



LIRA NEWSLETTER

LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
Office of Community and Cultural Affairs – UMass Lowell
Member of Road Scholar Institute Network
Tel.: (978) 934-3135 Web: uml.edu/community/LIRA



December 2024

Vol. 31 No 4

LIRA Holiday Party 2024

Thursday, December 12

10 a.m. – noon
Moloney Ballroom
(University Crossing) OR on Zoom

Hear about Winter Intersession offerings!

Participate in the Holiday Raffle!

Hear from Scholarship recipients!

Enjoy the camaraderie of friends!

Support Community Teamwork with donations of hats, gloves, and children's books!

From the President:

We have just wrapped up the LIRA Fall 2024 semester. Big thanks to everyone that helped put together the fall program and special thanks to our Curriculum Chairs Jim Rutter and Beverly Rudeen, as well as the Curriculum Committee, for all their hard work toward a successful fall program. I'd also like to thank the class coordinators, Zoom hosts and refreshment volunteers. Every contribution helps make our sessions a success.

The 2024 LIRA Holiday Party is Thursday, December 12, from 10 a.m. to noon in the Jacqueline and Edward Moloney Hall, University Crossing room 260, and on Zoom. I hope everyone can make it to the meeting either in person or on Zoom. An important piece of business at the meeting will be to award \$2000 scholarships to five outstanding UML students.

LIRA members are encouraged to bring a consumable item (Holiday basket, wine, cheese platter, gift card, etc.) \$25 or less, to be raffled off during the meeting. All proceeds of the raffle are donated to the LIRA Scholarship Fund. For more information, see the article by Sheila Pariseau in this Newsletter. If you are unable to attend in person, you can still send a donation directly to the Scholarship Fund.

We also ask members to bring new children's hats, gloves and books to the Holiday Party for donation to Community Teamwork Inc (CTI). For more information, see the article by Kathy Forstey in this Newsletter.

Please note that the centerpieces at the meeting are books that Kathy Forstey has collected all year long and then hauled up to the Holiday Party to donate to CTI. If you see Kathy at the meeting, make sure to thank her for all her hard work.

We will also introduce the Winter Intersession class schedule at the Holiday party. During the Winter Intersession, I encourage you to invite friends, family and anyone you think might be interested in trying out LIRA. All of our Intersession classes are open to guests both in person and on Zoom. The Winter Intersession will be held on Wednesdays from January 8 through February 26. Hybrid sessions will meet in University Suites 106 and on Zoom. In the event of inclement weather, and always when UML closes, we will shift to Zoom only sessions. LIRA will notify members by 6:00 p.m. on the day before if we cancel the in-person class.

I look forward to seeing you at the Holiday Party!

Peter Sebelius

LIRA'S Scholarship Fund Annual Raffle

We will hold our annual raffle at the LIRA Holiday Party on Thursday, December 12. The raffle will be a "Consumable Raffle" once again. It is a fundraiser for the Scholarship Fund, and this year LIRA will be giving five UML students \$2,000 scholarships each.

What is a Consumable Raffle? It is a raffle where all donated items can be consumed, i.e., you eat it, drink it, do it, or use it up. The Committee sells tickets: \$1 per ticket, \$5 for 6 tickets or \$10 for 18 tickets. You decide what item(s) you want and put your ticket(s) in the appropriate container(s). All donations must be brought directly to Moloney Hall (University Crossing) on the day of the party.

Some things you might donate: Baked Goods; Candy; Wine; Gift Certificates, i.e., restaurant, movie, theater, grocery store, and bookstore. The suggested amount for donation is about \$25.

Suggestions for Baskets you can make:

Book—put a gently used book in a basket with a bookmark, book light, china teacup, box of tea, etc.

Food—Italian or Mexican

Soup Lovers Basket

I think you get the idea. It will all be wonderful and we have a great time deciding just what we want to win. Thank you to everyone who has donated in the past. Let's make a difference in someone's life and have a great raffle again this year.

Sheila Pariseau

Books, Hats and Gloves

LIRA has had a longstanding relationship with Community Teamwork of Lowell, which provides vital services to low-income people. Once again, we are asking our members to bring the following items to our holiday party. Hats and mittens for all age groups are greatly needed. Also, please bring books (hardcovers and paperbacks) for children ages 2 to 11. All items will be given to Cynthia Perrone, the volunteer specialist of Community Teamwork, who will distribute them to the families who will benefit. If you need further information, please contact Kathy Forstey at k3and2@netscape.net.

Kathy Forstey

Field Trips During the Past Semester

Natural History Museum



We had a great time at the glass flower exhibit. The docent was very informative and very helpful. It's hard to believe that everything was made from glass.

Debbie Sebelius

Arts League of Lowell Gallery



Simply Khmer Noodle House

(Diversity Committee "Dining Tour")



Lowell Chamber Orchestra



Member News

Long time LIRA member Betty Bayard took a fall in her apartment recently and broke her hip. She does not require surgery and is now rehabilitating at her home.

Betty would love to hear from her LIRA friends, so please don't hesitate to reach out to her.

If you have any personal news you would like to share with LIRA, or if you know of any members who might appreciate cards or other support from LIRA members, please contact Laura Boerman (laura_boerman@yahoo.com).



The next newsletter will be out on **March 1, 2025**; the deadline for news items is **February 15, 2025**.

Please submit all **member news** to Laura Boerman: [***laura_boerman@yahoo.com***](mailto:laura_boerman@yahoo.com)

All other LIRA news items should be emailed to: beckybronson241@gmail.com

Becky Bronson

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Steve Buccieri
Kathy Cryan-Hicks
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Stan Powers
David Troughton

Future Visits in Planning:

Check LIRA newsletters for a list of upcoming trips on the Lowell Dining Trail. Attendance is limited so be sure to sign up early for future trips.

Cover art from a Welcome Flag created by Kathy Cryan-Hicks featuring Lowell's "Winged Victory" statue and symbolizing the success newcomers can aspire to in their new community.

Athenian Corner

207 Market Street in Lowell

978-458-705

<https://www.atheniancorner.com/>

Panela

525 Market Street in Lowell

978-455-2868

Visit their website at

<https://panelarestaurant.com/>

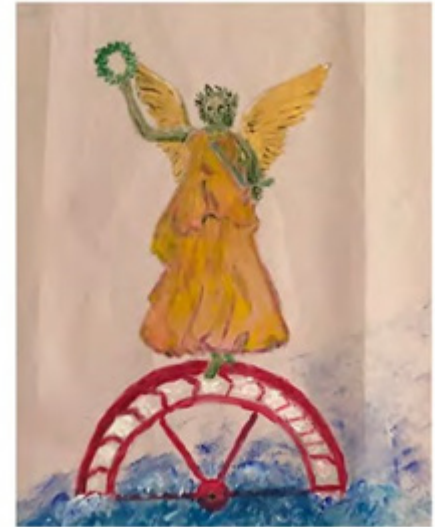
Simply Khmer Noodle House

7 Summer Street in Chelmsford

978-244-1228

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Simply-Khmer-Noodle-House-and-Bar-100095305417287/>

**LOWELL
DINING TRAIL**



Experience the various food cultures the Lowell area has to offer. This guide is brought to you by LIRA's own Diversity Team.



Athenian Corner

207 Market Street in Lowell
978-458-7052

We began our journey at **Athenian Corner** Restaurant, in Lowell's Historic District. Since 1974, the Panagiotopoulos family has been proudly serving quality Greek dishes and generous portions at affordable prices. Owner Ted Panos told us about the history of Greek food, culture, and community in Lowell. In addition to delicious authentic Greek foods the Athenian Corner offers a full bar and weekly Greek and Middle Eastern music and dancing.

"Food was delicious. Waitress could not have been nicer or more helpful."



Visit their website at:
[https:// www.atheniancorner.com/](https://www.atheniancorner.com/)

Panela

525 Market Street in Lowell
978-455-2868

Our second stop was at **Panela**. Panela was inspired by the Columbian word for raw sugar cane, a staple of Colombian cooking. We enjoyed a hearty and delicious meal and also met Chef and co-owner Vivian Aceved who emigrated from Columbia. She attended Lowell High School and later studied at Le Cordon Bleu. She established Panela with her parents and brother. Panela hosts weekly Salsa Nights and offers a full bar. It has been featured on the Chronicle (Channel 5).

"...the food was beautifully presented and good mix of contrasting flavors."



Visit their website at:
<https://panelarestaurant.com/>

Simply Khmer Noodle House

7 Summer Street in Chelmsford
978-244-1228

Lowell has the largest Cambodian population in the country after Long Beach, CA. The original Lowell restaurant was established by Sam and Denise Ban in 2007. **Simply Khmer's** mission is to offer exceptional Cambodian cuisine in a pleasant, appealing and cozy atmosphere. Manager, Xavier Eang Lee, talked about the culture and food of Cambodia as we enjoyed the tastes of Cambodia.

"Great tasting and healthy food; great variety, nice setting. Xavier was amazing!"



Visit them on Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/p/Simply-Khmer-Noodle-House-and-Bar-100095305417287/>

LIRA 2025 Winter Intersession Course Descriptions

All programs will be available via Zoom. For programs listed as hybrid, the presenter will be in person in room 106 of the University Suites building at UMass Lowell and the program will also be available via Zoom. The presenter will be remote for all programs labeled Zoom only. Please check your email for the weekly program announcement, and for any last-minute changes or additions. * denotes LIRA member.

Maritime Music and Songs of the Sea **Wednesday 1/8/25 10 a.m. to Noon. Zoom Only** **Presenter: Chris Koldewey**

Folk singer and multi-instrumentalist Chris Koldewey will present an informative concert of traditional Shanties (sailor's work songs) and Forebitters (Ballads) from our maritime past. We will journey, virtually, out to sea as our forbearers did in the 19th and early 20th centuries. We'll hear the shanties and see the shipboard jobs for which they were used, as well as the stories and lore of our connection to the sea. Short journeys for fishing, or 2 to 5 years on a whaler or merchant ship, all had their songs, and Chris will give us a taste of what that might have sounded like on deck, and below. He primarily performs US and British traditional music, and the approach to many of those songs includes their historical and social perspectives and background. The songs may range from the "sublime to the ridiculous," and everything in between, and may be accompanied by a variety of acoustic instruments.

*Coordinator: Lisa Hertel**

Waste Management Recycling Center Tour **Wednesday 1/15/25 10 a.m. to Noon Hybrid** **Location: Billerica, MA**

Have you ever wondered if the stuff you put into recycling really gets recycled? Well, it does, and now you can see how, right nearby in a former Boston Globe distribution plant, in Billerica. Waste Management's plant processes roughly 180 million pounds of recyclable material every month. It comes into the plant mixed together and leaves the plant sorted and sellable. Don't wear your best clothes, watch your step, and prepare to be awed by humans and machinery working together to turn your recycled trash into a sorted treasure.

Tour size is limited to 9 people for safety reasons, and reservations are required. Contact Chris Geggis (lira@geggis.com) to be signed up for the tour.

*Coordinator Chris Geggis**

All About Taxes

Wednesday 1/22/25 10 a.m. to Noon Hybrid
Presenter: David Penfield*

Death and taxes. Both are certain, but most people probably dread each of them. This presentation will cover the basics of taxes, including their historical roots, types, and purposes. Then we'll talk about today's tax landscape with an emphasis on topics relevant to LIRA members. What are all the taxes you currently pay? How are they collected? How can you pay less? Where to go to get help filing your income taxes. And at some point, you'll see what happened to some famous people who didn't pay their taxes. And you'll find out who first said that death and taxes are the only certainties. Spoiler alert - it wasn't Benjamin Franklin.

*Coordinator: Jim Rutter**

A Short History of Opera....Abridged

Wednesday 1/29/25 10 a.m. to Noon Hybrid
Presenter: Martha Warren

400 years ago in Italy, some composers and lyricists decided that sung music could tell stories other than the Latin mass. There could be drama, comedy, or history presented with singers, orchestra, sets, lights, costumes—and not just for royalty! This course will explore the evolution of opera through the centuries, from Monteverdi to Mozart to Puccini, and all the way up to the beginnings of modern musical theater, a true descendant of the genre. There will be video and audio examples, tributes to great singers of the 20th and 21st centuries, and as a treat, the presenter will sing an aria live, to explore the vocal training of opera singers.

*Coordinator: Bev Rudeen**

UML Library Tour

Wednesday 2/5/25 10 a.m. to Noon Trip

Presenter: UML Library Staff

Join us for a tour of O'Leary library and an introduction to UMass Lowell library resources. Learn about our rich historical holdings at the Center for Lowell History, how to use our academic databases on campus, and which resources are also available from home.

*Coordinator: Bev Rudeen**

Rewilding Your Yard With Beneficial Native Plants

Wednesday: 2/12/25 10 a.m. to Noon Hybrid

Presenter: Meaghan Sinclair

You can create a thriving ecosystem! Learn how to rewild your yard with native flora and fauna. This lecture will delve into the world of native plant gardening and its many benefits to our communities.

Did you know that native plants attract an array of creatures that provide natural pest control? And that native plants survive much better than non-native species in harsh conditions like deluge or drought? Discover which native plants host beneficial insects including butterflies and moths.

We will review which native plant species perform best in sun, shade, and in-between, as well as discover when to plant and where to purchase plants or forage seeds. Different methods of gardening, including winter sowing and no-till practices, will be discussed and demonstrated. Meaghan will also provide tips on how to maintain and sustain our mini- and macro-ecosystems as the planet warms due to climate change.

*Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache**

Understanding the Legal Rights & Responsibilities of Immigrants

Wednesday 2/19/25 10 a.m. to Noon

Zoom Only

Presenter: Immigration Attorney Valerie Napier, New England Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)

What do you know about the legal rights and responsibilities of immigrants? How does U.S. immigration law distinguish between “legal” vs. “illegal,” “documented” vs. “undocumented” immigrants, and asylum seekers vs. refugees? Do all immigrants qualify for work permits, a license to drive, public education, housing, and the right to a court hearing and citizenship? Attorney Napier will provide us with an understanding of the complex legal issues that involve asylum, Temporary Protective Status (TPS), unaccompanied minors, “green” cards, and the overall immigration process.

As an affiliate of the national Immigration & Justice Network, New England JFON provides expert legal aid to low- and no-income immigrants, specializing in humanitarian-based cases. Attorney Napier joins New England JFON as the Legal Director of the new “Pathways to Hope” program for unaccompanied minors.

*Coordinator: David Troughton**

German Elections 2025

Wednesday, 2/19/25 1-3 p.m. Hybrid

Presenter: Jim Pope*

The German national elections are scheduled for 23 February 2025. This will be the first time a government in Germany has lost a vote of confidence and has been forced to call an early election.

The course will consist of two sessions (four hours). This class: before the elections and one after the elections during the LIRA Spring semester.

Topics include:

- The German system of government.
- German political parties and who belongs.
- Post WWII German elections.
- How candidates are selected.
- How one votes in Germany.

- How the votes are counted; how the seats are allocated to each party; who gets those seats.
- How the government is formed.
- How the Chancellor is chosen.
- Why the current government lost a vote of confidence.
- The issues in this election.
- Similarities and differences among the German, American, British, and other governmental systems.
- How this election turned out and its meaning for Europe and the U.S.

*Coordinator Jim Rutter**

Scuba Diving In Honduras
Wednesday 2/26/25 10 a.m to Noon Hybrid
Presenter: Jesse Heines*

Jesse Heines has been scuba diving for 38 years and has done over 600 dives. In this talk, he will focus on his recent trip to Roatán, an island off the coast of Honduras, where the reefs are in good condition and the sea life is abundant. As he always does in his LIRA talks, Jesse will treat us to a cornucopia of photographs, but this time taken mostly with his iPhone rather than his Nikon. He will show us the watertight housing in which he takes his iPhone underwater and demonstrate how he enhances iPhone pictures using Adobe Lightroom. This talk will appeal equally well to people curious about life in the medium that covers over 70% of our planet's surface, those interested in photographic techniques, and those who simply enjoy treating their eyes to dazzling images.

*Coordinator: Jim Rutter**

Book Discussion

10 a.m. to Noon Zoom Only

January 17 "Absolution" by Alice McDermott, 2023, 324 pages, Discussion leader: Karen Naka

February 21, 2025: Tom Lake, by Anne Patchett, 2023, 318 pages. Discussion leader: Lynn Tyndall

At our January meeting, we'll be choosing books for the spring semester and we welcome any suggestions you might have.

Our next session will be on **December 20**, when Susan Lemire will lead our discussion of North Woods by Daniel Mason.

Film Discussion

10 a.m. to Noon **Zoom Only**

January 24 "Notre Dame de Paris", a musical inspired by Victor Hugo's classic novel

February 28 "Akeelah and the Bee", a 2006 production

Chelmsford Library/LIRA Lecture Series

1-3 P.M. Hybrid

Pre-registration Required

Friday, January 10 Life on an Unpredictable Planet: Coping with the Threats Posed by Natural Disasters.

Presenter: Matt Davis

A significant percentage of the world's population lives with the threats posed by various natural hazards. Although deaths resulting from natural disaster events have decreased over time, the economic impacts, social disruption, and effects on our infrastructure have steadily increased. Join speaker Matt Davis to learn more about these threats. Drawing examples from his research at Italy's Mt. Vesuvius and Washington's Mt. Rainier, his experiences in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and his work on earthquake preparedness efforts in California, a number of issues in disaster preparedness and recovery will be addressed. Specifically, we'll explore the reasons people choose to live in risky places, some of the psychological factors that affect their perceptions of risk and likelihood of preparing for potential disasters, and factors that help in disaster recovery.

Friday, February 28: "Inundation District" Film Screen and Q&A.

Presenter: David Abel

"Inundation District" is an award-winning feature-length film about the implications of the City of Boston's decision to ignore the threats posed by climate change and spend billions of dollars on building a new waterfront

district. In a time of rising seas and intensifying storms, one of the world's wealthiest, most-educated cities made a fateful decision to spend billions of dollars erecting a new district along its coast — on landfill, at sea level. Unlike other places imperiled by climate change, this neighborhood of glass towers housing some of the world's largest companies was built well after scientists began warning of the threats, including many at its renowned universities. The city, which already has more high-tide flooding than nearly any other in the United States, called its new quarter the Innovation District. But with seas rising inexorably, and at an accelerating rate, others are calling the neighborhood by a different name: Inundation District.

The 79-minute film won Best Conservation Film at the Mystic Film Festival as well as the Monadnock International Film Festival's Jonathan Daniels Award, which is given to films that "fuse social and/or political awareness with artistic excellence and encompasses Jonathan Daniels courage by telling stories of hope, redemption, and the triumph of the human spirit."

The screening will be followed by a Q&A session led by the film's director, David Abel.

LIRA 2025 Intersession Calendar

Zoom Only in Red

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
December 9	December 10	December 11	December 12 10 am to Noon LIRA Holiday Party	December 13
December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>Northwoods</i>
January 6	January 7	January 8 10 am to Noon Maritime Music and Songs of the Sea	January 9	January 10 1 – 3 p.m. Chelmsford Library/LIRA Lecture Series Psychology of Natural Disasters
January 13	January 14	January 15 10 am to Noon Waste Management Recycling Center Tour	January 16	January 17 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>Absolution</i>
January 20	January 2	January 22 10 to Noon All About Taxes	January 23	January 24 10 am to Noon Film Discussion <i>Notre Dame de Paris</i> Inspired by Victor Hugo's Novel
January 27	January 28	January 29 10 a.m. – noon A Short History of Opera.... Abridged	January 30	January 31

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
February 3	February 4	February 5 10 am to Noon UML Library Tour	February 6	February 7
February 10	February 11	February 12 10 am to Noon Rewilding Your Yard with Beneficial Native Plants	February 13	February 14
February 17	February 18	February 19 10 am to Noon Understanding the Rights and Responsibilities of Immigrants 1 - 3 p.m. German Elections	February 20	February 21 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>Tom Lake</i> Anne Patchett
February 24	February 25	February 26 10:00 am to Noon Scuba Diving in Honduras	February 27	February 28 10 am to Noon Film Discussion <i>Akeelah and the Bee</i> 1 - 3 p.m. Chelmsford Library/LIRA Lecture Series "Inundation District" Film Screen
March 3	March 4 10:00 am to Noon Annual Town Meeting	March 5	March 6	March 7