



News & Views

Volume 29—Number 11

November 2025

Wednesday, November 5 -- 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.

Tell Steve Cohen if you have a joke to share for "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum"

George Washington and Slavery



No matter how significant their contributions were, founding fathers who owned enslaved people have received considerable criticism in recent years. Enslaved workers were very important to the economic well-being, social position, and opportunities for all of their owners. While George Washington was the only Founder to present a plan to free his enslaved workers after he and his wife died, he too lived off slavery throughout his life.

Peter R. Henriques, who received his PhD in history from the University of Virginia and is professor Emeritus of History at George Mason University, will provide his assessment of George Washington and slavery. He will attempt to give a balanced picture of the dilemma that Washington and the nation faced, and he will examine

what Washington's actions reveal about the man and the country he helped found.

Dr. Henriques is one of the country's foremost scholars on George Washington and the author of *First and Always: A New Portrait of George Washington*; *Realistic Visionary: A Portrait of George Washington*; and *The Death of George Washington: He Died as He Lived*. His latest book, *George Washington: His Quest for Honor and Fame*, was released September 23, 2025. He has served as a lecturer on the History Channel, a consultant on the A&E network's biography episode on George Washington, and a featured speaker at many lectures and seminars. A member of both the Editorial Board for the George Washington Papers and of the Mount Vernon committee of George Washington Scholars, he regularly conducts Leadership Institutes at Mount Vernon for various government and private groups and is involved in teacher seminars conducted by Mount Vernon and other educational institutions. His honors include presenting the *Distinguished Lecture Series* at Colonial Williamsburg, receiving a *George Washington Fellowship* from the National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, and receiving the *George Washington Memorial Award* from the George Washington Masonic Memorial Association. We are truly fortunate that he is available to speak to us. He hopes to have copies of his latest book available for purchase.

After-Forum Lunch — Join fellow LLI members for lunch and conversation at [Ariake Japanese Restaurant](#), 8708 Little River Tpke., Fairfax (Prosperity intersection). Patricia Brennan will host.

In our newsletters, you will see underlined names of people who are points of contact (POCs). Click on a name to sign into our website and find the POC's email in our member directory.

President's Corner



Our first picnic in about a decade was a rousing success. Carol Fagnani and Mary Alexander were instrumental in putting this together and deserve so much credit. The weather was very kind, with temps in the

70s and a lovely breeze. Forty-six people showed up and most stayed for the entire event. Folks loved getting together with people they hadn't seen in a while, making new contacts, and generally enjoying themselves. See the article on page 5 for more on the picnic including some great photos. I was impressed with the creativity and imagination of our members, who brought a wide variety of sides and desserts with very few duplicate items. And from the empty plates I saw, they were all delicious! We would welcome comments on the picnic, but at this point, I am in favor of doing it again next year.

This segues into our next opportunity to get together socially – our Winter Luncheon on Friday, December 5. **Put it on your calendar now so you don't forget!** Members, friends, and family are welcome to register. Another benefit – it is indoors – away from the weather! Our annual sit-down luncheon is held at the beautiful Fairfax Country Club. See the article to the right for details and the registration link. The luncheon is always terrific. It's wonderful to see great turnouts for our events.

Thanks to everyone who came, contributed, and enjoyed the picnic! And, I hope to see you at the Winter Luncheon. As always, I'll close with a reminder to everyone that our Forums, events, and classes don't and can't happen in a vacuum. We are a volunteer organization and we all need to contribute. **Our strength is our members!**

Patti Volz (president@llinova.org)
President, LLI/NOVA



Winter Luncheon Friday, December 5 Country Club of Fairfax



11:00 a.m. Reception/cash bar

12:00 noon: Lunch

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



We'll continue our tradition of collecting new, unwrapped toys for children.

Register and pay online [here](#) for yourself and your guests before the **November 17** deadline!

Questions? Contact [JoAnn Ackerman](#).

Want to Get More Involved? Join the Curriculum Committee!

We're looking for a few volunteers to help out on the Curriculum Committee – specifically, an executive committee member and a few class coordinators.

Class coordinators have a light but essential role. They send reminder emails to instructors about when and where their class is happening and arrive early for the class to log into the computer and introduce the instructor.

The executive committee helps to identify instructors, makes sure class coordinators know what to do, and assigns coordinators to classes at the beginning of a semester.

LLI is an all-volunteer run organization and we rely on people like you to keep things going strong. If you'd like to help make our classes a success (***without a huge time commitment***), we'd love to have you on board!

Please contact [Ellen Wallace](#) if you're interested or have any questions.

Community Outreach

Thank you for the food you brought to the October Forum for the leadership students at John Lewis High School. Dr. Deborah March, the program leader, and the students very much appreciate our support of their continuing quest to learn good leadership and communication skills.

This month we will focus again on students, this time at NOVA. We continue to support the NOVA Nighthawks food pantry to benefit students and staff at the college in need of help as they work and study, often having families to care for at home. Undoubtedly, many of their households are feeling the additional strain of no paychecks until government or contractor jobs are funded.

Please bring non-perishable food items which can be consumed on campus, such as granola bars and other snacks, boxed drinks, microwavable food or ready-to-eat meals, vegan and vegetarian items. Baby diapers (all sizes) and wipes as well as sanitary napkins are also needed.

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

Also, a big thank you to Debbie Omori for agreeing to work with Betsy Pugin on the food pantry collections. Debbie has been a member of LLI for several years and is busy assisting with various other outreach efforts. Thank you, Debbie, for helping and sharing your time with LLI. Community Outreach supports so many of our neighbors.

November will be our last in-person food pantry collection of the calendar year. Stay tuned to this outreach column for monthly reminders to help our local pantries by direct financial donations when we're not meeting in person. Every bit helps.

– *Betsy Pugin and Debbie Omori*

Scholarship Fundraising



Thanks to the generosity of our members, we met all of the anonymous challenge grant milestones and passed the \$20,000 goal set for this year by \$4,800! After expenses (credit card fees, postage, etc.), we will have \$24,000 to distribute to five scholarships. The Scholarship Committee will meet to determine the exact amounts, with LLI Board approval to follow. A check for the scholarships will be presented to a member of the NOVA Foundation staff at the November Forum.

[Steve Cohen](#), Scholarship Committee Chair

National Writing Day at NOVA Annandale

Several LLI members attended NOVA Annandale's National Writing Day event featuring bestselling author David Baldacci. The NOVA Provost, Dr. Diane Mucci, introduced him and acknowledged attendance by LLI, students, and staff. Mr. Baldacci spoke about the importance of literacy to an informed, engaged society. He also talked about his writing process and his experience going from attorney to published author.



Welcome, New Members

- Mary Davis
- William Johnson
- Barbara Whitehead



Events in Our Community

UPCOMING EVENTS

Curious about non-LLI educational and informational events happening in our community? Starting soon (on a six-month trial basis), the LLI administrator will send emails listing events we have been made aware of.

Events may include lectures, tours, presentations, performances, activities, and festivals, and may be, for example, sponsored by libraries, museums, historical societies, non-profit or for-profit organizations, universities, or colleges. Events may be free or may have costs associated with them. Sources of information may include LLI members, local publications such as The Gazette and Beacon, websites of historical societies and county libraries, commercial entities, and social media.

No political, religious, or controversial topics will be included, unless it's part of a presentation for educational or informational purposes only.

If you learn of events that you think may be of interest to other LLI members, please send them to the point of contact, Carol Fagnani, at culturalexursions@lilnova.org.

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](mailto:Arlene.Gribben).

Foodies & Friends



Friday, November 14 – 12:30 p.m., [Aracosia](#)
1381 Beverly Rd., McLean

Aracosia McLean is part of the Bistro Aracosia family of restaurants that was voted one of Washingtonian Magazine's 100 Very Best Restaurants in 2025. Afghan food is a melding of many South Asian and Mediterranean influences resulting in delicious combinations of meats, stews, and dumplings. Vegans will be delighted by the rich flavors of the many vegan dishes on the menu. And the restaurant assures guests on a gluten-free diet that almost everything on their menu is gluten-free. Many experts say warming spices boost immunity, so Aracosia's exotic spices may even help your body fight illness.

Your dining experience at Aracosia will also help those in need, since Aracosia contributes a percentage of proceeds to vulnerable people in the community.

The restaurant is located on the first floor of a two-level building with parking access from Beverly Road (elevator goes up to first floor). There is also a small parking lot off Elm Street with no stairs or elevator. RSVP by November 11 and join your host [Patti Volz](#) at 12:30 p.m. on November 14 to enjoy one of her favorite cuisines. Separate checks will be provided.



LLI Potluck Picnic – A Great Success

LLI members and guests enjoyed perfect weather, camaraderie, and food at the LLI picnic a few weeks ago. Thanks to organizers Carol Fagnani and Mary Alexander, and to the 46 members and guests who attended. We enjoyed visiting with old friends and meeting new ones.



Special thanks to Deb Hunsberger for providing an extra table for food; Frank Krempa for making all the hamburgers; Steve Malone and Frank for grilling; Arlene Gribben and Mary Lu Bednarsky for collecting money; and for the many who came early to set up and stayed late to clean up. Of course, the salads, dishes and desserts provided by members were incredible. It certainly was a team effort!



Photos courtesy of Mary Alexander



Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Thursday, November 6, and Wednesday, November 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 Martin Stutsman, bridge@llinova.org

Cinema – Wednesday, November 26, approximately 12:00 p.m. at Cinema Arts Theatre in Fair City Mall, Fairfax. Let Patricia Brennan (cinema@llinova.org) know to add you to the email list.

Favorite Books – Thursday, November 20, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL

Our choice for November is “Concrete Rose” by Angie Thomas (Young Adult fiction).

POC Lynne Smaldone, favoritebooks@llinova.org

Foodies & Friends – Friday, November 14, 12:30 p.m. See article on page 4 for details.

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

We will discuss “Gray Mountain” by John Grisham. For December, we will discuss “The Spy Coast” by Tess Gerritsen. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mysterybooks@llinova.org

Photography – Friday, November 21, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at KPL. New members are always welcome. Cell phone cameras are fine. POC Buck Myers, photo@llinova.org

Tabletop Games – Tuesday, November 25, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL.

We will play Qwirkle. Contact POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, tabletopgames@llinova.org, to confirm this date and time due to its proximity to Thanksgiving.

Visual and Performing Arts – Discounted Tickets

LLI members can purchase seats **for \$15** (plus \$4 fee), a mere fraction of the regular price, with access to orchestra, balcony, or box seats. Also, pre-show **chats begin an hour before curtain**, offering a glimpse into compositional craft. *For more information contact [Anna Dixon](#).*

Limón Dance Company (Saturday, November 1, 8:00 p.m.)

Founded on the modern dance principles of José Limón, this troupe’s performances are rooted in a poetic physicality that bridges narrative and abstraction, memory and sensation. For more detail, click [here](#).

360 ALLSTARS (Saturday, November 8, 4:00 p.m.)

This crew brings the urban and hip-hop vernacular into the theater, turning the stage into a breakdance battlefield laden with flair, acrobatic feats, and collective fire. Click [here](#) for more detail.

Winter/Spring 2026—Mark your calendars for these; click on (hyperlinked) titles below for detail.

- [Mark Morris Dance Group & Music Ensemble](#) – Saturday, February 7, 8:00 p.m.
- [Virginia Opera: Intelligence](#) – Sunday, February 15, 2:00 p.m.
- [Les Ballets Africains](#) – Friday, February 20, 8:00 p.m.
- [Mnozil Brass](#) – Sunday, March 1, 4:00 p.m.
- [Circa: Humans 2.0](#) – Sunday, April 12, 7:00 p.m.

Cultural Excursions

Tour The Falls Church – Free

Friday, November 7, 10:30 a.m. to noon
166 East Broad Street, Falls Church



Join us on a tour of The Falls Church, an historic church that was established in 1732.

This event is open to members and guests. Find details about this excursion and register [here](#). The church is wheelchair accessible. Trip Leader: [Regina Rogers](#).

Tour of Historic Blenheim – Free

Thursday, November 13, 10:00 a.m.,
Fairfax City.



Join us for a guided tour of Historic Blenheim. The tour will be 1.5 hours and will involve walking uphill to the historic house from the Civil War Interpretive Center.

Click [here](#) for detailed information and registration. Trip leader: [Bill Tuceling](#).

*The Newsletter Committee
wishes you a*



And a lovely Thanksgiving!



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