

BRAIN SPARKS!

Newsletter of the Institute for Learning in Retirement



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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

When I have the occasion to talk to people who are interested in ILR, they often have questions about the advantages of our program. Two things always stand out in my mind. First, there is the quality of our SGLs, many of

whom excel in their professions and come to us voluntarily to share their expertise. I can't thank them enough for their contributions.

These SGLs contribute to the variety of our offerings. This spring, our Curriculum Committee has accepted nearly 50 courses, representing 16 different topics. We have something for everyone from cooking to games to science to music to literature and history, to mention some examples. Our catalogue will be available shortly. Look it over and I am sure there is something there for you.

The second thing I see as a benefit of membership is the opportunity to meet and interact with others. Many friendships have been forged after our members meet new people and share interests and experiences.

So, take advantage of the opportunity to expand your interests, knowledge, and social circles. We have something for everyone.

Nick Maiorino, President



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Finding volunteers to help as hosts and co-hosts is a special challenge for Zoom courses because those who help need a level of technology comfort and expertise that not everyone has.

With 500 ILR members, however, there are probably many people who have such expertise and might be willing to help. We will happily provide training to those interested who may want some updating of their tech skills.

If you are interested and have a little time, you can reach us at volunteers@ilrn.org or call Pat Maiorino at 203-687-8966 or Rita Esposito at 203-464-2712. We would love to hear from those willing to act as liaisons for in-person classes as well

Written by Pat Maiorino

Spring Course Registration Protocol

Registration for the spring semester will begin at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 2. Classes will begin on Monday, March 16.

Have you had this experience? You excitedly look through the catalogue and mark off a class that you look forward to taking. You sit at your computer on day one of registration anxious to enroll. You go through the screens and !?!^&#. The class is already full? You see the dreaded word: WAITLISTED.

Some classes become full shortly after registration begins. Because of this, and the large number of members who are put on a waitlist, the registration process for the spring 2026 semester is being changed. In the first week of registration you will only be allowed to register for 4 classes. After the first full week you can register for any other classes you wish to take. We hope that this policy will allow more members to get into the classes they seek. The results of this change will be carefully reviewed.

Question: What happens if I go on the waitlist?

When members are placed on the waitlist our people immediately go into action to address the situation in several ways. We contact the SGL giving the class to see if they would allow a greater number to take their class. We look into finding a larger room to accommodate more people. We ask if the SGL would be willing to repeat the class.

In short, your chance of getting into the class you were waitlisted for is better than you think. Keep the date open so you will be able to register for it if a seat becomes open. *And please, let the registrar know if you are unable to attend a class you had registered for.* This will allow someone on the waitlist to take your place. *Please note that your seat is not transferable.* You would love to give your seat to your next door neighbor who really wanted to take that class, but in fairness to all, your seat will go to the person on the top of the waitlist.

NEW NAME FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

BRAIN SPARKS!

Thanks to the popular ILR Study Group Leader humorist Joyce Saltmann, our ILR Newsletter has a new name: Brain Sparks! A few months ago we asked our members to find a new newsletter name, and this submission by Joyce was the clear winner. We have hunted her down and are presenting her with the winning prize: a Barnes & Noble gift card.

A PEEK AT A FEW UPCOMING COURSES

- Geopolitics with an Emphasis on the "Geo"
- Dungeons & Dragons
- The Battle for the 2026 Midterms
- The Arts of Memory in Classical & Medieval Times
- Maps & Politics: From Propaganda to Gerrymandering

SGL Spotlight

MARCIA JAMRON



If you have ever been on an ILR trip to an art museum or an out-of-the-way destination, chances are that trip was planned and organized by Marcia Jamron. Although Marcia has been active on many different committees of ILR, she is most involved in planning day trips to fun and educational places.

Marcia's relationship with ILR began almost as a twist of fate.

Many years ago, she got to know Trish O'Leary as they ran into each other at different art museums in New York and Connecticut. One fateful evening, at a concert at Edgerton Park, Marcia and Trish ran into each other again. This time, Trish asked Marcia for a favor. Trish told Marcia that ILR had a trip to Yale Art Museum planned; however, the organizer was not able to go. Trish asked Marcia to step in: greet everyone, take attendance, etc. She knew Marcia would be a great trip leader. Marcia agreed to go, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Marcia joined ILR and soon became a board member. At one of the board meetings, Marcia offered to run bus trips within the Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts area—somewhere off the beaten path. Marcia found a driver who had an old bus with a restroom, and they were off to discover new places. People really enjoyed these trips. The trips offered folks an easy and affordable way to participate in new experiences. They could even be viewed as mini-vacations.

In spite of the setbacks caused by COVID, Marcia has found other ways for people to travel. Some of the trips are virtual; others are by train or car. Marcia still enjoys thinking up new venues for us.

Marcia greets everyone with a smile. She truly enjoys meeting new people—every person has an interesting story.

According to Marcia, ILR's strength lies in its wonderful people, the SGLs and the members. Marcia Jamron is definitely one of those wonderful people.

Written by Pat Sirulnick