



News & Views

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Wednesday, January 7 **LLI/NOVA FORUM on ZOOM** (Link to be emailed)

Social Zoom: 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"

What the **ACLU-Virginia** is Doing to Protect Democracy

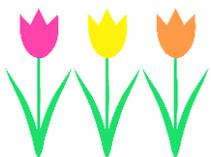


We are most fortunate to have as our first Zoom Forum speaker of the year Mary Bauer, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Virginia. Among other things, our distinguished speaker will discuss some of the lawsuits and prospective lawsuits before the courts.

Before assuming her current position, Mary Bauer had served as legal director for the Southern Poverty Law Center and the ACLU of Virginia, and as general counsel for Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. She has had a long and varied relationship with the Legal Aid Justice Center, including as legal director of its Immigrant Advocacy Program, director of advocacy, and, for five years, as its executive director.

Mary's legal career began as a [Skadden Fellow](#) representing migrant farmworkers in Virginia. She has been a civil rights lawyer for over 30 years and has litigated a wide range of cases across the country. An expert on immigrants' rights, she has testified before many Congressional committees on multiple occasions and is author of several groundbreaking reports. Mary did her undergraduate work at College of William & Mary and received her law degree from University of Virginia School of Law.

This important topic will be a fascinating and timely way to kick off LLI's 2026 Forum season.



Registration for Spring Classes is Open

The Winter/Spring 2026 class catalog is out, and registration is open! There are 41 classes in the catalog, with topics including history, current events, religion, health, writing, nature, and others. There's something for everyone. Please be sure to take a look at the catalog and sign up early!

Welcome, New Members

- Alfreda Layne
- Fara Maslaki
- Lucinda Stewart



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. Zoom Forums are held regardless of weather.
- 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.

President's Corner



I want to kick off this month's musings by thanking JoAnn Ackerman for her selfless work to ensure our winter luncheon would go off without a hitch. As this event's coordinator for the last three years, JoAnn continues to

do a terrific job. At this year's luncheon on December 5, I presented the 2025 President's Meritorious Service Awards to Betsy Pugin and to Bonnie and Paul Hopler.

For many years Betsy has been coordinating Forum food and sundry collection efforts, to which our members give generously. She has sought out groups that may not get the recognition they deserve. This year we gave to the John R. Lewis High School Leadership Program, which takes students on field trips that instruct on human rights and historical events.

The Hoplers, as most of you know, have been stalwarts at LLI for decades and have worked tirelessly on the Board, Curriculum Committee, and Event Committee. In particular, Bonnie "found" Chef Cal, and launched our teas, and Paul was instrumental in helping me put together a semester of classes after we lost Dick Robison. Thank you, and congratulations!

I'd like to mention a few ongoing efforts:

- We have received numerous kudos for our **"What's Happening"** email that Patricia Brennan and I prepare and send out weekly.
- We plan to develop a similar email called **"Around Town,"** which will be sent out periodically, and will be dependent on members letting us know of things going on that may be of interest to fellow members. It is an effort to support non-profit, community-based groups. If you know of a tour, choral/other concert, play, lecture, nature walk, etc. please send info to Jan Pry (aroundtown@llinova.org). She will issue the "Around Town" email when we accumulate enough events to make it

worthwhile. Two weeks or more notice would be helpful. Contact Jan for information.

- **LLI Website:** Finally, we have formed a small group to look into updating our website. If you have any ideas about this, please send them to me or Janice at admin@llinova.org. If you would like to join us, contact Janice.

Whew; the New Year is starting with a bang! Happy New Year and remember:

Our strength is our members!

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



Community Outreach

Does January remind you of snow people and fun? If you're homeless or living in a vehicle, the cold is not fun. You need a hot meal, a warm place to put

down bedding, and a chance for clean clothes and welcoming faces. Many also need a chance to connect with basic services without having to travel in the cold.

Since 2005, the Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program has ensured that from December through March no homeless person has to spend the night outside. This partnership among Fairfax County, nonprofits, and the faith communities continues as you read this.

One of the nonprofits that helps provide a social safety net for vulnerable neighbors is FACETS, working with congregations during the coldest nights of the season to provide meals and a place to sleep overnight. This is in addition to all the other work FACETS does with food distribution, housing, medical outreach, financial literacy, and more. You, too, can help neighbors in need by donating online (FacetsCares.org) or sending a check to FACETS, 10700 Page Ave., Suite 160, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Your thanks will come from sharing, even if you don't see the faces of the recipients, who will see that someone cares.

Celebrating at Annual Winter Luncheon

Additional luncheon photos will soon be posted [here](#)



Friday, December 5 — at The Country Club of Fairfax

Superb food, courteous and attentive service, fine LLI friends, and a beautiful setting – what more could we ask for — except perhaps for less icy weather on the morning drive out there? But it turned into a beautiful day and a wonderful luncheon!

Much credit goes to our dedicated luncheon chair, JoAnn Ackerman, who arranged every detail to perfection. She wishes to thank her helpers: Janice Viola for guidance, nametags, and greeting guests; Cathy Becker for table decorations and greeting; Loren Brandman for helping on the luncheon floor; Fritz Ernst for serving as our photographer; Mary Alexander for playing piano in the lobby as guests arrived; and Dick White, artisan friend of JoAnn's, for donating ceramic pieces given to a lucky diner at each table. Also, thanks go to attendees for donating many new toys for children at Artemis House. Lastly, President Patti Volz announced the selection of Betsy Pugin and Bonnie and Paul Hopley for the 2025 President's Meritorious Service Awards, to enthusiastic applause.

Foodies & Friends

Thursday, January 15 – 10:30 a.m.,
[The Original Pancake House](#)
7395 Lee Hwy., Falls Church

It's that time of year again! Time for breakfast, brunch, or an early lunch – your choice! Since weather is unpredictable in January, we are once again planning a casual meetup at The Original Pancake House, which is flexible about reservations. Original Pancake House's signature dishes include the Apple Pancake and the Dutch Baby. The Apple Pancake is a single large pancake smothered with sautéed apples and cinnamon sugar and baked to perfection, creating a deliciously rich glaze.



The Dutch Baby is an air-filled delight, oven-baked to golden perfection and served with lemon, whipped butter, and powdered sugar to create a mouthwatering dish.



The Original Pancake House has an extensive breakfast, brunch, and lunch menu. Although walk-ins are welcome, [Patti Volz](#) would still appreciate an RSVP by January 13 if possible. We hope to see you there to share a cup of coffee or tea and a bit of lively conversation! The restaurant has recently instituted a cashless payment policy. They accept all major credit cards, debit cards, and contactless payment. There is plenty of parking, and the restaurant is totally accessible. Come join us!

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Wednesday, January 14, and Thursday, January 29, 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@lilnova.org

Cinema – Wednesday, January 28, approximately 12:00 p.m. at Cinema Arts Theatre in Fair City Mall, Fairfax. Let Patricia Brennan (cinema@lilnova.org) know to add you to the email list.

Favorite Books – Thursday, January 15, 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. (note time change for this month only) at KPL. Our choice for January is “Remarkably Bright Creatures” by Shelby Van Pelt (fiction). POC Lynne Smaldone, favoritebooks@lilnova.org

Foodies & Friends – Thursday, January 15, 10:30 a.m. See article on page 3 for details.

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

We will discuss “The Family Remains” by Lisa Jewell. February’s book has not yet been selected. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mysterybooks@lilnova.org

Photography – Friday, January 16, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at KPL. New members are always welcome. Cell phone cameras are fine. POC Buck Myers, photo@lilnova.org

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

We will play Qwirkle. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, tabletopgames@lilnova.org.

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. Pre-show **chats begin an hour before curtain**, offering a glimpse into compositional craft. *For more information contact [Anna Dixon](#).* Click on the hyperlinked titles below for more detail.

[Mark Morris Dance Group & Music Ensemble](#) – Saturday, February 7, 8:00 p.m.

Mark Morris unites live musical performance with choreography. This program is a vibrant celebration of the rich tapestry of American music and dance. It celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of the nation’s artistic heritage.



[Virginia Opera: Intelligence](#) – Sunday, February 15, 2:00 p.m.

Virginia Opera presents the state premiere of *Intelligence*, an operatic drama that tells a gripping true story of espionage, sacrifice, and the fight for freedom during the Civil War. Packed with riveting drama, powerful music, and dynamic dance, *Intelligence* will keep you on the edge of your seat. Sung in English with English surtitles.

[Les Ballets Africains](#) – Friday, February 20, 8:00 p.m.

Les Ballets Africains is a powerhouse of Guinean dance and music, marrying ancestral rhythms with vibrant choreography in an electrifying celebration of heritage. Expect communal energy, percussive brilliance, and costumes that speak of lineage and movement. Les Ballets Africains has become known for “dazzling, high-speed footwork” (LA Times) as well as “sheer physical energy and beauty” (New York Times).

Mnozil Brass – Sunday, March 1, 4:00 p.m.

This brass septet wields humor, technical precision, and musical versatility—think operatic virtuosity, jazz-like improvisation, and self-aware comedy played on brass instruments. They’re not just performers; they’re brass jesters of impeccable taste. A playful, yet astonishing, ride.

Circa: Humans 2.0 – Sunday, April 12, 7:00 p.m.

“Arguably the world’s most daring circus company” (Guardian), Australian company Circa presents “jaw-dropping, seat-clawing” (ArtsHub) next-level circus. In a symphony of acrobatics, sound, and light, Circa’s internationally acclaimed Humans 2.0 is a tightly woven choreography of bodies, pulsing with music and dramatic lighting. Humans 2.0 is intimate, primal, and deeply engaged with the challenge of being human. This is “circus that sets your pulse racing and your soul stirring” (The Scotsman) and “pushes the boundaries of what circus and acrobatics can be.”

Cultural Excursions

The committee is planning some interesting excursions for 2026. We welcome any LLI member to volunteer to lead an excursion. To plan an excursion, it usually takes one phone call to the venue to discuss tours, price, and a date. Carol Fagnani is always available to guide you through the process. If you have places you recommend for an excursion, please contact Carol at culturalexursions@llinova.org with your ideas.

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](#).



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