

ALFA**bits**

ALFA—ADULT LEARNING IN THE FITCHBURG AREA

President's Notes

It's been an exciting year for ALFA. More people have taken more courses than ever before. We're dancing, quilting, watching film noir, and speaking French in classes both on and off campus. All of this happens because ALFA runs on volunteers and the support of Fitchburg State University.

If you've taken classes, you're greeted by volunteers and your class aide is a volunteer. The newsletter you're reading is put together by volunteers. I could go on, but the basic point is that ALFA is a unique organization based on collaboration between the local community and Fitchburg State University. While the ALFA Board includes two members from the university's Graduate and Continuing Education Department and a Fitchburg State faculty member, the rest of the board is us.

Your fellow ALFAs represent the community and set the goals and objectives for the program. Essentially, this means designing the curriculum, choosing topics and presenters for Food for Thought and the Shirley Pick Spring Series, and setting up Special Event trips. What you participate in as an ALFA member is community driven and designed. All the University asks is for us to follow the academic calendar and fit our classes/programs into available space.

What makes ALFA amazing and unique is that we are supported, but not directed by Fitchburg State. Course and program fees don't come close to covering the cost of our program. What volunteers contribute doesn't approach the university's share. ALFA is being welcomed to more Fitchburg State facilities and activities. You all know about Fitchburg State faculty teaching ALFA courses, but you may not know about the support from Continuing Education, printing, facilities, IT, and so on. We are a real part of our university and are supported as such.

So, thank you to all of the ALFA volunteers and to Fitchburg State University for making 2017/2018 the best ALFA year yet! We already know that the coming year will offer awesome classes and programs. This is also the year in which ALFA begins to explore new ways to cooperate with both our university and our local communities. Stay tuned. It's only getting better.



Joyce Ayadi Hinckley
ALFA President

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sept. 25 — Food for Thought

The Cornucopia Project with speaker Kin Schilling
2:30 p.m., Ellis White Lecture Hall
in the Hammond Building

Oct. 9 — Lake Winnepesaukee Foliage Tour

\$72 cost includes bus, train ride, and dinner.
Bus leaves the Mall at Whitney Field, Leominster
at 9:30 AM, returns approximately 5 p.m.

Oct. 30 — Food for Thought

*Women's Suffrage and the Stories Behind
How Women Got the Vote* with speaker Fredie Kay
2:30 PM / Ellis White Lecture Hall
in the Hammond Building

Inside this issue:

Meet your ALFA Teacher	pg. 1
Fall Preview	pg. 2-4
Active for Life	pg. 9
Trees by Their Bark.....	pg. 12
Film Noir in an Age of Anxiety	pg. 14

ALSO INSIDE:

- Italian-American History
- Drawing Inspired by the Masters
- Cities on the Sea
- History of Photography
- Dystopian Literature
- Understanding Autism
- Cultural Heritage Through Images

... and more, including
(right) Degas' *Little Dancer* at the MFA.





ALFA-Bits photographer, Gail Hoar, says these photos of Adem Elveren in the classroom only begin to capture the energy and enthusiasm he displays while teaching subjects close to his heart. His debut ALFA class on inequality, she says, was “An energy-filled adventure into a difficult and often confusing subject.”

TRULY A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY JOYCE HINCKLEY / PHOTOS BY GAIL HOAR

“You’re family now,” Dr. Adem Elveren says to his ALFA class while smiling. Dr. Elveren, or Adem as he prefers ALFAs to call him, knows about family. He comes from a large, close Turkish family. He’s the youngest of five: three older brothers and one sister. They all lived in Urfa, a city of about 560,000 folks in southeastern Turkey. That’s a long way from Fitchburg.

How Adem came to Fitchburg State University and ALFA begins with family. He says his two older brothers were his early heroes, so he followed them to university in Ankara. He got his Bachelor of Arts degree there and knew by the time he was a junior that his life’s goal was to be a university professor

Meet Your ALFA Teacher

in economics. This was a difficult goal, but with his family’s encouragement Adem left Turkey to come to Boston University to complete a Master’s program, and then to University of Utah in Salt Lake City for his doctorate.

Adem has given his family many reasons to be proud of him. He has an impressive list of publications in both social policy and defense and peace economics. He has worked closely with renowned economist James Kenneth Galbraith and is a visiting scholar at the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University. Admirable accomplishments!

But I think his family would be most pleased with the compassion and expertise he brings to his classroom. Like most economists, Adem uses charts—lots of charts!—but they are not dull or boring. They serve as a springboard for explanation and discussion; those lines tell you about the world and what’s happening to its people. In his class, inequality is not purely a topic to be studied, but something to be understood and deeply felt. The students respond with questions, points of view, and passion. It’s more like a lively family discussion than a stuffy classroom. Lovely.

Adem wasn’t sure about what teaching an ALFA class would be. Now that he’s done one it’s clear that he enjoyed it as much as the ALFA students and he will teach for us again. We always say ALFA is a community or family of lifelong learners. It’s pretty clear we’ve just added another member. Welcome, Adem.

How to 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

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.



EDITOR—GRF

PHOTOGRAPHY—Gail Hoar, Jon Jones

WRITERS—Joyce Hinckley, Joanne Huse

DESIGN AND LAYOUT—FSU Print Services

SPECIAL THANKS to Seth Brody for his meticulous copy editing and assistance in preparing this issue of ALFA Bits for publication.

A Course for Every Interest

FALL-WINTER COURSE PREVIEW



ALFA's Curriculum Committee has lined up an array of courses targeting a wide range of interests. Here's a partial listing of offerings in the coming fall-winter sessions:

Science and Nature

- The Pleistocene Ice Age and Extinct Animals
- Fall Birds at Wachusett Meadow
- Fall Fungi

History

- Landmark Cases in Constitutional Law
- Immigrant Experiences from Three Continents
- Voices of Resistance in American History

Health and Fitness

- Guided Meditation
- Stretch and Tone
- ALFA Biking Group
- Breathe Your Way to Life-Altering Experiences

Travel

- Italy's Five Best Travel Cities: Rome, Venice, Florence, Milan, and Verona

Literature and Philosophy

- Discover Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- Contemporary Young Adult Literature
- Norse Mythology
- Free Will: What is it?

Learning and Polishing Skills

- Making Great Videos and Photographs
- Holiday Flower Designs
- Dining to Learn
- Genealogy Without the Big Dot Com
- Beginning iPhone or iPad
- How to Improve Your Memory
- Specialty Tea Series
- Writing Your Family History

The Arts

- Introduction to Opera
- Drawing Technique for All Levels
- Woodcarving Caricatures

Ideas for courses come from a variety of sources, including proposals from individuals with expertise in a particular subject or activity who would like to share it with eager-to-learn ALFAs and courses suggested by members of the ALFA Executive Board and its Curriculum Committee.

Equally important are ideas from students who offer their suggestions for future courses via the class evaluation forms they fill out. The Curriculum Committee has a substantial backlog of proposals for courses, but your suggestions are nevertheless very welcome. Contact us at (978) 665-3706.

Talk by Author Caps Community Read

COMMUNITY READ FINALE

BY GRF

Denise Kiernan, author of *Girls of Atomic City*, was the keynote speaker at the Fitchburg State University's Community Read Finale. Ms. Kiernan's account of the little-known roles of hundreds of women recruited to help develop the atomic bomb during World War II was the book for this year's Community Read.

Ms. Kiernan recounted highlights of the roles women played at the top-secret facility. She also shared her personal journey from television staff writer to best-selling author and revealed her strategies for coming up with ideas for writing projects.



Keynote speaker
Denise Kiernan, author
of *Girls of Atomic City*.



Denise Kiernan makes a point at Community Read finale.

ALFAs who participated in the community read book discussion led by Dr. Lisa Moison, director of Professional Studies and Extended Campus Programs, were well-represented among the readers who filled the Main Lounge in Hammond Hall.



Farewell to Joe Moser

BY JOANNE HUSE

SPOTLIGHT

When Joe Moser joined the ALFA pantheon of remarkable teachers, he was already active in the community as a host of the Fitchburg Public Library's film series. His first ALFA course in the spring of 2014 was *Irish Drama and Film* and in a recent conversation with ALFA-Bits, he said his first encounter with ALFA students was overwhelming. He loved having a roomful of students who had a keen interest in the subject and an inclination toward curiosity and debate.

Over the years he said he has come to cherish ALFAs for their breadth of knowledge and their willingness to listen, absorb, and chew over the finer points of Chekhov, film noir, and propaganda, among other subjects.

Joe gave his all in planning for his ALFA courses, providing a syllabus, readings, discussion questions, and (of course) a list of relevant films. Along with ALFA Board members Eric Budd and Karen Pick, Joe helped make Winterlude a popular annual event between semesters.

Unfortunately for us, Joe and his family are moving back to his home state of Minnesota, and we who have cherished him and his scholarship are feeling very sad indeed. At a recent farewell event, Joe said that being an ALFA instructor has been an honor and a privilege and that the experience has been a highlight of his life. He asks ALFAs to be sure to share the joy of ALFA with others, especially young people.

Thank you, Joe, and best wishes from all of us.



Professor Joe Moser

We need your ideas and experience!

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.

SPECIAL EVENT FALL PREVIEW



Luncheon on a Scenic Railroad

BY SALLY HENS

Join your ALFA friends on Oct. 9 to enjoy a nostalgic, scenic train excursion along the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee between Meredith and Lakeport, N.H. Travel through the front yards of many of the fine resort homes. Take in the fall foliage. The lake will always be in view.

Aboard the train, riders will enjoy a delicious turkey dinner catered by Hart's Turkey Farm. The \$72 cost includes bus, train ride, and dinner.

We begin this adventure at 9:30 a.m. at the Mall at Whitney Field in Leominster near the Entertainment Cinemas and return at about 5:30 p.m. Capacity is 47 people. Accessibility: There is a short walk to the train, and there are stairs to board the train.

A Day at the Museum

SPECIAL EVENT

BY NANCY TURNER / PHOTO BY MARIE CATON

A fabulous ALFA trip to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston was enjoyed by 48 guests on a lovely warm January day. Upon arrival Special Events chair Judy Shaughnessy checked us in, and maps were dispensed. Headphones for self-guided tours were available for rent. Attendees were then free to explore the exhibitions at their own pace.

Most impressive was the display of Dale Chihuly's 42-foot-tall lime green glass and steel icicle tower. Art treasures of the many galleries from contemporary art to art of the ancient world were a source of wonder and delight. The Art of the Americas gallery held a world-class collection, as did the displays of sculpture, decor, musical instruments, and jewelry of other galleries.

Of special delight was the display explaining the discovery of a missing Van Gogh painting. Scholars knew of a painting titled *Wild Vegetation* only from the artist's letters. The mystery of its whereabouts was solved when X-ray analysis revealed that Van Gogh had painted *Ravine*, now hanging in the MFA's Impressionist Gallery, over the earlier work.

Attendees were free to choose from four dining options designed to suit taste and pocketbook. Gift shops, as usual, were a pleasant way to end this trip.



Elaine and Jim Page were inspired by Renoir's *Dance at Bougival* at the MFA.



Lunenburg photographer Eric Vickery presents his photographs of Iceland and Greenland.

Photos for Thought

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

BY EMILY FINE / PHOTOS BY GRF

At the March Food for Thought event a full house of ALFAs were wowed by Eric Vickery's photographic tour of Iceland and Greenland.

The award-winning photographer traveled to southern Iceland in the depths of winter with a small group of photographers from 10 countries. Together they explored waterfalls, blue lagoons, ice arches, and deep ice caves. The low sun's rays shone through the ice, creating exquisite designs and colors. The Northern Lights put on a tremendous show.

During the trip, Eric met Kerry Koepping, director of the Arctic Arts Project, which provides photographic documentation of the warming arctic regions. The project aims to bring awareness, perspective, and greater understanding of the effects of climate change. Eric presented a 2016 video from another organization, the Arctic Circle Assembly.

During a summer trip with his family, Eric returned to Iceland. He used a drone for many of his photographs. He also used computer software to combine winter and summer images of the same scenes. Travelling along the coast of Greenland in the schooner "Donna Wood," Eric witnessed glaciers calving.

To see more of Eric Vickery's work, go to vickeryphoto.com. The Arctic Arts video is at arcticartsproject.com.



Photographer: Eric Vickery

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FALL PREVIEW

Two Thought-Provoking Talks

BY EMILY FINE

Two challenging ALFA programs are planned for the fall Food for Thought series.

On Sept. 23 Kin Schilling will trace the history of the Cornucopia Project. Founded in 2006, the project's stated goal is to "seek to better the lives of our community members by providing programming that empowers them to grow their own food, teaches them about sustainable and organic growing methods, and encourages them to make healthy food choices."

That mission is good for kids, families, community, and our planet. The project's programs include school gardens, Cool Chefs youth cooking classes, Farm to Fork high school agriculture, and community education.

Come learn how Kin's love of cooking and gardening on a small plot of land grew from a hobby to a CSA to the Cornucopia Project. Kin's work earned her New Hampshire Magazine's award as one of NH's Remarkable Women of Cuisine in 2013.

On Oct. 30 Freddie Kay will celebrate the stories of the women behind the movement that succeeded in winning women the vote nearly 100 years ago.

The program, just days before the midterm congressional election, comes at a perfect time. Ms. Kay, founder and president of the Women's Suffrage Celebration Coalition of Massachusetts, will teach us about the inspiring and dramatic history of women's suffrage. The coalition is dedicated to commemorating and celebrating the centennial in August 2020 of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing women the right to vote.

Ms. Kay is an attorney and advocate for women's rights, a member of the Equal Pay Coalition of Massachusetts, the Women's Vote Centennial Initiative Task Force of the National Women's Party, and the Votes for Women National Trail Committee of the National Collaborative of Women's History Sites.

Both programs will be held at 2:30 p.m. in the Ellis White Lecture Hall in the Hammond Building.

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**.

A Study of Conflict, Change

WINTERLUDE 2018

BY CAROL DECAROLIS / PHOTOS BY GRF

ALFA's third annual film day was a wonderful interlude after one of the most frigid weeks in recent history. Dr. Eric Budd and Dr. Joe Moser, two outstanding Fitchburg State University faculty members, donated their time and expertise to lead the examination of the topic "Conflict and Promise of Change."

Dr. Budd first spoke about the many ways we who live in a free society have to bring about political change. The film he chose, *Desert Dancer*, depicted the life of a young man in Iran who was not able to pursue his dream of dancing openly because of oppression by the regime in power. The film followed his life and the lengths to which he had gone to be able to express himself through dance. This true story was powerful; it was filmed beautifully and with compassion.

After a short lunch break Dr. Moser presented his selection, *Pride*, a true story about the conflict between striking Welsh coal miners and the British government. When London's gay activists decided to help the miners in their struggle, the situation became difficult. The film portrayed the conflict with

humor, and the character depictions were powerful and so true to life. The resolution required all three sides (the miners, the activists, and the government) to change.

After each film the professors led a lively discussion during which the audience was encouraged to present views on the topic and on the films.

The notion of a free program during the university's intersession break, spearheaded by ALFA board member Karen Pick, was embraced by all who filled the hall to overflowing.



ALFAs packed the Winterlude screening room in Hammond Hall.



Eric Budd and Joe Moser field comments from ALFAs (left).

Winterlude snacks (below).



Thank You, Volunteers!

BY LINDA KENNEDY

ALFA wishes to thank all of the class aide volunteers. It's an important job to keep everyone informed about ALFA info, cancelations, and events in and around the Fitchburg area. We appreciate all that you do.

The following people were class aides during Sessions 3 and 4: Dorothy Smith, Jon Jones, Barbara Jablonski, Barbara Reynolds, Maxine Pincott, Kathleen Pliska, Mary Alice Girling, Linda Kennedy, Karen Pick, Sharon Donahue, Harry Semerjian, Sharon Cetrano, Carol Raymond, Barbara McQuirk, Thomas McQuirk, Betty Gelinas, Dorothy Cormier, Richard Olson, Gail Hoar, Joanne Bianco, Marie Stansel, Roni Beal, Barbara Edsell, Diane Rouleau, Judy Normandin, Filomena Didiano, Diane Pedersen, Janet Coleman, Chris Erban, and Elaine Page. Greeters were Linda Olson, Judy Normandin, and Karen Pick.

Our deep appreciation to all the volunteers who help to make ALFA a success.

A Voyage to the Era of Sail

MYSTIC SEAPORT TRIP

BY MARIE CATON

Although the spring trip to Mystic Seaport began with the threat of rain, the sun won out. Provisioned with maps of the Seaport, we set out to explore on our own.

Some of us took the harbor cruise. Others explored the Seaport buildings, which provide a glimpse back into American maritime history. In the print shop, we watched type being set and learned the origins of common phrases such as “upper and lower case” letters. In the cooperage, we saw how brandy barrels were made and how workers could easily move a 700-pound cask.



Special Events Committee members Elaine Page, Marie Caton, Carol DeCarolis, and Sally Hens try out their sea legs.

There was a whaling museum to explore and demonstrations on rope-making, sail-stitching, and navigating by the stars. There also were restored vessels of another era, figureheads, and ship carvings. In the working shipyard, restoration of the Mayflower II is the current project. A detailed scale model provided a bird's-eye view of the 250 dwellings, barns, and shops of Mystic Seaport in 1870. Each exhibit offered a different perspective of our nation's history with the sea and voyages on the water.

We enjoyed a leisurely lunch at Latitude 41, featuring a full gourmet meal in our own dining area, offering great views of the harbor. It turned out to be a perfect day.

Session d'été au café français

BY JOYCE HINCKLEY

ALFA FRENCH CAFÉ has a new focus. We meet for 1½ hours every two weeks and speak French. News, daily life, literature are discussed. We're going to continue on our own during the summer and return as ALFA French Café in the fall.

If you're moderately or more fluent in French and would like to join us, contact Billy Ayadi at billayadi@comcast.net.



FATV's New Director

BY GRF

As ALFA students know, retired police Lt. Glenn Fossa's interests range far beyond the nitty-gritty of police work. In one course he focused on steps people can take to enhance their personal safety. In another, he surveyed the history of the automobile in the United States.

Fossa also has a longstanding interest in videography and public access television. He served 13 years on the Fitchburg Access Television board and is familiar to FATV viewers as an on-air reporter. Earlier this year, he took that commitment a step farther, taking on the role of the station's executive director.

Fossa's role as an occasional ALFA teacher is just one facet of FATV's relationship with Fitchburg State University, as he noted in an interview with the Worcester Telegram & Gazette. Among other things, FATV offers a for-credit course for FSU students, a relationship that has resulted in more than one full-time hire.

Fossa's new responsibilities have not changed his commitment to ALFA. A new course, “Making Great Videos and Photographs,” is coming in the fall.



Glenn Fossa
FATV's New Director

Birds, Bark, Fungus, and More

WINTER WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

BY RICK GARDNER / PHOTO BY JON JONES



Flora or fauna? Joe Choiniere (kneeling) and class members inspect an interesting woodland specimen.

Naturalist Joe Choiniere has learned from experience that it's best to be flexible when dealing with wildlife courses held outdoors. This semester's lack of snow and preponderance of ice meant that animal tracks were scarce, and the walks around Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary were somewhat curtailed.

Despite the poor conditions on the ground, Joe found plenty to show our class. There were lots of holes in the ground to explain, nesting materials to observe, and most of all plenty of scat to identify!

We spent a half-hour before each excursion in the classroom, passing around animal skulls and preserved moles, voles, and shrews. We also learned about published resources for identifying animal tracks (we did actually see a few).

The broad scope of this class allowed time to also talk birds, bark, fungus, and many other topics.

It's always a good idea to spend some time with Joe, an expert on all things natural. But sign up early—he is in high demand.

To Have and Have Not

INEQUALITY

BY MAXINE PINCOTT / PHOTOS BY GAIL HOAR

In this class we delved deeply with Dr. Adem Elveren into what economic inequality is, what it looks like, where it is found, why it matters, and how it came about.

Dr. Elveren explained that in recent decades the disparity in wealth between a tiny group of super-rich individuals and the rest of the population of the United States has grown exponentially. A number of factors such as race, gender, nationality, where one goes to college, access to technology, and the availability of well-paying jobs contribute to inequality. Changes in trade, migration, government, unions, family structure, and corporations are compounding factors.

Inequality is not a worldwide problem, Dr. Elveren noted. The Scandinavian countries, for example, have significantly less disparity in wealth. The concentration of great wealth in the hands of a few matters, because it tends to stifle healthy competition and disproportionately influence national policy—to the detriment of the middle class that is vital for widespread economic success.

This analysis indicates that inequality is increasing in the United States, with no end in sight.



Adem Elveren



ALFAs Martha Crawford and Katherine Hunter discuss inequality issues in Dr. Elveren's class.



ENHANCING YOUR BRIDGE SKILLS

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE — Bridge is more than a card game to participants in this popular course, which focused on playing defense in Session 4. While ALFAs engage in card table combat, instructor Shirley Wagner keeps close watch on the field of battle.

PHOTO BY GAIL HOAR

Exploring One's Inward Journey

GUIDED MEDITATION

BY BRIAN LEDUC

As we progress through life, we face many difficulties, and it is not easy to deal with the stress we go through. I decided to try this class, because although I have much kindness and so much I want to share and teach, I do really have a hard time accepting the world for what it is.

I learned that this class was more than just meditation. The class got deep into healing strategies and positive outlooks.

The thing that really stood out and really helped me was the statement from teacher Arlene Acevedo: "It is not selfish to think about what is best for yourself." I am an explorer, and I explore many different areas. I am a solo traveler, not because I'm negative, but because I am passionate for the good. Hearing the teacher confirm my worldview was very encouraging, because we do need to explore more, and this class helps to expand awareness.

So much good can come from different and positive outlooks, and that is why this class is special.

Delving Into Autism

LEARNING ABOUT AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

BY NANCY MCKNIGHT / PHOTOS BY GAIL HOAR

This course delivered on its promise to give "a deeper understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder and the various evidence-based interventions that are being used."

Learning from Nancy Murray is easy, as she has a wealth of knowledge and energy and an engaging personality. She generously shared personal stories that complemented the academic materials. Students also took part in an experiment designed to push us into the experience of autism, so that we might better understand what people on the spectrum face.

Participants came away from the course with enhanced empathy for people with autism and with a better idea of what they might be thinking and experiencing. This understanding provides the basis for better communication, as we learned ways to phrase and present ideas in a more comprehensible way ourselves.

We also learned practical strategies for teaching social skills and social thinking. If what you need is not in the coursework, it is likely to be in the expansive list of additional resources Murray provided.



Nancy Murray



Students ponder a point in Nancy Murray's class on autism.

Active for Life Most ALFA courses aim to stimulate creativity and intellect, but several courses promoting lifelong fitness continue to be perennial favorites. Among these health and fitness offerings are courses focusing on stretching, yoga, dance exercise, hiking and snowshoeing, meditation, and more. ALFA photographers looked in on several of the classes. Here are some of the images they captured.

WALK, SNOWSHOE, AND SKI ABOUT — Hikers navigate a tricky section of trail at the beginning of a hike in Leominster. Depending on the weather, participants explore the woodlands of North Central Worcester County on foot, snowshoes, or skis. They are guided by Sally Hens, a former National Park Ranger, pictured left, and Karen McNall, volunteer for the Leominster Recreation Department. PHOTO BY GRF



STRETCH IT! — Class members work out at the barre under the watchful eye of Judith Lindstedt.

The course, based on Ms. Lindstedt's lifetime experience as a professional dancer, provides a full-body workout adjusted for all levels, from beginner to advanced.

Ms. Lindstedt also teaches the "Stretch & Tone" course, which emphasizes low-impact exercises.

PHOTO BY JON JONES



ZUMBA FITNESS — Participants in Amy LeBlanc's class ham it up for the camera after an energetic cardio fitness workout to up-tempo Latin-inspired music. Ms. LeBlanc, a longtime group fitness instructor, says the goal is to "burn some calories and make some smiles!" PHOTO BY JON JONES



AQUA AEROBICS — Swimmers at the pool in Fitchburg State University's Recreation Building show their heartfelt appreciation for instructor Amy LeBlanc. The course is designed to promote cardio fitness and muscle toning in a gentle workout with no impact on joints. PHOTO BY JON JONES



ALFA BIKING GROUP — Some members of Claire Gingras' biking course ride along a wooded bikeway in Winchendon. Riders are given the choice of pace and distance of 6 or 12 miles. PHOTO BY GRF



LET YOUR YOGA DANCE — The disciplines of yoga, movement, and dance are fused in this course, which instructor Ann-Marie LaBollita describes as being the place in which "joy and fun meet deep and sacred," promoting "body, brain, heart, and soul health." PHOTO BY JON JONES

Coming to America

ITALIAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

BY NANCY HARGRAVES CATALINI

Professor Theresa Fava Thomas' course on Italian-American History interested me personally because my husband's father emigrated with his parents and an older sister from Le Marche, Italy to Fitchburg in 1914. As a maternal ancestor of mine had arrived in Ipswich in 1635, I was curious to see what a difference of almost 300 years would look like! And Professor Thomas delivered big time for me!



Theresa Fava Thomas

A wealth of information flowed via carefully prepared handouts, books available to borrow, references for further reading, maps of the regions of Italy, and especially PowerPoint slides to enhance Professor Thomas' interesting presentations. Brief discussions and explanations followed as questions came up. Reference to the Fitchburg-Leominster area churches, businesses and families was often included.

Areas of special interest were:

- **Family life:** In a tradition carried over from Italy the children, often the boys, were expected to leave school after eighth grade and go to work to help support their large families.
- **Transitional lifestyle:** Many heads of households worked in America during the warmer months, perhaps as stonemasons helping to build the Wachusett Reservoir, then returned to Italy for the winter months.
- **Immigration issues:** Who was allowed to remain, perhaps bring the family, and/or seek citizenship? Who would be restricted from citizenship by quotas or by questionable connections, real or perceived?

One class member expressed his interest in this course by saying he had no known Italian ancestry but had visited Italy on several vacations and is interested in Italy and its culture, especially music and opera. Italy is one of the newer European nations, dating back to the consolidation of Italian states, or Risorgimento, which was completed in 1870.

The Oak Ridge Girls

COMMUNITY READ BOOK DISCUSSION

BY SHARON MCCULLAH

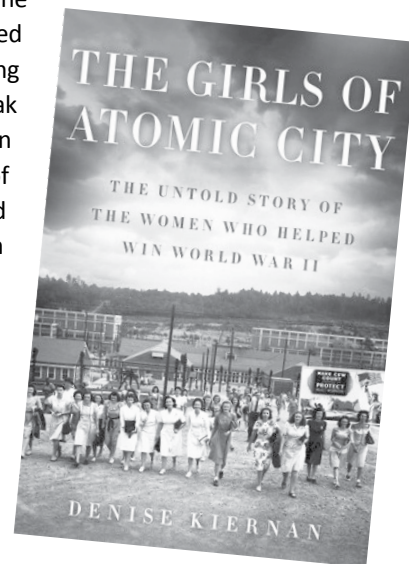
Is the government always justified in using censorship and coercion to protect "national security"? What were the effects of isolation and secrecy on the workers at Oak Ridge?

Dr. Lisa Moison began the first book-study sessions of Denise Kiernan's *The Girls of Atomic City* by presenting these questions for small-group discussion. The larger group then considered thoughts and opinions relating to the shadowy city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee that had been discussed. Many thousands of women and men only learned that they were participating in enriching uranium on Aug. 6, 1945, when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

In the next session, participants offered facts and insights that they had learned while doing a "deep dive" on a chosen topic—a person, place, or thing that sparked his or her interest in the reading of *The Girls of Atomic City*. Other participants enriched the discussion by sharing personal connections to what we had read.

The final session focused on the aftermath of the dropping of the atomic bomb. Participants each chose a photograph to ponder and share. Many issues were discussed, including racial issues and the ambiguities of war. Many of the photographs had been taken by Ed Westcott, whose task was to document in picture form the varied work and community activities at Oak Ridge. The class culminated with the watching of a video documentary about Westcott and his work.

The university-wide community read was capped by a campus visit by Denise Kiernan in March.



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.

Down to the Sea in Ships

CITIES ON THE SEA: THE GREAT TRANSATLANTIC LINERS

BY EDWARD R. CRONIN

This course provided a fascinating look at the way that ships have evolved from the time of paddle-wheel steamers with sails to the great Atlantic liners, all in a little more than a century.

History is part of the story: Many of the great liners were deployed as troop ships in response to two world wars—and then returned to passenger service.

Nicholas Langhart's course was presented around an enormous collection of slides; even the history of the interior décor of the ships was clearly illustrated.

What ended the era of the great ships? Air travel, of course. There are still big ships—but now they are cruise ships, not quite the same thing. Cruise ships do not routinely cross the Atlantic; meanwhile they are increasing their capacity by adding on decks. And in at least one case, illustrated by slides, a liner was lengthened by cutting it in half and floating in and attaching a prefabricated middle portion. Unbelievable!

I've never been on a cruise; my one relevant experience was touring the beached Queen Mary at Long Beach, California. On its final voyage a half-century ago, the liner took 90-plus days to go around the tip of South America, since it couldn't fit through the Panama Canal. The passengers, off on a historic junket, suffered through a complete loss of air conditioning as the ship plowed through tropical waters.

Many more interesting stories came out of this class, enlivened by Nicholas Langhart's enthusiasm for the subject.



Electric Sheep and Other Horrors

DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

BY SETH BRODY / PHOTO BY GRF

The Dystopian Literature course is, as its title suggests, suited for those who are attracted in some way to depictions of the bleakest possible future. Ancient mythology, the work of painters such as Hieronymus Bosch and Bruegel the Elder, the last 100 years of cinema, and a wide variety of literature are all testament to the human fascination with visions of despair, or fear of running out of options.

Our ALFA course was constrained to modern literature: in particular, the novels *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, and *Station Eleven*.

Professor DeMisty D. Bellinger-Delfeld is open-minded and her teaching style is of a flexible nature. She gives careful and respectful consideration to widely varying points of view, and she transitions easily from one range of ideas to another, depending on how the class responds to the current reading selection. She usually sets the tone for our discussions by playing clips of movie or TV adaptations, or by presenting biographical information about the author—but then she more or less turns the class loose and interacts with us in the role of a gentle guide, adding her own perspective as the questions and opinions fly around.



DeMisty D. Bellinger-Delfeld

We end up having lively and dynamic discussions, in which each participant feels comfortable expressing his/her impressions and thinking out loud. A wonderful way to learn!



KUSUDAMA FLOWER MAKING WORKSHOP

BEYOND ORIGAMI — In December, arts and crafts enthusiast Betty Gelinis led a special one-day workshop in kusudama. The traditional Japanese flower-folding craft employs origami techniques to create intricate flower arrangements using real flower petals and herbs. Crafters now typically use colorful paper squares, trading off scent for longevity.

Pictured are flower folders at work, and one of the finished arrangements.

PHOTOS BY GRF

Barking Up the Right Tree

TREES BY THEIR BARK

BY MICHAEL LAROCHE

If you love trees as I do, this course is for you. You will be taken on a discovery journey of trees. You will learn the differences between the bark of oaks and maples, black cherry, and beech. You will discover that trees grow differently in a forest than in a meadow.

Naturalist Joe Choiniere will guide you through the trails at the Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary in Princeton, identifying the distinctive shagbark hickory, the different varieties of gray, river, and paper birch, and more. You will see how wildlife in the sanctuary makes use of young trees and magnificent old-growth trees alike.

Class time is over too soon and always leaves you wanting more. Joe Choiniere shares his knowledge of trees and nature, making this course a transforming experience.

Camerawork: A Panoramic View

HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

BY JAY JANELL / PHOTO BY GRF

This class provided a brief overview of the history of photography, beginning with early developments of the photographic process, when it was more of a science than an art. We learned to look at photographs in terms of both informational and compositional value. Instructor Lauren Szumita provided examples of photographs from the pictorial, conceptual, and documentary genres.

The course was greatly enhanced by the opportunity to view photographic prints from the Fitchburg Art Museum collection, not just images from books. We viewed images made by some of the photographers we learned about in class. We also had a visit from Stephen Jareckie, FAM consulting curator, who generously answered some of our questions.

In addition, we had the opportunity to view photographs currently on exhibit in the museum and to learn more about the process of selecting and arranging items for exhibition. Lauren guided us through her own exhibit, "Windows and Reflections," in which she displayed photographs in thematic groupings. The exhibit included photographs by Sheeler, Stieglitz, and Berenice Abbott, as well as many lesser known contemporary photographers.

Lauren encouraged class participation by posing thought-provoking questions. She is a thoughtful, organized, and skilled presenter.



Lauren Szumita

A City of Makers and Shakers

FITCHBURG IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

BY BARBARA MCGUIRK

Frank Morrison, an assistant professor in the Business Administration Department at Fitchburg State University and longtime researcher into the history of industry, took this ALFA group back to a time to when Fitchburg was an industrial force in New England.

Printed documentation, photographs, and maps gave the class a picture of what Fitchburg once was in the industrial world. Who would have dreamed that what is now Renaissance Park once was Stone Mill Pond, a large body of water fed by the Nashua River?

It was interesting to learn that many Fitchburg streets, such as Putnam, Goodrich, Sawyer, and Kimball, took their names from Fitchburg industrialists from years ago. For one class we took a walk down Water Street as depicted in an essay written by Charles Fosdick who arrived in Fitchburg from Groton on the train in 1869. In addition to pictures of the times, Frank entertained us with his vast knowledge of tools, machines, people, and places of the period.

Fitchburg can certainly take pride in her part of the industrialization of our country.



Frank Morrison

Mastering the Art of Drawing

DRAWING MADE EASY INSPIRED BY THE MASTERS

BY BARBARA EISENZOPF

What do right brain, left brain, doodling, meditation, blindfolds, and sandpaper have to do with the course named *Drawing Made Easy Inspired by the Masters*? They are components of the fun exercises, materials, and techniques we experienced in Carolyn Todd's drawing class.

Ms. Todd's approach made this class both educational and truly enjoyable. She engaged our attention, broadening our perceptions as she taught us to interpret what we see, and to transfer that onto paper with pencils and charcoal.

The classes were well organized, with still life objects already prepared and handouts explaining what was to be covered that day. Class critiques and homework assignments encouraging us to practice master artists' techniques helped to stimulate our creativity. The five 1½-hour class sessions flew by, but in that time I learned so much about light and dark, shading, contour-line drawing, and the materials needed to create desired effects.

I highly recommend this class whether you are a beginner who wants to draw or a seasoned artist seeking to expand your skills.

Linking Images of Past, Present

CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH IMAGES

BY GRETCHEN LETTENNEY / PHOTO BY GRF

Chained libraries. Medieval castles with intriguing stories. Sherwood Forest. Viking grave sites. If viewing images of these sounds interesting, then this fascinating class taught by Professor Kisha Tracy is for you.

Kisha Tracy shares her passion for medieval literature and culture through images and readings. According to the ALFA course catalog, “the students in this course will participate in a larger project to develop physical and digital photography exhibitions that will parallel the ancient to medieval cultural heritage stories of local communities, particularly centered on New England and Fitchburg.”



Kisha Tracy

Students collaborated on research projects linking recent local history—namely, the creation of Hickory Hills Lake in Lunenburg and the Revolutionary War-era Hartwell Cemetery in Fitchburg—to themes from the distant past.

Kisha Tracy has a wealth of knowledge founded on her academic studies and extensive travels. We learned of themes in medieval literature that have carried over time to today’s literature.

The images she has taken in her travels to such places as England, France, and Iceland are truly amazing and thought provoking. The project mentioned in the course description will culminate in an exhibition of cultural heritage that will be held at the Fitchburg Art Museum in September.

Inspired to Be Creative

TAKE YOUR ART TO THE NEXT LEVEL

BY JUNE DUPREY

I once was given colored pencils for a birthday present, but, to be honest, I was ready to move beyond coloring in coloring books. I have taken several of Laurie Bebeck’s classes, and she has given me inspiration to be creative in my own way.

Laurie gives a brief talk in the beginning of each class, touching on the basics of art and color. She patiently answers questions as constructively as possible. Demonstrations and ideas are given. Laurie’s laid-back personality is never intimidating. She always gives positive feedback. She makes books, picture visuals, and handouts available in class.

In this class, the students were at different levels. I am a beginner, but her class has inspired me and expanded my knowledge of art. Colored pencils are now my favorite medium!

That’s Entertainment, and More

GREAT PERFORMANCES—STAR POWER!

BY LELA MALE

Journalist and playwright Sally Cragin brings her wealth of interesting information and insight to explore people in the arts—be that poetry, music, comedy, dance, etc.—who not only stood out because of their exceptional talents but also changed their respective art forms with their innovations and vision.

Performers up for consideration included Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, WC Fields, the Marx Brothers, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, the Beatles, Barbara Streisand, Ethel Merman, Mary Martin, Zero Mostel, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Mark Morris, Martha Graham, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, and others.

While Sally comes prepared with topics, video clips, and handouts, she is always ready to go with the flow if the discussions point in other directions. We left the class enlightened and entertained, contemplating things like our own definitions of genius.



Sally Cragin



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 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.



Film Noir class members in appropriate noir garb gather around instructor Joe Moser.

Suffering with Style

FILM NOIR FOR A NEW AGE OF ANXIETY

BY RONDA GOLDEN / PHOTOS BY GAIL HOAR

Joe Moser's superb teaching has always attracted a large and dedicated following. Most of the 30 enthusiastic students came dressed in black to this film noir class.

We watched 12 films from the 1940s and early 1950s and were subjected to the tension and fear typical of the genre, as the femme fatale schemes and seduces the innocent man.

But what of the femme fatale? Why such a need for money, for deceit, for murder? What is she trying to gain? From what is she trying to escape?

We discussed film noir characteristics and motifs. We recognized the understated acting of Robert Mitchum and Joseph Cotton, and the fearless and conniving behavior of the characters portrayed by Jane Greer, Jane Russell, and Barbara Stanwyk.

We learned about stylistic elements and tone in film as distinct from genre. We now know how light and oblique and vertical lines and water all help to bring about the style of film noir.

We thank you, Joe Moser, for teaching the ALFA students so much and we wish you the very best in Minnesota. We will miss you.



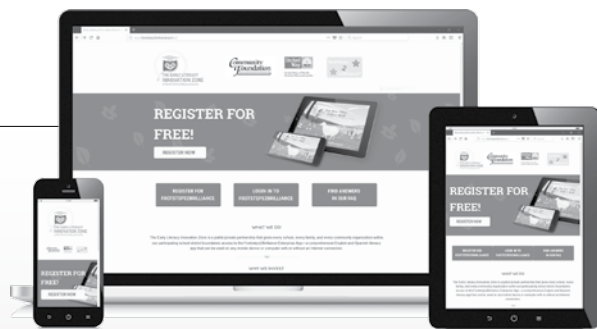
Joe Moser

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. 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 fall of 2018 run from Sept. 17 through Dec. 20. In the calendar below, Session 1 class dates are in YELLOW blocks, Session 2 dates in GREEN.

	SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
Sep 2018	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
Oct 2018	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Nov 2018	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	1
Dec 2018	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22