



News & Views

Volume 30—Number 5

May 2026

Wednesday, May 6 -- 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"

How Communities Are Using Nature to Adapt to Climate Change



Our May Forum speaker is CEO Hank Cauley, who along with two partners founded [Nature for Justice](#) (N4J) in 2020. The goal of this nonprofit is to ensure that communities affected by climate change and biodiversity loss have the resources and support needed to develop high-impact, nature-based solutions. N4J's distinctive commitment to social justice and community-led approaches sets it apart. It focuses on actions that protect, restore, and sustainably manage ecosystems, all while addressing societal challenges and generating tangible benefits for both people and nature. One of its projects, the Growing American Farmer Prosperity Program, supports smallholder farmer adoption of regenerative agricultural practices, which can substantially lower input costs, increase climate resilience, enhance yields, and stabilize farm profitability.

N4J has evolved from a focused vision—to help people respond to climate change through nature markets—into a robust organization with deep technical, financial, and management capabilities. It utilizes a four-pillar approach: mobilizing and blending financial resources, building local capacities, advancing policy and advocacy, and forging inclusive partnerships. Together, these capabilities position N4J to deliver community-led, high-integrity, nature-based solutions.

Hank is a seasoned leader with more than 35 years of experience in this field. He has launched or revitalized seven organizations and major initiatives, consistently working at the intersection of social, environmental, and business priorities, and is known for his ability to foster collaboration and find common ground.

After-Forum Lunch — Join fellow LLI members for lunch and conversation at [Hunan West](#), Kings Park Shopping Center, 8938 Burke Lake Rd., Springfield. Patricia Brennan will host.



Please check out the Election Supplement on the last three pages of this newsletter. This provides notice that elections will be held for our Board members (for our July 2026 to June 2027 fiscal year) at our Annual Meeting at our Wednesday, June 3, Forum.

President's Corner



In lieu of my usual President's Corner message, I am instead encouraging you to prepare to vote at our June 3 Forum and election (about a month away) for our slate of nominees for next year's Board of Directors. Take a look at the biographies of the candidates by turning to the "Election Supplement" contained in the last three pages of this newsletter. This supplement fulfills our bylaws' requirement for candidates to be announced and publicized to the general membership no later than thirty (30) days prior to the election.

We are fortunate to have dedicated members willing to spend their time and effort to serve on the Board, which runs our organization. So please show up for our June 3 Forum to give a hearty "Aye" for this slate. Always remember:
Our strength is our members!

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

Community Outreach

Our May Forum food collection will be for the NOVA Nighthawks food pantry, which benefits NOVA students and others at the college in need of some help as they work and study, often having families to care for at home.

Please bring non-perishable food items that can be consumed on campus, including granola bars and similar snacks, boxed drinks, microwavable food or ready-to-eat meals, and vegan and vegetarian items. Also needed are baby diapers and wipes as well as women's hygiene products.

Thank you for your continuing generosity in filling food pantries, as gathered by the monthly collections at the Forum.

Betsy Pugin and Debbie Omori

Welcome, New Members

- Dara Aldridge
- Ilene May
- Karen Mellon



Spring Classes

The Spring semester is winding down, but there are still a number of classes available.



April 28: **Jane Austen's Novel "Emma"**

April 28: at Renwick Gallery, **State Fairs: Growing American Craft**

May 1: **The Art of Neuroanatomy; The Marriage of Art, Science and the Brain.**

May 6: **How Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were influenced by Turkish Military Music.**

May 7: **How Did I Get to Be Old?**

May 15: **Making Meaningful Connections on the Road.**

May 18: **Hyperlocal Peacebuilding** (about actionable ways to build peace around you with family, friends, colleagues, or strangers)

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,
Administrator: Janice Viola–	Steven Cohen, Fritz Ernst,
Contact at admin@llinova.org	Carol Fagnani, Ed McKnight,
	Ellen Wallace

LLI Newsletter Committee

Chair: Cathy Becker, newsletter@llinova.org
Loren Brandman, Patricia Brennan

Foodies & Friends

Thursday, May 21, 12:30 p.m.

[Kelly's Oyster House & Bar](#),
4069 Chain Bridge Rd., Fairfax

Join us for a foray to the eastern shore and beyond. Kelly's is an oyster bar, a sports bar, and a restaurant. Co-owner Bill Hamrock has been in the restaurant business since he was 13 years old, starting at Three Pigs Barbecue in McLean. He has been the chef-owner of Hamrock's Restaurant since 2015, where Foodies & Friends has enjoyed dining several times. Both restaurants are located in old historical homes in Olde Town Fairfax City.



If you plan to attend, RSVP to our host, [Tempie Tavenner](#), temtav@verizon.net by May 19. Individual checks will be provided, parking is easy, and the restaurant is accessible.

Special Interest Group (SIG) Meetings at a Glance

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

POC = Point of Contact

Bridge – Wednesday, May 13, and Thursday, May 28, 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 – this SIG has closed.

Favorite Books – Thursday, May 21, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at KPL

Our selection this month is “The Berry Pickers” by Amanda Peters (fiction).

POC Lynne Smaldone, favoritebooks@lilnova.org

Foodies & Friends – Thursday, May 21, 12:30 p.m. See article above for details.

Mystery Books – No meeting in May.

On June 1 we will discuss “Past Tense” by Lee Child.

POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, mysterybooks@lilnova.org

Photography – No meeting in May.

Our next meeting will be on June 19. POC Buck Myers, photo@lilnova.org

Tabletop Games – Tuesday, May 26, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at KPL

We will play Bunco. POC Mary Lu Bednarsky, tabletopgames@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](#).

Cultural Excursions

Detailed information about each excursion is on the class-registration webpage. Reserve your space by registering on the LLI website. Carpooling is strongly encouraged; contact the LLI leader if you are interested in participating in a carpool. Contact [Carol Fagnani](#) with any questions.

Trillium Hike – \$26, divided among participants. Wednesday, April 29, 8:30 a.m. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, Linden.

Join LLL's annual field trip to see the spring flowers, especially the trillium flowers. Join [Mary](#)



[Alexander](#), LLI instructor, member, and Virginia Master Naturalist, on an organized walk to look for trillium and other spring flowers. More information about the trillium trail is available [here](#) and on the LLI registration [page](#). Meet at Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

Pohick Episcopal Church Tour – Free
Wednesday, May 13, 1:00 p.m., Lorton.

Join us for a tour of Pohick Episcopal Church, "the Mother Church of Northern Virginia." Free, but contributions to the church are welcome. Details [here](#). Trip leader is [Regina Rogers](#).

Ball-Sellers House Tour – Free
Wednesday, June 17, 11:00 a.m., Arlington.

The Ball-Sellers House, built in 1750, is the oldest structure in Arlington County. It is on the National Register of Historic Sites and it is designated a Virginia State Historical Landmark. The house has been restored to its condition from the colonial era. Free, but contributions are welcome. Details [here](#). Trip leader is [Regina Rogers](#).

Tea Around Town DC – \$82.50

Tuesday, May 19, 11:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



For a unique experience, enjoy a delicious afternoon tea while also enjoying the historic sights of our nation's capital aboard the "[Tea Around Town](#)" party bus. Leave the driving, cooking, and tea brewing to others as you enjoy this one-of-a-kind afternoon tea experience.

The price includes 14 savory and sweet items and tea, of course. [Registration on the LLI website](#) is available now and closes May 10. Your payment by check or cash is due to [Bonnie Hopler](#) by May 10.

Tour meeting location, accessibility, and further details are available online. You are responsible for your own transportation to this meeting place or you can meet Bonnie at the Springfield Metro by prior arrangement.





2026 ELECTION SUPPLEMENT



Plan to attend the **Wednesday, June 3. Forum (9:45 a.m.)** to vote for our LLI/NOVA Board of Directors and its officers. The LLI/NOVA 2025 Nominating Committee is pleased to announce an outstanding slate of Board members and officers for our July 2026 to June 2027 year. The Nominating Committee was comprised of Derick Malis (Chair), Andy Butler, Bonnie Nelson, Ed McKnight, and Peter Brandman. **See the biographies of the candidates below.** Our Board of Directors consists of 15 members elected by the membership to serve three-year terms, staggered so that terms for five members expire annually.

The five candidates to serve three-year terms ending June 30, 2029 are:

Andy Butler	Patti Volz
Fritz Ernst	Ellen Wallace
John Sullivan	

Four officers were nominated by Board members to serve a one-year term:

President:	Patti Volz
Vice President:	Steve Cohen
Secretary:	Bill Tuceling
Treasurer:	Richard Sigman

Patti Volz – President and Board



Patti joined LLI/NOVA in May 2013 after a 33-year career with the CIA, serving in a number of assignments throughout the Intelligence Community focusing on intelligence collection and requirements. She also served

two fascinating years in Public Affairs where she learned to say “no comment” 50 ways. 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 LLI Board since 2016, including as vice president for several years and president for the last two years. She has also chaired the Curriculum and Forum committees. Currently Patti heads up the Foodies & Friends SIG, and sits on the Curriculum, Forum, and Scholarship Committees. She earned her BA as a member of the first class of women at UVA (1974) and her MA in international relations at Georgetown. She is an avid SCUBA diver and enjoys travel, reading, and growing herbs.

Steve Cohen – Vice President

(Steve hosts “A Funny Thing Happened...” at Forums)



I grew up in suburban Rochester, NY, in a small 2-½-bedroom, 1-bathroom house with no privacy, and was bullied at school for being small and a wise guy. Surviving that, I eventually married my kindergarten classmate,

Debbie, the love of my life and my favorite SCUBA diving/snorkeling partner.

At Cornell, I obtained my BS and veterinary degrees, working two summers on dairy farms as an indentured laborer. I learned important life skills: making hay, shoveling cow pies, and driving a manure spreader. After vet school, I practiced small-animal medicine and surgery for 35 years, establishing the first full-time small-animal house-call practice in Virginia. Smart pets ask for Dr. Steve.

I first encountered LLI/NOVA while discussing and solving world problems with several naked men in the Audrey Moore Rec Center locker room. I became an LLI class instructor and later was bamboozled into running for the

Board. I am a staunch defender of our Board president even though she is insisting that in-person classes require LLI/NOVA credentials and a passport for admittance. Violators will be removed by LICE- Lifetime Institute College Enforcement. As a member of the audit committee, I was determined to root out waste, fraud, and abuse, but alas, found none. (I was mildly suspicious about a reference “Going to Disneyland.”) I did discover the Treasurer’s passion for statistics and graphs. Allegations that the 2020 election was stolen also proved false.

If elected as Veep, I plan to eventually seize control of Board meetings, eliminate the rampant excessive verbiage, and adjourn in under 20 minutes.

Richard Sigman – Treasurer



Richard Sigman grew up in Billings, MT, and has a Bachelor's degree in mathematics from Colorado State University. He arrived in the Washington, D.C. 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 works part-time at George Mason University teaching statistics, and 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 of Directors. 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). Since 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.

Andy Butler – Board



Andy has a long history of supporting professional organizations and local non-profits. He is currently a board member of the National Capital Area Radio and TV Museum. He also serves on the facilities

committee for NOVALabs, a non-profit community workspace. He served the Society of Broadcast Engineers in positions from local chapter chairman to president of the society. As an Eagle Scout, he was a Cubmaster, a Scoutmaster, and chaired the Pack and Troop Committees. He has served on various committees for nonprofit organizations, including SHIP (Sexual Health Includes Pleasure), the Woodhull Foundation, and the local PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association).

Andy grew up in St. Louis and received a BS in Engineering and a Master’s in Management from the University of Missouri-Rolla. He has

designed and built broadcast facilities in St. Louis, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Washington, and New York. He also served as Marketing Manager for Broadcast Electronics and as conference manager for the National Association of Broadcasters. He retired after serving the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) for the past 29 years. Andy has two adult sons and has lived in Fairfax County for more than 30 years.

Fritz Ernst – Board



Frederick (Fritz) Ernst earned a BS in Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point, and a Master's in Civil Engineering and Nuclear Engineering from Stanford University. He served 26

years with the Army Corps of Engineers in a wide variety of engineering and other assignments, including in Vietnam, Thailand, Europe, and the United States. He commanded an Engineer Battalion (approximately 700 soldiers) stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. His final Army assignment was three years serving in high-level leadership and management positions (e.g., Directorate Head and Agency Chief of Staff) at the Defense Nuclear Agency (now the Defense Threat Reduction Agency).

After retirement, Fritz provided technical and advisory services to the Defense Nuclear Agency for 22 years and served as the program manager for as many as 300 technical personnel during the contract period. He provided significant input for written and oral proposals that led to the contract's being awarded roughly every five years on a competitive basis. Fritz has been active in LLI with the photography group and as a current Board member and past treasurer.

John Thomas Sullivan – Board



John's a native of Harrisburg, PA, and graduate of the University of Scranton and the Georgetown University Law Center. He retired in 2025 after a 40-year career in administrative law and

litigation in the Washington, D.C area. He began his career in a major trade association and law firms representing clients in transportation regulation matters, primarily railroad issues, before moving to the Office of the General Counsel of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission. During his many years there he represented FMSHRC in federal appellate courts throughout the country while also serving much of the time as counsel to four different politically appointed Chairmen and Commissioners of both parties. He was then appointed as a federal administrative law judge. John's community activities included stints as President of the Sleepy Hollow Manor Citizens' Association, Mason District Little League baseball, and Bishop O'Connell Crew Boosters, as well as board memberships of those organizations and of Falls Church-Annandale Babe Ruth baseball and St. Aloysius Catholic Church. He and his wife Leslie Carole Sullivan have lived in the same home since 1992, a year after their marriage, and have one son, Jack, who resides in Fair Oaks.

Ellen Wallace – Board



Ellen was born and raised in Baltimore, and moved to Alexandria in 1981. After more than 36 years of service at FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C., she retired in 2010. Since then, she has remained active in

her community through volunteer work with the National Alliance of Mental Illness, Alexandria's Domestic Violence Program, and Ravensworth Baptist Church. Ellen joined LLI in 2023 and currently serves as Chair of the Curriculum Committee. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, LLI classes, and playing pickleball.