



News & Views

Volume 29—Number 5

May 2025

Wednesday, May 7 -- 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.

Guns in America

Our Forum speaker will be Dr. John Lechelt, Professor of Political Science, Northern Virginia Community College. He will talk about guns in America, a complex national dilemma.

Dr. Lechelt, a graduate of George Mason University, has been a professor at NOVA Community College for over 18 years. He currently teaches "American National Politics" and "State and Local Politics" and is chair of the College Senate, an advisory panel on campus concerns. His students say he is awesome and "one of the best." Please join us for what will be a thought-provoking Forum.

After-Forum Lunch — Join fellow LLI members for lunch and conversation at [Kilroy's](#) in Ravensworth Shopping Center, 5250A Port Royal Rd., Springfield. Patricia Brennan will host.

NEW! Links for Zoom Classes – Now Available Two Ways

If you are registered for a Zoom class, the Zoom link will be provided by Janice in the class reminder email — a return to what we've always done.

However, there will be a second way to get the Zoom link if you can't find the reminder message or you forgot to register for the class in time and want to attend. Go to the home page of the LLI website (llinova.org). On the right side, under News Alert, click on "Recorded Classes & Links to Zoom Classes." This takes you to "Online Class Materials." Then, click on "ZOOM LINKS to Spring 2025 Classes (Members Only)." You will be prompted to login, if you are not already logged in, and will then see the Zoom links for various classes, which will be available about two weeks prior to class.



Please check out the Election Supplement on the last three pages of this newsletter. Elections will be held for our Board members (for our July 2024 to June 2025 fiscal year) at our Annual Meeting at our Wednesday, June 4 Forum.

President's Corner



I want to call your attention to the **special election supplement** at the back of this newsletter. The membership will elect a new slate of officers for the LLI at our June 4 Forum. Candidates' bios are located in this supplement. If you have questions,

contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Derick Malis, derickmalis@gmail.com.

I am now completing my monthly "President's Corner" series by covering the last two Special Interest Groups (SIGs) below:

Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)

Chairman Anna Dixon encourages members to **help shape in-person arts experiences for 2025–26!** Her committee is looking for your ideas and preferences for VPA activities that make you want to show up! The DMV area offers an unparalleled range of cultural and educational treasures—why not enjoy them together? Imagine once-a-month painting sessions with the Fairfax Arts League or LLI/NOVA classes, followed by in-person group visits to major exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art.

The VPA SIG makes the most of our proximity to museums, universities, galleries, and studios, offering a mix of film screenings, speakers, member-led sessions, and field trips. All LLI/NOVA members are welcome to join any activity that sparks their interest. Events are planned and coordinated by our members. Share your ideas—and if you'd like to participate in or join the VPA SIG, contact Anna (see member directory).

Foodies and Friends

Anyone who enjoys a good meal, getting together with friends, and exploring some wonderful dining opportunities is welcome in the

Foodies & Friends SIG. As one of the oldest of LLI's SIGs, this group has been going strong since 2004 when it was established to increase opportunities for members to get better acquainted with each other in a more casual manner than afforded in meetings or classes.

Foodies get together about once a month. Members take turns being host and deciding and planning events that in some way involve food. The meetings are usually a weekday lunch at a restaurant, often to sample some of the area's delicious ethnic cuisines. However, a host has flexibility to choose a weekend date, or a different meal of the day, if that means achieving unusual menu offerings or sites, such as dim sum, weekend cooking class, a food festival, a food-related tour, demo cooking class, pot luck picnics in parks, lunch in a member's home, afternoon tea, or holiday celebrations.

Please consider joining us and feel free to invite a friend. If you would like to be added to the Foodies & Friends email list, please contact Patti Volz, pvolz63@gmail.com.

Help Us Attract New LLI Members

Finally, as a general reminder, our membership is currently below our optimum number. As I'm sure you can all agree, LLI offers a terrific deal, considering that the annual membership fee of \$125 covers Forums, over 120 classes, excursion opportunities, and SIGs. Your help is critical to attracting new members. If you belong to another senior group and believe we should speak to it to recruit members, please let a Board member know! We have been speaking to many groups and are always ready to brag about our organization. If you have neighborhood cookouts this spring, tell your neighbors about us! LLI/NOVA needs you to get involved!

Remember: **Our strength is our members!**

Patti Volz
LLI/NOVA President

Community Outreach

Many thanks for all the wonderful food items you brought for the John Lewis High School leadership students in April -- the biggest collection they have received! The next day, I attended their student fair at the school, and they mentioned our support of their students' efforts in their quest to learn good leadership and communication skills.



In May, we will focus again on students, this time at NOVA. We continue to support the NOVA Nighthawks food pantry, which benefits students and others at the college in need of some help as they work and study, often having families to care for at home.

We are glad to receive donations similar to the April collection, including granola bars and other snacks, boxed drinks, microwavable food or ready-to-eat meals, vegan and vegetarian items. Students also need baby diapers (all sizes) and wipes, as well as sanitary napkins. These can be costly.

Thank you for remembering to bring something to share. LLI members are always generous!

– Betsy Pugin and Susan Jagen

LLI Tech Team

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



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

- Luis Granados, Android devices: granadoskerry@yahoo.com, 202-460-1270
- 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

Chef Cal is Retiring

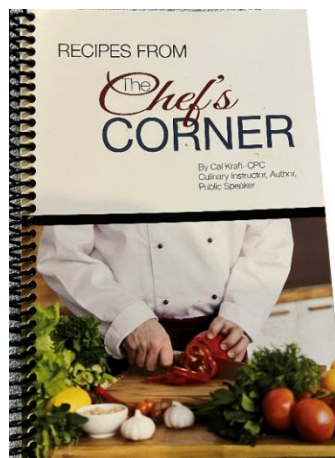


Calvin Kraft, affectionally known throughout LLI as Chef Cal, will be hanging up his toque and retiring from teaching at the end of May. His final class on May 22 is appropriately called *Some of My Favorite Recipes*. Chef Cal gained class attendees—and fans—quickly not only for his knowledge of food and its proper preparation and presentation, but because of his humor and skill as a storyteller. Cal has taught for LLI for over 10 years—80 classes. His first class, *Cooking with Chef Cal*, was in October 2014. During the Covid pandemic, he figured out how to teach on Zoom from his small home kitchen. Attendance continued to be high because people had more time to cook at home.

Even if the class subject did not directly apply to him, such as vegetarian meals, he always asked class members for their suggestions and proceeded to teach everything they suggested. He taught a class on low-fat recipes, despite telling us that you spell flavor “F-A-T.”

He shared not only recipes but hints, tips, and techniques, and led a field trip to the restaurant supply store. We repeated some of his most requested classes, such as “Knife Skills” and “Crockpot Cooking,” so everyone had a chance to attend.

LLI will greatly miss Chef Cal's classes. If you want to personally thank him with an email, his address is chefcal007@yahoo.com.



During the pandemic, Cal had time to complete and publish his cookbook. To purchase a copy of Cal's book, contact him via [email](mailto:chefcal007@yahoo.com).

Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Thursday, May 8, and Wednesday, May 21, 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

Cinema – Wednesday, May 28, approximately 12:00 p.m. at Cinema Arts Theatre in Fair City Mall, Fairfax. Let POC Patricia Brennan (patriciaabbrennan@cox.net) know to add you to email list.

Favorite Books – Thursday, May 15, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL

Our choice for May is "The Last Kings of Shanghai" by Jonathan Kaufman (nonfiction).

Come join us! POC Lynne Smaldone, lynne.smaldone@gmail.com

Foodies & Friends – Thursday, May 15, 12:30 p.m. See article below for details.

Mystery Books – Monday, May 5, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL

"The Hellfire Club" by Jake Tapper. On June 2, we will be examining the book "The House of Silk" by Anthony Horowitz. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Photography – Friday, May 16, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at KPL. New members are always welcome. Cell phone cameras are fine. POC Buck Myers, hbm@hbmphoto.com

Tabletop Games – Tuesday, May 27, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL.

We will be playing "Double Ditto." POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mlbednarsky@gmail.com

Visual and Performing Arts –

This is the last discounted performance for the spring season. Click [here](#) for details on purchasing \$15 tickets to [Virginia Opera: "Loving v. Virginia"](#) – Sunday, May 4, 2:00 p.m.

Foodies & Friends

Thursday, May 15 – 12:30 p.m.

[Seray](#), 160 Maple Ave. West, Vienna



Please join Foodies & Friends as we explore a new restaurant in the heart of Vienna. The restaurant

has received several excellent reviews and describes itself as a place "where the spirit of Lebanon comes alive through our flavors and hospitality." The owners invite you to experience the warmth of family-style dining as you savor classic dishes like creamy hummus,

crispy falafel, and other recipes passed down through generations. They are committed to sourcing only the freshest ingredients to craft each dish with care and tradition, bringing the vibrant essence of Lebanese cuisine to you. They have an extensive appetizer list from which you can craft your own lunch. Check out their menu [here](#).

The restaurant is accessible, and separate checks will be provided. Patti Volz is our host this month. RSVP to her at pvolz63@gmail.com no later than May 13. Hope to see you there!

Study/Travel Program Committee chair still needed! Please consider volunteering!



Michelle Adler
Matthew Burns
Dorothy Jordan

Marion Plummer
Carolyn Offutt
Yama Yousof

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:

- 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

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 one-to two-hour walk at the [Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area](#) (TWMA). We will look for trillium, spring beauties, trout lilies, showy orchids and other spring flowers.

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. Registration and information about carpooling and meetup location are [here](#).

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% gratuity. There is space for 20 guests. Register and give your check or cash to Bonnie Hopper **not later than May 12**. There is free parking on the street and close by, but carpooling is also 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 where you may want to spend time in the morning or afternoon.

Fairfax County Emergency Operations Center and 9-1-1 Call Center Tour – Free

Friday, June 6, 10:00 –11:30 a.m., Fairfax

The Department of Public Safety Communications ([DPSC](#)), also known as Fairfax County 9-1-1, is a nationally recognized public safety communications center, the largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia and one of the ten largest in the United States. DPSC receives approximately one million calls requesting public safety services per year. It dispatches units of the Fairfax County Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, and Sheriff's Office. In addition to serving Fairfax County, DPSC is the designated 9-1-1 public safety answering point for the towns of Herndon and Vienna and the City of Fairfax. Join us for a tour and to learn more about this vital department.

Meet at DPSC, 4890 Alliance Dr., Suite 2200, Fairfax. Trip leader is Ellen Wallace. Register on the LLI website [here](#). The facility has plenty of parking and is handicap accessible. No stairs will be involved, and seats are available in each room of the tour.

Rippon Lodge Historic Site Tour – \$3

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

[Rippon Lodge](#) was built circa 1747 by Richard Blackburn, an immigrant from Rippon (now Ripon), England. His son, Lt. Col. Thomas Blackburn, enlarged the house in 1800. Judge Wade Ellis expanded Rippon Lodge to its current size during the early 1920s. Tour the restored house, visit the 18th-century cemetery, and admire the view of historic Neabsco Creek.

Rippon Lodge has ADA-compliant walkways from the parking lot to the house and bathroom. Ramps also lead into the house and the first floor.

This event is open to LLI members and guests. Register on the LLI website [here](#). Meet at Rippon Lodge, 15520 Blackburn Rd., Woodbridge. Directions are on the website [here](#). Trip coordinator is Regina Rogers.

Anderson House Tour – Free

Thursday, July 10, 1:00 p.m., Dupont Circle

The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, Inc., is a center for education that is dedicated to promoting understanding and appreciation of the American Revolution and its legacy. We will tour the Anderson House, a National Historic Landmark, and headquarters of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Anderson House's first owners, Larz and Isabel Anderson, were a wealthy couple who devoted their lives to public service, travel, entertaining, collecting, and philanthropy—interests and activities that are reflected in Anderson House, where much of the couple's art collection and furnishings are still on display.

Meet at Anderson House, 2118 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Directions, parking, and Metro information is on the Society's website [here](#). Anderson House is wheelchair accessible.

Register [here](#) by June 23. Trip Leader is Regina Rogers.

LLI Potluck Picnic

**Wednesday, June 25, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.,
[Roundtree Park, Annandale](#)**



Members and their guests are all invited to attend LLI's picnic. A \$10 per person fee will cover hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, condiments, paper goods, and ice. LLI funds will cover the park rental. Plenty of parking. Covered pavilion with picnic tables. Restrooms.

Members/guests should bring their own beverage, and a side dish to share (with a utensil to serve the dish). Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on County Park grounds.

Register on the LLI website [here](#). Indicate type of side dish you'll bring (e.g., salad, casserole, dessert) and which volunteer position you'd like to fill. The \$10 fee will be collected at the picnic. Volunteers are needed for:

- Greeter/fee collector
- Cooking at two grills;
- Arranging the side dishes in groups (salads, casserole, desserts);
- Set up;
- Clean up;
- Lending their grilling utensils.



LLI/NOVA Board of Directors

President: Patti Volz

Vice Pres: Patricia Brennan

Secretary: Bill Tuceling

Treasurer: Richard Sigman

Past President: Derick Malis

Administrator: Janice Viola—

Contact at admin@llinova.org

Members:

Richard Ackerman,

Mary Alexander,

Cathy Becker, Andy Butler,

Debbie Cohen, Steven Cohen

Fritz Ernst, Carol Fagnani,

Richard Martin, Ed McKnight

LLI Newsletter Committee

Chair: Cathy Becker, cz.becker@verizon.net

Loren Brandman, Patricia Brennan

Please attend our 2025 Annual Business Meeting Wednesday, June 4 at 9:45 a.m., followed by Forum speaker at 10:15 a.m. – at usual Forum location, LRUCC, 8410 Little River Tpke, Annandale

Agenda:

1. Elect officers and members of the Board of Directors
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.



2025 ELECTION SUPPLEMENT



Plan to attend the **Wednesday, June 4 Forum (9:45 a.m.)** to vote for our LLI/NOVA Board of Directors! The LLI/NOVA 2025 Nominating Committee is pleased to announce an outstanding slate of officers and board members for our July 2025 to June 2026 year. The Nominating Committee was comprised of Derick Malis (Chair), Rich Ackerman, Mary Lu Bednarsky, Debbie Omori, and Patti Volz.

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 appointed to complete the unexpired term.

The slate of candidates for the Board is as follows:

Board candidates for three-year terms ending June 30, 2028

Rich Ackerman
Cathy Becker
Debbie Cohen
Bill Tuceling
Richard Sigman

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	Bill Tuceling (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. She also served two fascinating years as a public affairs officer in a classified agency. She is a recipient of the CIA's Career Intelligence Medal, awarded for service reflecting exceptional achievements that

substantially contributed to the mission of the Agency. Patti has served on the Board since 2016, including as vice president and in this past year, as president. She is chair of the Foodies & Friends SIG, and is a member of the Curriculum Committee, Forum Committee, and Scholarship Committee. She earned her BA at the University of Virginia and her MA in international relations at Georgetown University. 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 about 20 years, serving first as Hospitality co-chairman with Mary Purdy, then as copy editor of the LLI newsletter with the late Mary Jablonski for several years and

now, since 2021, with current editors Cathy Becker and Loren Brandman. She has served on the LLI/NOVA Board and as vice president for the last two years. She established LLI/NOVA's Tech Team and the new Cinema SIG, and headed the committee that formulated and analyzed the recent member survey. She has represented LLI/NOVA at various events, as well as giving talks to recruit new members.

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 / Board



Richard Sigman grew up in Billings, MT, and has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Colorado State University. He arrived in the Washington, DC, 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, retiring from full-time work in 2017. In retirement, he worked part-time at George Mason University teaching statistics from 2019 through 2024, and he participates in citizen-science data collection projects organized by Earthwatch and Adventure Scientists. Richard joined LLI in 2022 and is currently the 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).

Bill Tuceling – Secretary



Bill joined LLI in June 2024 and volunteered to be Board secretary as of January 2025. He was born in Poughkeepsie, NY, attended Gettysburg College (BA) and the University of Kentucky (MS),

and has lived in the Annandale area since 1980. While working as a GAO research librarian specializing in military affairs from 1988 to 2011, Bill also served on the boards of the DC Library Association (secretary, treasurer and Scholarship Chair) and the DC chapter of the Special Library Association (secretary and Membership Chair). After retiring, he has volunteered at Food for Others, Green Spring Gardens, Historic Blenheim, and Meals on Wheels. In his spare time, Bill gardens, reads, travels, bikes, swims, and walks.

Rich Ackerman - Board



After many years of taking classes at Northern Virginia Community College following retirement, Rich joined LLI in 2017. He graduated from the City College of New York with a degree in Electrical

Engineering. He moved to Virginia in 1968 and completed graduate work in Engineering Administration at George Washington University. He went to work for the Navy Department in aviation electronics for seven years and then pursued a long-held passion for the environment, working for 30 years at the Environmental Protection Agency enforcing motor vehicle and fuel emissions rules and requirements covering internal combustion engines and motor vehicle fuels.

Besides attending numerous NVCC and LLI classes since retirement, Rich has worked as a volunteer coaching kids' basketball; tutored students at the Alexandria Seaport Foundation and local elementary schools; volunteered at Fairfax County rec centers; served as an information aide at Reagan National Airport for over 10 years; and has performed other miscellaneous volunteer food assistance and delivery services. His hobbies include: basketball (until recently with former LLI President Derick Malis), fishing—both locally and in Alaska, SCUBA diving, boating, and doing all kinds of fixit projects for friends and family. Elected to the LLI Board in 2022, he is happy to continue serving.

Cathy Becker - Board



After serving 21 years of active duty as a U.S. Navy officer, Cathy Becker attended George Mason University earning an MS in Environmental Science and Policy. Rejoining the workforce, she spent 20 years

as an environmental database manager and analyst. She also holds a BS Mathematics degree from University of California, Davis, and an MBA (Information Technology) from George Washington University.

In addition to enjoying LLI classes since joining in 2014, she became the LLI Newsletter Committee Chairman in 2021, and has been a member of LLI's Board since 2022. She also is

active at the Lincolnia Senior Center, NoVA Lights Chorale (treasurer of the Board and alto!); Friends of Fairfax County Senior Centers (secretary); Pinecrest Community activities; and frequent traveler on the back of husband Dick's Goldwing motorcycle.

Debbie Cohen - Board



Debbie Cohen has 40 years of broad experience in finance, management, marketing, and communications at for-profit and non-profit organizations. She retired as Chief

Development Officer of a mutual fund for pension funds in 2019. Other management roles have included vice president positions at Fannie Mae and Chief Operating Officer at the non-profit Forest Stewardship Council - US.

Wanting to give back to the community, Debbie has volunteered at various non-profits. These include Board of Director positions at: Shelter House, Inc., which manages homeless family and domestic violence shelters; the Campagna Center, which provides educational programs for children and adults; and she continues to serve as Board secretary and treasurer at Nature For Justice, which uses nature to address the social justice needs of vulnerable populations confronting the climate crisis around the world.

She has also enjoyed her role as a public-facing volunteer in the fossil hall at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Debbie holds an MBA from the University at Buffalo and a BS in Biological Sciences from Cornell University. Debbie and her husband Steve joined LLI/NOVA in 2019. They live in Annandale with their wonderful cat Knuble.

