

# ALFA**bits**

ALFA—ADULT LEARNING IN THE FITCHBURG AREA

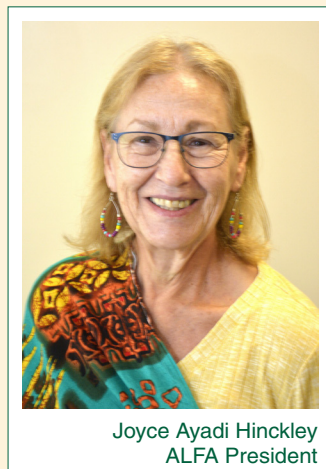
## President's Notes

ALFA is celebrating its 15th anniversary Spring Session 2019 and we've come a long way. From 2 classes and 50 registrations in 2014 to 60 classes and events and 1200+ registrations in Fall 2018! Much has changed; more has remained the same.

We're no longer a startup, but rather a mature organization fully integrated into our university and communities. ALFA has progressed from making things up as it went along, to formulating strategic plans for moving forward in a systematic way. Every ALFA member will have the opportunity to contribute to this success by completing an organization-wide demographic survey. Please fill out the form when asked.

ALFA leadership typically lasts around 10 years. We're now midway through our second generation of board members. There are now only two founding members on our board: Karen Pick and Harry Semerjian. Interestingly though, we still have original students enrolling for classes. By the time we're into the third generation, it's likely that the majority of board members or students will never have met an original participant.

(continued on next page)



Joyce Ayadi Hinckley  
ALFA President

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### March 26 — Food for Thought

*Oriental Rugs* with speaker Robert Dermardirosian. **FREE.**  
2:30 PM, Ellis White Lecture Hall, Hammond Hall.

### Apr 30 — ALFA Grand Finale

Featuring Russian soprano Olga Lisovskaya and South African writer and historian Neville Frankel. **FREE** (Luncheon \$11).  
11 AM, Hammond Hall.

### May 15 — Blitheworld Estate, Newport Trolley Tour and lunch at the Lobster Pot Restaurant

\$97 cost includes transportation to the Blitheworld Estate and Gardens, and lunch. Bus departs from the BJs Leominster back lot at 8:15 AM, returns about 6 PM.

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From last fall's ALFA Group Trip on a nostalgic scenic train excursion along the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. Read the review on page 3. PHOTO BY KEVIN O'BRIEN

## Meet Your ALFA Teacher

### THE MULTI-TALENTED GAIL ALLO

BY JOYCE HINCKLEY / PHOTO BY SETH BRODY



Gail Allo is familiar to many ALFAs because she teaches Flower Arranging, sometimes called the ALFA program's "happiest class". These classes are always full because Gail has a unique gift for creating beauty with flowers, and she inspires everyone she teaches to do the same. Everyone leaves these classes feeling both competent and creative.

However magical flowers are, they are only a part of who she is. Gail Zimmermann Allo grew up in various Brooklyn neighborhoods including Bay Ridge, where many residents shared her Norwegian background. She obtained her BA in English Lit from Brooklyn College, working in the NYC area before, during, and after her education. It was because of a job

before college that Gail was first introduced to opera. We'll get back to that. Right now, it's important to know Gail has an MAT from Cambridge College, and used it to teach at Leominster High School. She also owned Dodo's Phlowers in Leominster for 18 years. She is a widow and her great-grandchildren call her "grandmamma."

Since she was 18, Gail has loved opera, and began sharing her passion with ALFAs this fall in a class called "Introduction to Opera." She saw her first opera on a date and fell in love—with the music (not the man). For many years, she had subscriptions to both the Met and NYC operas. After she relocated to Massachusetts, she continued to see live opera whenever possible and for several years, has been attending live broadcasts from the Met at local movie theaters.

Gail says it's hard to pick a favorite opera but mentions *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Traviata*, and *Rigoletto*. Her favorite singers include Luciano Pavarotti and Jonas Kaufmann: for a single aria, she chose *Va Pensiero* from *Nabucco*. You're in for a treat if you listen to of these, but an even bigger one if you sign up the next time Gail does an opera class. As with any class Gail teaches, you are guaranteed to leave happy.

### President's Notes (continued from page 1)

Unlike many lifelong learning programs, we have never had and do not intend to have membership dues. Our classes will continue to be affordable. We will not fill auditoriums with anonymous faces. The opportunities to engage with each other and with instructors will not change. Volunteers will always be how ALFA functions. Yes, we have incredible and increasing support from our university, but it is the members who keep us going. This was true when the program began and it continues to be the way we do things today. What we want to maintain is the special sense of community, engagement, and joy that comes with being part of ALFA. We don't want that to change as we grow. We want to remain students, participants, instructors, aides, committee or board members, and friendly faces in an event or class. We want to remain lifelong learners who have created and intend to keep the sense of welcome, inclusion, and excitement that make ALFA unique. Go us!

## GET INVOLVED

ALFA could not function without the help of volunteers. If you would like to lend a hand, please contact the ALFA office at:

**Fitchburg State University**  
**McKay Campus School, Room C-154**  
**(978) 665-3706 • [alfa@fitchburgstate.edu](mailto:alfa@fitchburgstate.edu)**

We welcome your ideas for news items as well as artwork, poems, and articles for publication in the ALFA-Bits newsletter. Contact us for information about submitting your material.

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Paul Weizer sheds light on a case that many of us remember.

## Landmark Cases in Constitutional Law

BY PAUL CLANCY / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Landmark Cases in Constitutional Law was very ably taught by Dr. Paul Weizer. To provide some perspective on current activities in Washington, he dug into the history of the Supreme Court and presented five cases that are considered landmark decisions regarding the legal foundations of the structure of government. These decisions (over a period ranging from 1803 to 2000) affected the areas of Judicial Power, the meaning of Federalism, the power to regulate Interstate Commerce, Presidential War Powers, and Executive Privilege. Each class included an overview/explanation of not only the case, but also the bigger issues wrapped up in each court decision. Class participation, via questions tossed out to the class and comments sought, was encouraged and remains an active part of Dr. Weizer's teaching style. Professor Weizer brought current events into perspective by pointing out that even two of history's most highly regarded presidents, Lincoln and FDR (who wanted to add six Supreme Court justices so that he could push across his New Deal legislation), had to be reined in by the Supreme Court. This was a very thought-provoking class and I would recommend it for everyone regardless of their individual political affiliation.



## FALL FUNGI—MUSHROOMS!

Class members showing a very large Polypore with instructor Joe Choiniere (back, second from right). We didn't eat it!

BY JON JONES / PHOTO BY JON JONES

## Kin Schilling and the Cornucopia Project FOOD FOR THOUGHT

BY LINDA KENNEDY / PHOTO BY LINDA KENNEDY

The Cornucopia Project began in 2006 with Kin Schilling, a few children, some seeds and an empty triangle in town. It grew into a wonderful program for the ConVal School District in New Hampshire. Slowly the project developed into a project for the classroom, then the school and then eight schools in the District. During this time, The Cornucopia Project became a non-profit and developed a curriculum for the classrooms that included construction, math, English, science, nutrition, organics, and cooking. In the spring, the children built raised beds, prepared the soil and planted the seeds. Students cared for the plants during the school year and families volunteered over the



Kin Schilling with Honey Bee fliers

summer. As vegetables ripened, they were used in the school cafeterias. At the fall harvest, students prepared a dinner for the community all with produce from the gardens. Dinner included soup, salad, and bread. Attendees brought their own bowls, utensils, and reusable napkins.

The success of this project can be measured by noting that approximately sixty percent of the families involved have taken the Cornucopia Project methods and created their own family gardens.

Kin retired from Cornucopia but it is still going strong in the District. She has now partnered up with Melissa Stephenson and The N.H. Honey Bee Initiative to spread the word on the importance of honey bees. Together, they have raised enough money to promote their project by having a mural of hundreds of bees painted on the Community Building in Peterborough. It is a sight to behold!



## On the Road to America

### IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES FROM THREE CONTINENTS

BY JOANNE HUSE / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Five guys from three continents walk into a bar and ...

Wrong story! But five guys from three continents did walk into an ALFA classroom over five weeks to talk about their immigrant stories from five different countries.

Bill Ayadi told of the upheaval in Tunisia that led him to continue his studies in Paris where he met his future (American) wife, and so moved to the United States for love. Aldo Bianco was brought to New York as a child so his parents could make a better life, but his family never lost the dream of perhaps going back to Italy one day. John Paul converted to Christianity as a young man, left India to pursue his education, and found his calling to teach in the colleges and universities of the American Midwest. Peder Pedersen's grandfather actually emigrated to Minnesota in the early 1900s but was forced to return to Denmark after family tragedies. Decades later, Peder made his own way to the US to pursue graduate studies, fully intending to return home. Love and professional opportunities made him change his plans. Sawkat Anwer also came to America for graduate studies from East Pakistan. But when his visa was up, his own country was in the midst of a civil war so he moved to Germany (home of his future wife). A few years later, he and his wife moved to the US for job and education opportunities.

All five men told their stories with historical context and personal anecdotes. It was a pleasure for ALFAs to get a glimpse into these lives and a broader perspective on immigration.



American Immigrants (from left to right) John Paul (India), Sawkat Anwer (Bangladesh), Peder Pedersen (Denmark), Bill Ayadi (Tunisia), and Aldo Bianco (Italy).



Traveling in style: food, education, and a beautiful day on the lake.

## Lunch on the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad

### LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE FIELD TRIP

BY JOANNE BIANCO / PHOTO BY JOANNE BIANCO

After a very comfortable ride up to the lake by bus between vistas of fall foliage, we arrived at the Scenic Railroad Train Station. The microclimate around the lake made an October day feel like summer. The train cars were refurbished originals from the 1940's. We left the Meredith, NH station and journeyed on to Weirs Beach and further south, passing beautiful lakefront homes and harbors. Hart's Turkey Farm treated us to a Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings, topped off by apple crisp! The delicious meal was served by a conductor who carved the turkey as he travelled down the aisle! He later told interesting stories related to the history of the area as we returned to our bus. It was a day of fun, food, and friends!



### DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A CLASS?

We welcome your suggestions for ways to make ALFA even more responsive to your interests. If you have ideas for a new course or special event—we want to hear them!

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO TEACH A CLASS?

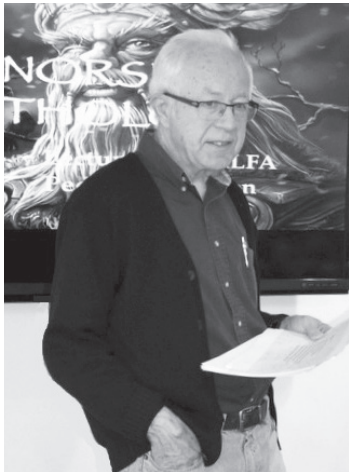
Do you have a special interest or field of expertise? Would you like to share your knowledge with engaged lifelong learners?

Contact the ALFA office at (978) 665-3706.

## Norse Mythology

BY BILL AYADI / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Professor Peder Pedersen, in his wonderful Danish accent, revealed the intricacies of Norse mythology. We learned of the Viking's code of honor, where heroes fight and die in veneration of the gods—a story woven in myths and legends, told and retold in poetry and in prose across centuries. For the Norseman to die in battle, sword



Professor Peder Pedersen

in hand, is to secure his place in the halls of Valhalla where he will feast with the gods and goddesses. Such heroes rise to fight at the side of Odin in the eminent battle of Ragnarök.

We are told of the Norse gods and goddesses of Asgard, and their association with everything in existence including: Odin the Allfather, to whom many of life's essential needs are attributed; Loki, a cunning trickster who had the ability to change his shape and sex and play tricks on humans,

gods, and dwarfs alike; and Dwarfs: subterranean dwellers with excellent abilities in metal forming and fashioning. But the most beautiful beings in Norse mythology are the Elves. It is said that they are more beautiful than the Sun. They live in the realm of Alheim, one the nine worlds in the Norse mythology.

When the myth turns into legend, recount the legend. Peder did this so well.



## AQUA FITNESS

**FITNESS AND FUN IN THE WATER** — Amy LeBlanc's Aqua Fitness class is fun and full of cool women! (There really should be some men in this class.) I was the only newbie. This instructor is lively and energetic and her participants have been returning for years. They say that she tailors her arm, leg and feet movements to everyone's fitness ability from the lowest common denominator upwards, so you will get a great workout, easy on the joints, and definitely a few laughs. Wait till you see her "make a pizza, put it in the oven" move! Thanks, Amy.

BY DEBRA FAUST-CLANCY / PHOTO BY DEBRA FAUST-CLANCY

## STAY INFORMED — Get FSU Text Alerts!

Would you like to receive a text if the University is closed or has a delay? Would you like to be immediately notified if there is an emergency on campus while you are here? Signing up is easy. Just text **"FSUAlert"** to **67283** or **226787**. It's just as easy to stop the messages at any time by texting **"STOP"** to **67283** or **226787**.

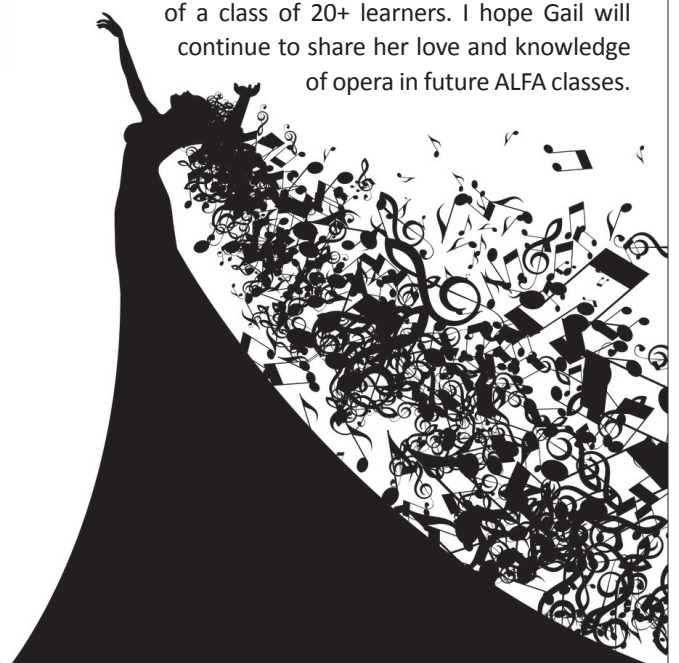
## The Opulence of Opera

### INTRODUCTION TO OPERA

BY SETH BRODY

European opera is a grand and spectacular art form. The operatic repertoire includes much of what one might find on the theatrical stage: intrigues, jealousies, power struggles, romance, emotional and physical violence, comedy, spirituality, fantasy, even dance interludes. Unlike theater productions though, the story lines are set to music and sung by prima donnas (real ones!) and the men around them. These outsized musical and dramatic personalities are magnified and given context by over-the-top sets and costumes, and powered by orchestral music—composed, it so happens, by musical geniuses.

It's not unheard of for an opera listener or attendee to feel overloaded by the experience; the visual and musical content are at least as important as the narrative. In her excellent Intro to Opera class, Gail Allo breaks those components down and makes sense of the art form in all its aspects, with examples. Her enthusiasm is infectious and she easily holds the attention of a class of 20+ learners. I hope Gail will continue to share her love and knowledge of opera in future ALFA classes.





## Behind Bars: THE LITERATURE OF INCARCERATION

BY JANE EPSTEIN / PHOTO BY JON JONES

Professor Lisa Moison's class led to increased awareness of the literary talents of inmates. We had thought-provoking discussions about our own stereotypes of prisoners, and about ways in which prisons might be made more humane. For example, the assumption that inmates are likely to be uneducated or even illiterate was dispelled by the thoughtful essays and poems produced by incarcerated men and women.

Much of the writing centered on a collection of themes: privacy being only in one's head during incarceration; thoughtful reflections on one's past; a pervasive sense of social injustice; the total lack of control over one's life behind bars; and searching for any positive outcome in a long sentence—for instance, is redemption possible?

The class performed an exercise that involved choosing from among an array of photographs of inmates those that most closely related to the reading we had been doing. Many photographs were very affecting and again, led to deeper reflection on our part about the daily lives of incarcerated people.



Dr. Lisa Moison, left, with class.

Incarcerated persons can experience a true sense of freedom when they use writing to examine and express their thoughts and feelings; they also gain the ability to tell their own story, rather than having others tell it. One inmate, **Anita Montoya**, put it this way in the conclusion of her beautiful poem:

*Strange, isn't it?  
I had to get thrown into prison  
To finally learn  
How to be free*

## Discover Eastern Orthodox Christianity

BY MAXINE PINCOTT / PHOTO BY DEBRA FAUST-CLANCY



Cantor Jim Woovis holding an icon of the Holy Trinity.

As with any "discover course" offered by Joyce Ayadi Hinckley, the Christian Orthodox experience was an infusion for the mind. Her co-instructor, Jim Woovis, is Cantor of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Fitchburg. Jim shared his knowledge, using visual material such as icons and pictorial scenes of Eastern Orthodox religious sites, along with an introduction to the Greek language and a full discourse on the Greek religious service.

One class was held at the Russian Icon Museum in Clinton, where we had the opportunity to make our own icons. Another week, we visited The Greek Church in Fitchburg. Adorning the church is a multitude of icons. After an informational lecture on the Service of Holy Preparation, the class was treated to a shortened liturgy with both Jim and the church Priest officiating. As Greeks are known for their hospitality, a feast was waiting for us in the fellowship hall. Joyce made traditional Koliva-boiled wheat (symbolic of hope in the Resurrection), and Spanakorizo, a recipe from her YaYa. Other ladies in the class added their specialties to the menu.

On our last day of class, we went to the Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.



## WOOD CARVING CARICATURES

It's safe to say that instructor Edwin Laetz inspires these obviously motivated students!

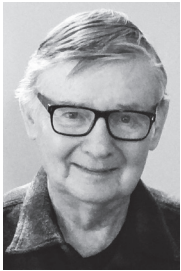
PHOTO BY JON JONES



## FALL BIRDS

IT'S SUPERMAN ... IT'S A PLANE ... IT'S A BIRD! Alison O'Hare's Fall Birds at Wachusett Meadow brought many ALFA bird-lovers together for another avian adventure, stalking through the wildlife sanctuary and looking at a myriad of our fascinating feathered friends.

BY JOANNE HUSE / PHOTO BY JON JONES



Robert Champlin

## The Pleistocene Ice Age and Extinct Mammals

BY KEVIN SMITH / PHOTO BY KEVIN SMITH

Professor Emeritus Robert Champlin guided our group on a trip in time through four eras of cold and ice occurring 10,000 to 1,000,000 years ago and their effects on the land, water, and animals from Cape Cod to the Great Lakes and beyond.

Lectures, video selections, topographical/contour, and geological maps were used to highlight the various topics of discussion.

We covered a million years of climate change, formation of the Great Lakes and the immense salt mines under several of their lake beds, and glacial impacts on the topography of the northern USA and, more specifically, central Massachusetts. We also discussed the spread and activities of early man which included hunting, clearing land, the use of fire, and how these caused the extinction of giant mammals such as saber-toothed cats, short-faced bears (50% larger than grizzlies), huge beavers (440 lbs / 9 feet long), American Hyenas, 155 lb Capybaras, Mammoths, and ancient horses.



As the Permafrost melts due to global warming, additional well-preserved animal specimens may be discovered, adding to the knowledge-base we explored during this fascinating course.

Thank you, Professor Champlin.

## Coming of Age Movies

BY GAIL HOAR / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Jeff Long, a film buff, professional critic and first-time ALFA instructor, taught Coming of Age Movies by selecting three films that were representative of the theme. The films he chose offered a variety of perspectives and were less well-known than some blockbuster movies in the same genre. Jeff managed the relatively brief class time by breaking the films into segments, leaving time for discussion at the end of each class period. This format nicely set up the viewers' anticipation for the next class to either finish watching the movie or to settle into a new tale. Jeff has an encyclopedic knowledge of little-known facts about actors, directors, and others involved in the making of each film and he provided great resources for those who like to delve into behind-the-scenes aspects of the film industry.



Instructor Jeff Long



## Thank You, Volunteers!

BY LINDA KENNEDY

We want to thank all who volunteered to be class aides these first two sessions. Your help is always needed and appreciated.

Class aides from Session 1 are: Richard Olson, Lucille Sampson, Bradford Kennedy, Jon Jones, Roni Beal, Joseph D'Eramo, Merry Cormier, Linda Kennedy, Kristen Gibbons, Winnie Beasley, Sally Hens, Barbara Hoos, Carol Swerzenski, Maxine Pincott, Martha Kaulback, Anne Seed, Mary Alice Girling, Susan Amico, Marie Stansel, Barbara Friedman, Ida Kymalainen, Celeste Fassbender, Joanne Bianco, Linda Olson, Judy Normandine, and Jackie Stanton.

Classaides for session 2 are: Lauretta Conlon, Merry Cormier, Karen Pick, Patty Finneron, Linda Kennedy, Margaret Woovis, Barbara and Tom McQuirk, Mary Alice Girling, Barbara Hoos, Joanne Huse, Linda Olson, Sharon McCullah, Barbara O'Connor, Patricia Thomas, Ann Trodello, Paula Hatch and Barbara Reynolds.

ALFA always needs Class Aides. We have 4 sessions a year and we would like to share the responsibility. If anyone would like to volunteer for an upcoming class please give a call to Linda Kennedy at (978) 400-5259. I promise I answer the phone. Stay warm this winter and those of you in Florida think of us.





## Voices of Resistance in American History

BY PHILIP DECHARLES / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Professor Ben Railton presented an extraordinary literary/historical course titled “Voices of Resistance in American History.” Each class was structured around a period in American history in which inspiring American figures expressed resistance through written text, poetry, violent, and non-violent actions. We considered the women’s resistance during the Revolutionary

The topic provoked thoughtful discussion.

era; the Native American resistance to the removal of the American Indian; the internment resistance by Japanese-American citizens during World War II; the resistance to exclusion by Chinese immigrants; and the African-American resistance to slavery in America. We were given detailed information about the various laws that were passed in Congress pertaining to each period of resistance. The reading material was written by inspiring individuals previously unknown

to us, and provided prior to each class. The writings gave us greater insight which led to lively discussions about tumultuous moments in American history.



## HOP A BUS TO ALFA CLASSES

Concerns about parking or transportation shouldn’t dissuade potential ALFA students from signing up for classes.

Seniors who live in Fitchburg can call the Fitchburg Senior Center at (978) 829-1790 to register for MART Transportation Services. After the Senior Center relays information to MART, you can call the MART to schedule transportation to and from your ALFA classes.

See the MART website [www.mrta.us/services/coa-service](http://www.mrta.us/services/coa-service) for information about service to communities beyond Fitchburg.

If you are driving, there is always ample, free parking at the Wallace Civic Center. The University provides free campus shuttles, serviced by MART. It is easy to use and gets you from your car to your destination without much walking. Two shuttles run on a continuous loop, which usually means there is one every 10 minutes.



## HOLIDAY FLOWER DESIGNS

A DELIGHTFUL WAY TO SPEND THE AFTERNOON—Beautiful flowers, a lovely aroma and Gail Allo, a great instructor in flower arranging. We were able to make and take home arrangements for the table; for sympathy; for fall we had flowers in a pumpkin and a boxwood centerpiece that could be decorated for Thanksgiving and then redecorated for Christmas. Gail walked around and made suggestions so that we all had successful arrangements. Thank you Gail.

BY LINDA KENNEDY / PHOTO BY JON JONES

## Free Will:

### WHAT IT IS, DO WE HAVE IT, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

BY MARTHA KAULBACK / PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

The ALFA course Free Will: What It Is, Do We Have it, and Why Does It Matter is taught by Dr. David Svolba, a well-published educator in the area of philosophy who clearly enjoys the subject matter and stimulating discussions of the same. If the subject matter seems daunting on first consideration, be assured that David brings considerable expertise and an engaging teaching style to the classes. Do not expect to leave the course with a comprehensive answer to the topic at hand; rather anticipate very lively and insightful discussion in the classes, and a fuller understanding of the controversy at course conclusion. This was one of the most enjoyable classes I’ve taken through ALFA.



David Svolba exploring a perennial question.





## A DRAWING MEDITATION

**EXERCISE: DRAW YOUR OWN HAND** — Parameters: Draw a lifted, curved hand (what you see) as a form, without lifting your pencil from the paper OR looking at your drawing until completion. This exercise is extremely difficult for most novices. It teaches many things: discipline, patience and sharpens observation skills. Even more demanding when done with a non-dominant hand! This is an exciting new drawing class led by Ann-Marie LaBollita.

BY DEBRA FAUST-CLANCY / PHOTO BY DEBRA FAUST-CLANCY

## Rock Walk

BY LINDA KENNEDY / PHOTO BY BRAD KENNEDY

On a spectacular fall day, Peter Capodagli led a group of 43 ALFA students and friends on a hike from the Rollstone Boulder in Fitchburg's historic Upper Common to the original site of the Boulder on the summit of Rollstone Hill. Peter provided a running commentary on Fitchburg history, telling us of some early Fitchburg leaders and the early history of the Boulder. We learned that the Boulder has been moved three times: twice on the top of Rollstone Hill to make room for granite quarrying, and a final time to the Upper Common. This final relocation had the Boulder blown-up into 45 pieces, moved and reassembled on the Common. We had a perfect day for the hike with views of the countryside that were enhanced by an amazing collection of graffiti in the abandoned rock quarries on the hill. The "Rock Walk Trail" is being upgraded with better access to the top of Rollstone Hill making this hike a gem in the collection of Fitchburg hiking trails.



## Cell Culture and the Biotech Revolution

BY SETH BRODY / PHOTO BY SETH BRODY

Cell culture is a collection of technologies that is fundamental to understanding of disease and aging, development of drugs and vaccines, and advancements in biotechnology such as genetic engineering and growth of new organs outside the body.



Dr. John Ryan

It is a rare opportunity to learn and interact directly with a world-class scientific researcher who is also an excellent lecturer and explainer. Dr. John Ryan has played a part in the advancement of cell culture for decades, has authored papers and been cited in other researches' work, and has patents for several inventions (for each of which he received a two-dollar bill from his employer).

Dr. Ryan recalled sitting in a conference with both Jonas Salk and Salk's fellow researcher and arch-nemesis, Albert Sabin. I'm certain that Dr. Ryan could keep the anecdotes flowing for a very long time, but the core of the class was his elucidation of cell biology (along with its underlying chemistry and physics), genetics, and techniques and motivations for doing various kinds of cell culture. This may sound daunting, but Dr. Ryan presented his material in terms that all of us could understand, and he entertained questions with exceptional generosity.



## CULINARY ADVENTURES

**GOOD DRINKS, FOOD, AND STORIES**—Dave Celuzza, owner of Slattery's Restaurant, took ALFA students on a tour through Germany tasting beer and bratwurst, Italian wines and gnocchi, Beaujolais Nouveau, Boston Cocktails and Bubbies. The food pairings were outstanding and Dave shared his secret gnocchi recipe. Dave also shared stories of his favorite restaurants, wine, and food. Eataly in Boston is one of his favorites. Class comments included "instructive," "entertaining," "great course," and "delightful."

BY LINDA KENNEDY / PHOTO BY LINDA KENNEDY

## Believe ... Believe ... Believe ...



Arllen Acevedo

### LEARN SELF-HYPNOSIS

BY CAROL DECAROLIS / PHOTO BY JON JONES

BELIEVE—the mantra we learned from our dynamic and articulate leader, Arllen Acevedo, was paramount to success in the class. Under her tutelage, we progressed from complete ignorance to an understanding of the techniques necessary to help us achieve a hypnotic state. We all set different personal goals that we hoped self-hypnosis would help us to achieve and we had to BELIEVE we could succeed.

Arllen's simple 3-Step Method involved homework starting at the first class by saying "Every day, in every way, I get better and better." We continued the second week with the Pre-Sleep Technique. The third week involved Programmed Suggestions, and finally the GIFT (Goal Imaging Focusing Techniques). She stressed that we have to practice, practice, practice at home to get more

comfortable and adept with these techniques. Arllen stressed that you cannot be hypnotized against your will. While under hypnosis, you will not do anything that is against your moral compass. Many thanks to our instructor who gave us this great class. She made us all so comfortable and took the scariness away with her positive, understanding, fun demeanor.



Learn Self-Hypnosis class with instructor Arllen Acevedo



### ALFA WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE EVENT

There were about 50 ALFAs in attendance with an additional 30 undergraduate students in Ellis White to learn about the Women's Suffrage Movement on its 100th anniversary.

PHOTO BY  
LISA MOISON



**NOTE TO POTENTIAL CLASS AIDE VOLUNTEERS:** During the weeks before classes begin, the Welcoming Committee tries to contact ALFA members to ask them to serve as class aides. That's not always easy because proliferating robocalls and solicitations have made many people leery of answering calls from numbers they don't recognize. We understand! But if you receive a call from Linda Olson or Linda Kennedy, and we leave a message, please respond.





## Active for Life

Most ALFA courses aim to stimulate creativity and intellect, but several courses promoting lifelong fitness and wellness continue to be perennial favorites. Among these health and fitness offerings are courses focusing on stretching, yoga, meditation, dance exercise, hiking, snowshoeing, biking group, and more. Here are a few of the offerings this spring:

- STRETCH & TONE
- YOGA FOR PAIN RELIEF
- AQUA FITNESS
- ZUMBA FITNESS®
- LET YOUR YOGA DANCE®
- ALFA WALK, SKI, AND SNOWSHOE ABOUT
- STRETCH IT!
- GUIDED MEDITATION
- BREATHE YOUR WAY INTO LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCES
- LEARN SELF-HYPNOSIS
- ALFA BIKING GROUP

You can view all of ALFA's offerings and take advantage of our easy online registration at:  
**[marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/ALFA](http://marketplace.fitchburgstate.edu/ALFA)**



## STRETCH IT!

**WORKING THE BARRE** — Judith Lindstedt's Stretch It class, located at Fitchburg State University's Recreation Center Dance Studio is a real treat. It's one and a half hours of movement and stretching with a very knowledgeable and entertaining instructor. As a former dancer, Judith provides valuable information about body mechanics as well as some rudimentary instruction on ballet positions. Her expertise enables her to quickly identify and modify students' incorrect positions. One leaves the class feeling thoroughly stretched. I highly recommend this class.

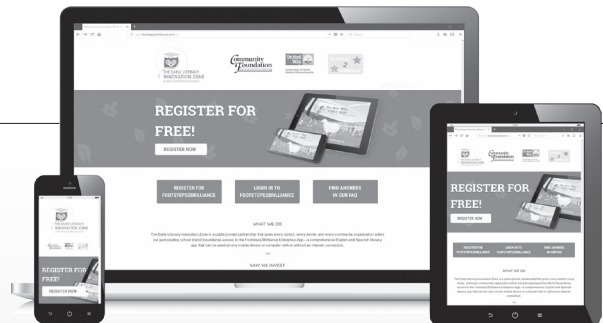
BY LINDA KENNEDY / PHOTO BY JON JONES

## GET INVOLVED IN LITERACY

Early literacy is the cornerstone of future success for children. The earlier we start reading to them, the more likely they are to be healthy, happy, and successful adults. And so several local communities have banded together to start an early literacy initiative—the only one like it in the country—that allows you to conveniently use your mobile phone to read “on the go” with children. It is called Footsteps 2 Brilliance.

The participating communities/schools are: Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner, Lunenburg, Townsend, Ashby, Winchendon, Pepperell, Athol, Royalton, Ayer, Shirley, Clinton, and the Narragansett Public Schools.

How can you help? Download the Footsteps 2 Brilliance app on your smart phone, tablet, or home computer by visiting **[www.footsteps2brilliance.com/iz](http://www.footsteps2brilliance.com/iz)**. The app can also be downloaded in English or Spanish.



Many of our ALFAs have grandchildren, nieces and nephews, young neighbors, and may even be full-time caregivers for young children. Research shows that as little as 15 minutes of daily exposure to reading can result in a significant improvement in the literacy of a young child.

Please pass this information along to anyone in your “circle of love” who might benefit from signing up for the program. Fitchburg State University is a proud partner for this important regional initiative, and I know that our ALFA community will do all that it can to support the effort.

## ALFA—What's It All About?

Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area (ALFA) offers non-credit daytime classes and special events organized by its member/volunteers in partnership with the professional staff at Fitchburg State University.

Each year ALFA presents dozens of classes keyed to a wide variety of interests. Most classes run 90 minutes one day a week for five weeks. While some classes are held at off-campus venues, most are at the McKay Campus. We welcome your suggestions for new courses, programs, and special events.

The idea of creating a local adult learning program originated with Shirley Pick and Dr. Philip Fallon. Enthusiastic support from Dr. Robert Antonucci, then President of FSU, and Dr. Shirley Wagner, then Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, helped make the dream a reality. ALFA is directed by a volunteer Executive Board and advised by Dr. Lisa Moison.

The community response has been gratifying. Enrollments in the two spring sessions totaled more than 600, and all seats on ALFA day trips were filled. A course brochure on winter-spring courses and registration will be available soon. For other information, or to be added to ALFA's mailing list, contact the ALFA office in Fitchburg State's McKay Campus Building C, (978) 665-3706.

## ALFA WEATHER POLICY

When Fitchburg State University cancels classes or has a delayed opening, no ALFA classes will be held that day. The policy applies to all ALFA classes, both on the Fitchburg State campus and at satellite locations such as the Fitchburg Art Museum and Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary in Princeton.

## FALL CALENDAR

ALFA classes in the spring of 2019 run from January through April. In the calendar below, Session 3 class dates are in YELLOW blocks, Session 4 dates in GREEN.

	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
Jan 2019	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Feb 2019	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	1	2
Mar 2019	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Apr 2019	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27