Dear Friends and Supporters of SILIR,

What a crazy time! Social distancing, social isolation, etc. Most of us are anxious to resume our ‘normal’ lives. The recent goal of SILIR has been to safely restore at least a small sense of normality in our activities. Accomplishing this while protecting the health of our members has been a major challenge, especially in an environment where the rules and expectations shift in response to the spread of the corona virus. We are not asking for your sympathy, but we do ask for your patience.

The SILIR Board owes great thanks to you, our members, for your quick and thoughtful response to the Questionnaire we sent to you earlier. The response rate was heartening and the information we gathered was helpful to the Board. A summary of the results are on page 3. Your responses have been helpful and have confirmed your support for SILIR.

The Curriculum Committee has put together a program of courses and activities for the fall that will function within safety constraints. They are described elsewhere in this newsletter. Zoom has been a loyal ally in all of this, and the Curriculum Committee and its Chair Roland Person deserve our thanks.

The Membership and Publicity Committee has made very thoughtful recommendations about sustaining, and even growing, our membership. Committee Chair Bobbie Ogletree should take a bow.

John Pohlman, Kathy Fatz, and Jackie Welch made the Membership Survey possible. I did not mention Dennis Leitner because he deserves a special thanks. He taught many ‘older’ members, me included, how to use Zoom, and we have used it quite successfully for meetings. He is a member of the Curriculum Committee and worked without complaint in its efforts to imagine courses that are offered in real-time from remote locations. If we had an elected office entitled “utility infielder,” I along with many others would nominate him (I think I just heard John Pohlman, Marsha Anderson and Gary Hartlieb say ‘amen’).

Despite all the challenges and a scaled down version of our activities, I hope you will renew your membership and also help expand it. One way to build our membership is for members to give ‘gift’ memberships to friends and family that might enjoy SILIR. Think about it.

With the eventual passing of the pandemic, we can plan more in-person activities. The social aspect of SILIR should not be overlooked. I am looking forward to a free cup of coffee and good conversation.

And finally, another thanks to Jackie Welch, this time for guiding a seamless transition from a paper newsletter to an electronic one.

Wishing you patience and good health,

Tom Britton, President
lawbritton@gmail.com
(618) 521-5853

Visit the SI Learning in Retirement web page at:
https://conferenceservices.siu.edu/silir.php
SILIR Monthly Interest Groups

**Musical of the Month Interest Group**
This group will be suspended through the fall semester. We will revisit the issue for the spring semester depending on the current situation.

Thank you,
Mike Hanes

**Monthly Book Club**
This group will resume in September. Watch the September newsletter for more details.

**Monthly Lunch Discussion Group**
Members are invited to join this group to meet monthly to share lunch and open conversation. Please bring a sack lunch and a mask.

August 27
11:45am
Location:
Evergreen Park, Carbondale

Time to Renew Your Membership

If you haven’t already renewed your membership in Southern Illinois Learning in Retirement (SILIR), do so now to be eligible for fall classes. The SILIR Curriculum Committee has slated a wide variety of classes on topics such as literature, law and politics.

Membership in SILIR runs from July 1 - June 30 the following year. Sign up now for the benefits of membership: classes, speakers, interest groups and access to trips. The cost of membership remains the same as it has been for over 10 years, thanks to the many teachers and speakers who provide “life-long learning” to our members with little compensation. Below is a list of current members who have given so freely of their time to teach SILIR courses. Be sure to thank them for their efforts:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Pohlmann</th>
<th>Mary Alice Kimmel</th>
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<td>Gary Hartlieb</td>
<td>Leo Gher</td>
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<td>Fran Oros</td>
<td>John Hooker</td>
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<td>Suzanne Schmitz</td>
<td>John Jackson</td>
<td>Roland Person</td>
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<td>Dennis Leitner</td>
<td>Thomas Mitchell</td>
<td>Parviz Sanjabi</td>
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<td>Brian Butler</td>
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<td>Tom Britton</td>
<td>Jim Sylvester</td>
<td>Dona Bachman</td>
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<td>Ken Buzbee</td>
<td>Anita Hutton</td>
<td>Mary Lamb</td>
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<td>Mary Pohlmann</td>
<td>Walter Metz</td>
<td>Arlene Pellow</td>
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Three easy ways to renew!! Membership is still $25.
- Mail registration form and payment to Conference and Scheduling Services (check or credit card)
- Call Conference and Scheduling Services at 618/536-7751 (credit card only)

**RENEW TODAY**
Summary of Answers to Preliminary Questions from the 2020 Survey of SILIR Membership

The survey was well received. More than 150 members responded. And the results were promising. Of those returning the survey, the vast majority (97%) have a computer at home, 87% have smart phones, and virtually all have internet connections (99%+). Here is a link to the results if you prefer a visual: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-Z75MM55G7/

Usage statistics were also impressive with 92+ percent of those responding using their computer at least daily, and 62+ percent using their computers to stream video. Nearly one-third use their computer to watch movies. Facebook was popular, with almost 60% using their computer to check and post. Almost 80% used their computer to watch YouTube or similar services.

Very heartening to the Curriculum Committee as it seeks alternatives to “in person” presentations was the finding that not quite 80% use their computer to “chat” or “Zoom.” A substantial majority (69%) reported that they had adequate bandwidth (speed) for most on-line activities.

Questions about class format (in-person or on-line) received interesting responses. Regarding in-person classes, a majority (60%) stated that they would enroll in small, nine persons or fewer, classes. As class size grew, a substantially smaller percentage (31%) would enroll in in-person classes of as many as twenty-five.

On-line classes using Zoom, Google Meeting or similar technology were viewed favorably with roughly two-thirds (66.5%) of respondents indicating a willingness to enroll. A smaller percentage (49%) was willing to enroll in courses which used prepared video presentations such as Ken Burns series on the Civil War, even with an opportunity to discuss the program electronically after its completion.

SILIR’s largest gatherings usually are the monthly meetings. Only 13% of those responding indicated that they would be willing to attend such meetings in the Fall of 2020 and only 20% indicated a willingness to attend in the Winter of 2021.

As to safety measures during our gatherings, 76% of respondents said they would like hand sanitizer, 91% indicate a desire for face masks and 92% favored social distancing. The choices were not forced, that is one could ask for all three of the precautions suggested.

In closing, one can safely say that ours is a technologically able group that would like to see activities continue, even if the format is different that we have grown to expect, so long as we proceed with great caution and adopt well-known safety protocols.

Thanks to all who participated.
Summary of the Written Comments
to the LIR Survey Questionnaire

By Dennis Leitner and John Pohlmann

Survey questions numbered 11 through 14 asked a similar question: Assuming your interest in the subject matter and appropriate safety measures where taken, would you enroll in a class. The only difference was the size and type of class: (1) Nine or fewer people (Q11), (2) as many as 25 people (Q12), (3) using communication via Zoom (etc) (Q13), or (4) using recorded video or lecture with real-time discussion afterwards. You have the frequency tabulation of the results; here is a summary of the comments of the types of courses and possible instructors.

Based on the comments, it doesn't seem that the respondents distinguished their suggested courses and instructors based on the type of class (1) through (4) above. For example, the responses to question 11 (asking for suggestions for class with 9 or fewer people) suggested our most popular and well attended classes, eg. John Jackson discussing elections, Walter Metz talking about films, Gary Hartlieb and friends talking about technology. So in this summary, we are combining the responses for ideas of courses and instructors together.

By far the most frequently mentioned course was John Jackson talking about elections. But also mentioned frequently were courses on technology (taught by Gary, Ken and John), courses on history (taught by Mike Batinsky), anything about law taught by Suzanne Schmitz or anything about film taught by Walter Metz, courses on musicals (Mike Hanes) and movies.

A few new ideas were courses on Black American History (taught by Fr. Joseph Brown and Dr. Brione Lockett), a course on baseball taught by Pete Peterson (perhaps this would confused with a monthly lecture), and a course on Native American Art. Also mentioned were some courses from the Great Courses which we have used in 2019 BC (Before Coronavirus).

In Question 18 (How do you see SILIR proceeding the next several months), members referred to two topics most often – safety and technology. There seemed to be a consensus that health concerns should dictate the speed and extent of SILIR reopening. Our reopening should comply with Illinois health and safety rules. Responses also noted that SILIR members are in the high-risk sector of the population, and we might want to go slower and be more cautious as the State’s rules are implemented.

Internet teaching technologies should be employed when appropriate. The word Zoom appeared in many of the responses. Some responses suggested that members may have difficulty with new technology. There was a concern about slow internet connections in members homes.

Question 19 (Other comments, suggestions and concerns) received similar comments to those of Question 18. More members noted issues with technology, but safety concerns were also expressed. Reference was made to the Zoom talks from the Simon Institute in which a tech person runs the video thereby freeing the speaker to focus on the topic.

A significant number of the respondents also expressed appreciation to the board for seeking the input from the membership. Several mentioned that they missed the monthly meetings and classes and look forward to LIR getting back to business.

Question 21 (End of Survey) gave respondents another chance to emphasize safety concerns (no shared food, proper distancing, requiring the wearing of masks, hand sanitizers, and a well-ventilated room). Someone even suggested a wellness check (i.e. questions at entry and/or temperature).

Lastly, we were surprised to learn that 80-percent of respondents did not want coffee and cookies at our monthly meetings.
SILIR Session I Classes — September 14—October 19, 2020

These courses will be offered via Zoom except where indicated. Face masks are REQUIRED and social distancing will be maintained. Although the cost for each class is free, you do need to register for any class in which you wish to participate so that we may contact you with Zoom and other information.

### Monday

**Reading Short Stories: How and Why**

**Instructor: Beth Lordan**

Registration Fee: $0.00

September 21-October 19

10:00 - 11:30 am

Epiphany Lutheran

We will read with particular attention to formal elements, the five stories below. I will provide the stories via email in the order listed:

"Enough," by Alice McDermott
"Hills Like White Elephants," by Ernest Hemingway
"Cousins," by Joyce Carol Oates
"Wizard of West Orange," by Stephen Millhauser
"Hidden Meanings, Treatment of Time, Supreme Irony, and Life Experience ..." by Michael Parker

Course limit: 9

### Tuesday

**Justices and Judges: Lives On and Off the Court**

**Instructor: Suzanne Schmitz**

Registration Fee: $0.00

September 15-October 13

1:30 - 3:30 pm

Zoom

We will examine the lives on and off the court of selected judges, including Louis Brandeis, Robert Jackson, Thurgood Marshall, Sandra Day O’Connor and others who may surprise you. We will explore a short biography and ask how, if at all, their pre-court life affected their work on the court and consider how some of their opinions live on. We will not consider any of the current U.S. Supreme Court justices. Some surprises: do you know how many U.S. Supreme Court justices were from Illinois?

Course limit: 49
Selecting a President in the Age of Covid-19 and Major Civil Unrest

Instructor: John Jackson
Registration Fee: $0.00
September 17-October 15 10:00 - 11:30 am
Zoom

This course will describe and explain the 2020 presidential nominations and elections in the unique circumstances of them being conducted while a pandemic is raging and the nation is also beset by deep civil unrest attendant America’s persistent racial problems. It will also cover the congressional elections to a lesser extent. Some of the analysis will be similar to earlier presidential elections while other aspects will be quite different because of this year’s unprecedented challenges. The discussion will adopt a chronological framework around which the events of the campaigns unfold. It will also present a considerable amount of polling data to show how the voters react to the candidates and the unfolding events. It will conclude with projections about the likely outcomes of the elections and their possible impact on the making of public policy in the next administration.

Course limit: 60

Interested in Voting by Mail? Here’s how it works..

Voting By Mail: It’s a Two Step Process

Step 1: Application

Applications to Vote by Mail will be mailed on or before August 1, 2020 to any person who voted in at least one of the following: 2018 General Election, 2019 Consolidated Election, 2020 Primary Election or anyone who registered to vote or change their address before July 31, 2020. Any registered voter not in one of the previous categories may request an application to vote by mail by contacting their County Clerk. To receive a ballot by mail, application forms must be filled out and returned to the office of the County Clerk where the person resides.

Step 2: Ballot: Receive, Mark, Return

County Clerks can mail official ballots to registered voters starting on September 24, 2020. All voters who have applied to vote by mail by October 1 should receive their ballot by October 6. If you don’t, call your County Clerk*.

Note: If you have not applied to vote by mail you can still apply to vote by mail until October 29, 2020. Once a ballot is received voters may vote the ballot and return it in the envelope provided. The ballot will be valid as long as it is postmarked on or before November 3, 2020.
VOLUNTEERING REMOTELY*: Part I

by Bobbie Ogletree

For those of us looking to offer our time, but wanting to do so remotely, the following is a listing of volunteer opportunities which can be done from home. Additional opportunities (Part II) will appear in the next newsletter. *Source: Facebook

**Missing Maps Project:**  [https://www.missingmaps.org/](https://www.missingmaps.org/)
Missing Maps Project enables those with a laptop to easily learn how to trace over satellite images to bring physical structures like buildings and roads into digital maps. Ensuring digital maps are accurate and maintained can help disaster relief responders to find every person in a search and rescue mission.

**Crisis Text Line:**  [https://www.crisistextline.org/become-a-volunteer/](https://www.crisistextline.org/become-a-volunteer/)
Crisis Text Line is a free 24/7 national crisis-intervention and counseling service conducted exclusively through SMS text. Volunteers use the nonprofit’s web-based platform to provide emotional support to texters who are dealing with a wide range of issues – bullying, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and more. Prospective volunteers go through screening and a lengthy self-paced training. Once complete, volunteers sign up to take one four-hour shift each week for a year.

**Book Share:**  [https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-involved/volunteer](https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-involved/volunteer)
Book Share offers thousands of books to people with reading disabilities. As an online volunteer you can either scan books to be added to the collection or edit books that have been scanned.

**Translators Without Borders:**  [https://translatorswithoutborders.org/volunteer/](https://translatorswithoutborders.org/volunteer/)
Translators Without Borders recruits volunteers who want to translate texts into different languages for NGOs and nonprofits.

**Be My Eyes:**  [https://www.bemyeyes.com](https://www.bemyeyes.com)
Be My Eyes is a free mobile app with the goal to make the work more accessible for blind and low-vision people. The app connects blind and low-vision individuals with sighted volunteers from all over the world through a live video call.

**Catchafire:**  [https://www.catchafire.org](https://www.catchafire.org)
Catchafire uses its website to match professionals with nonprofits based on their skills, cause interest, and time availability. You’ll find a wealth of skills-based volunteering opportunities, many of which can be completed virtually.

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**LIR is saddened by the passing of some of our members:**

Ellen Bradley, December 3, 2019

Judy Schwegman, July 15, 2020

Barbara Lesar, July 16, 2020

Frances Shiplett, a faithful greeter, July 17, 2020
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August 2020

National Girlfriend Day
National Root Beer Float Day
National Watermelon Day
National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
National Work Like A Dog Day
National Water Balloon Day
National Fajita Day
National Soft Ice Cream Day
National Rose Day
National Waffle Day
National Tell A Joke Day
National Senior Citizens Day
National Bowling Day
National Doughnut Day
National Relaxation Day
National Radio Day
National S'mores Day
National Senior Citizens Day
National Filet Mignon Day
National S'mores Day
National Filet Mignon Day

Resource: https://nationaldaycalendar.com/august/
Please submit a check payable to “SIU Carbondale” or your credit card information below.

Credit Card Number ___________________________ Exp. __________
Name on Card ___________________________ CVC __________
Email (for receipt): ___________________________
What will you learn today?

Visit the SI Learning in Retirement web page at:
conferenceservices.siu.edu/silir.php