recently received from Kelly Persons, the Executive Director of the NOVA Foundation.

### Community Outreach

When our Forum meets in person, as it will on April 2, we can visit with each other and collect the food items that are so important to the groups we support.

This month, we have a new group for which we will collect food. John R. Lewis High School in Springfield has an innovative new Leadership Program that allows students to get real-world experience and create positive change in our community. The program serves the whole school and strives to include students’ diverse strengths and needs. When students take field trips as part of the program, it is a big help to have portable food items so that hunger does not get in the way of students’ learning.

To support this next generation of student leaders, please bring non-perishable snack foods like cheese crackers, chips, granola bars, fruit snacks, bagged cookies, boxed juice drinks, and other similar food for students to eat on-the-go.

For more information on this program, click [here](#).

– Betsy Pugin and Susan Jagen



## Foodies & Friends



Tuesday, April 15 – 11:45 a.m.  
[Anita's](#) in Rolling Valley Mall  
9278 Old Keene Mill Rd., Burke

Please join Foodies & Friends at Anita's New Mexico Style Mexican Food Restaurant. Anita, Phil, and son Tom founded Anita's **over 50 years** ago in a little donut shop they converted into a carryout in Vienna. Today, they have nine restaurants in the Northern Virginia area, all serving authentic and delectable New Mexican dishes based on family recipes handed down for generations.

There is plenty of parking and easy access -- there is a curb to step up directly in front of the restaurant; however, there is no curb next to the handicap parking spaces. Separate checks will be provided. Our host for this luncheon is Arlene Gribben [arlenegribb@aol.com](mailto:arlenegribb@aol.com). RSVP to her no later than Sunday, April 13. (This restaurant is close to NOVA Annandale so won't interfere with the morning class that is scheduled).

## LLI Tech Team



The Tech Team stands ready to help LLI members. Just call and set up a meeting at a convenient time.

The Tech Team is looking for someone to replace Susan Bigman, who has stepped down. Susan has been especially good with Apple products, so ideally, we'd like to have someone available who knows that particular technology.

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

- Luis Granados, Android devices: [granadoskerry@yahoo.com](mailto:granadoskerry@yahoo.com), 202-460-1270
- Andy Butler, available evenings and weekends: [abutler@pbs.org](mailto:abutler@pbs.org), 703-451-5834
- Fritz Ernst, a Mac specialist: [fritz\\_ernst@msn.com](mailto:fritz_ernst@msn.com), 703-569-3898
- Steve Malone: [steven69m@icloud.com](mailto:steven69m@icloud.com), 202-494-3773

### Greeting Cards for 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 Arlene Gribben ([arlenegribb@aol.com](mailto:arlenegribb@aol.com) or 703-569-0357).

## Study/Travel Program Committee Chairperson (Still) Needed

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](mailto:pvolz63@gmail.com). For questions about the Committee, contact Rod Dyck at [rd2222@aol.com](mailto:rd2222@aol.com) or 703-328-1660.

## New Cinema SIG



Cinema SIG members are planning to gather to watch movies on the fourth Wednesday of each month, beginning on April 23. They'll meet at Cinema Arts Theatre in Fair City Mall, Fairfax, and select from films that are playing in the 12:00 noon time frame. Cinema Arts recommends arriving early for the best ticket selection. Tickets for seniors on Wednesdays are \$6. Depending on the popularity of movies offered, film fans may wish to buy their reserved-seat timed-tickets early.

Afterwards, movie attendees have the option of gathering at the tables between the theater and the Mamma Lucia restaurant to chat about what they've seen.

So far, about 27 LLI members and two former NVCC professors have expressed interest in the SIG. Meeting dates will be included on the LLI calendar and those who have signed up will receive an email a few days before each meeting listing movies playing in the noon time frame.

Contact Patricia Brennan ([patriciabbrennan@cox.net](mailto:patriciabbrennan@cox.net)) with any questions.

### Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

**POC** = Point of Contact

**Bridge – Wednesday, April 9, and Thursday, April 24, 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 Martin Stutsman, [4business2stutsman@cox.net](mailto:4business2stutsman@cox.net)

**Cinema – Wednesday, April 23, approximately 12:00 p.m. (see article above).**

POC Patricia Brennan ([patriciabbrennan@cox.net](mailto:patriciabbrennan@cox.net)).

**Favorite Books – Thursday, April 17, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL**

"Brave the Wild River" by Melissa Sevigny (nonfiction) Come join us!

POC Lynne Smaldone, [lynne.smaldone@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.smaldone@gmail.com)

**Foodies & Friends – Tuesday, April 15, 11:45 a.m.** See article on page 4 for details.

**Mystery Books – Monday, April 7, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL**

Our April book is "The House Across the Lake" by Riley Sager. For May, we will be examining the book "The Hellfire Club" by Jake Tapper. Please join us for a lively discussion.

POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, [mlbednarsky@gmail.com](mailto:mlbednarsky@gmail.com)

**Photography – Friday, April 18, 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](mailto:hbm@hbmphoto.com)

**Tabletop Games – Tuesday, April 22, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL.**

We will be playing Five Crowns. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, [mlbednarsky@gmail.com](mailto:mlbednarsky@gmail.com)

**Visual and Performing Arts –**

Sketching in the National Gallery of Art's Sculpture Garden – April 12. See page 7.

Three discounted performances remain. Click [here](#) for details on purchasing \$15 tickets to:

- [Shakespeare's "The Tempest"](#) – 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.

## Cultural Excursions

For details about each trip, please go to the [LLI Class Registration Calendar](#). **Members and guests must register on the LLI website to participate in the trip.** These are all meetups. If you are interested in participating in a carpool, whether as a driver or passenger, contact the Trip Leader, who will coordinate and share names of those looking to carpool. Trip leader contact info is online in the LLI Directory.

LLI has many excursions planned over the next several months. Further details are below and online:

- April 25 – City Nature Challenge
- April 28 – Ladew Topiary Gardens Tour
- April 30 – Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tour
- May 1 – Trillium Hike
- May 20 – Springtime Afternoon Tea
- June 6 – Fairfax County 9-1-1 Center Tour
- June 10 – Rippon Lodge Tour
- June 25 – LLI Potluck Picnic
- July 10 – Anderson House Tour

### City Nature Challenge – Free

Friday, April 25, 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.,  
Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Annandale

LLI members, their guests, and the public are invited to participate in an event organized by the [Hidden Oaks Nature Center](#). This should be a fun event – simply a walk in the woods enjoying nature!

Each spring, cities around the world participate and compete in the Challenge, simply by observing and recording the wild plants and animals seen in nature. Those involved are taking part in one of the largest community science events in the world, as well as learning more about nature in our own urban environment.

Trip Leader is Mary Alexander, an LLI Board member who has taught many LLI classes on nature.

### Ladew Topiary Gardens Tour – \$159

Monday, April 28, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.,  
Monkton, MD

Spend a spring morning at [Ladew Topiary Gardens](#) enjoying a tour of the house and beautiful gardens. Trip departs Green Spring Gardens at 8:30 a.m. and returns at 6:30 p.m. Fee includes motor coach, admission, tour, and lunch.

This trip is being offered through the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA). Registration is open now through April 28. (The cancellation deadline is April 14). Sign up at your earliest convenience on both the [FCPA](#) and [LLI](#) websites. Further information is available on both sites. LLI trip leader is Robbie Comer.

### Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park Tour – Free

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

LLI members and guests are invited to join us for a guided tour of the [Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park](#), a 140-acre historic site in western Prince William County. Federal and Confederate soldiers fought the Battle of Kettle Run in 1862, and the Battle of Bristoe Station in 1863. For each of the two battles, the corresponding walking trail is about 1.25 miles. This can be shortened if need be.

Trip Leader is Regina Rogers.

### Trillium Hike – \$26 (divided among participants)

Thursday, May 1, 8:30 a.m.,  
Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area,  
Linden, VA

LLI members and guests are invited to join Mary Alexander, LLI instructor/member and a Virginia Master Naturalist, on an organized walk at the [Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area](#) (TWMA). We will look for trillium, spring beauties, trout lilies, showy orchids and other spring flowers.

The drive to TWMA takes about 65 minutes. We will caravan and car pool. We will meet at the

*(Cultural Excursions, Trillium Hike continued)*

[Hidden Oaks playground parking lot](#) (separate from the Hidden Oaks Nature Center) at 8:30 a.m. and divide up into fewer cars.

At TWMA, we will walk one to two hours on an uneven dirt trail on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The trail slopes gently downhill, with a few narrow footpath detours to see yellow lady slippers. We can return the same trail or take an alternative more uphill return for the last half mile to complete a loop. Learn more about the Trillium Hike [here](#). Bring snacks, water, hat, bug spray, notebook and pencil, a flower identification guide, and binoculars (if interested in birding).

After the walk, we may travel to [The Apple House](#) for a late lunch. Anyone who still has energy and interest may also stop at one of the many wineries in the area. Register [here](#) for this event.

Contact coordinator Mary Alexander with questions and to let Mary know if you're willing to drive. Rain date for this outing is Tuesday, May 13.

### **Springtime Afternoon Tea – \$45**

Tuesday, May 20, 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.  
[Crest Hill Tea Room](#), The Plains

Let's enjoy a warm spring day in the historic village of The Plains for a lovely afternoon tea. We will be served five assorted tea sandwiches, tea bread, cookies, fruit, a scone and a choice of tea. Baked items are freshly made in house.

The cost is \$45 per person, which includes the tax and a 20 percent gratuity. There is space for 20 guests. Register on or before May 12; your payment to Bonnie Hopler by cash or check by May 12 is your confirmed registration. There is free parking on the street and close by, but carpooling is recommended. The location is accessible with two stairs to the entrance with a railing; there is no ramp. There are one or two antique/gift shops nearby, so you may want to plan to spend the morning or afternoon.

Details for the following excursions will be published in the May newsletter.

- **Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center and 9-1-1 Call Center Tour – Free**  
Friday, June 6, 10:00 –11:30 a.m., Fairfax
- **Rippon Lodge Historic Site Tour – \$3**  
Tuesday, June 10, 1:00 p.m., Woodbridge
- **LLI Potluck Picnic – \$10**  
Wednesday, June 25, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., Roundtree Park, Annandale
- **Anderson House Tour – Free**  
Thursday, July 10, 1:00 p.m., Dupont Circle

### **Visual and Performing Arts Outing – Sketching in the [National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden](#) – Free**, Saturday, April 12, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m., D.C.

We will sketch in the outdoor National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden. Bring your own supplies or use the National Gallery of Art's simple sketchbook and pencils.



The landscaping of the sculpture garden space provides a distinctive setting for 17 major works. We will enjoy the reflecting pool and fountain in the center of the Sculpture Garden. Spacious walking and seating areas give participants a chance to rest and reflect on the works of sculpture amid the rich landscaping.

This gathering is limited to LLI/NOVA members. Meet at the gallery for coffee in the outdoor café.

Further information and registration for this outing is online [here](#). POC is [Anna Dixon](#).

#### **LLI/NOVA Board of Directors**

<b>President:</b> Patti Volz	<b>Members:</b>
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Contact at <a href="mailto:admin@llinova.org">admin@llinova.org</a>	Richard Martin, Ed McKnight

#### **LLI Newsletter Committee**

**Chair:** Cathy Becker, [cz.becker@verizon.net](mailto:cz.becker@verizon.net)  
Loren Brandman, Patricia Brennan