President’s Corner: So You’re Retired!

Let me introduce myself, Don Christensen. I was just sworn in as the new President presiding over a highly successful organization. We’re growing by leaps and bounds and are up to 942 members now, and counting. We’re growing with virtually no publicizing or marketing ourselves.

ILR fills a niche; one that is in high demand and with relatively few competitors. Lifelong learning appeals to retirees, as does travel, socializing, and all the things that ILR represents so admirably, allowing for the living to be easy…and fulfilling.

We members have an interest in the quality of our retirement. Financial planning was only part of the process. We have transitioned from someone with a daily purpose of getting to a job and identifying with a role. We now may occasionally wonder who or what we are now that we are retired. Time is somehow different in retirement. It affords the leisure to enjoy all the little things in life…you know, smelling the roses.

My 76-year old brother just retired. I asked the proverbial question of how he was enjoying retirement. “Before I retired, I was always rushing,” he said. “I had chores to do, things that I really enjoyed doing, but rushed to get them done, and then I didn’t enjoy them as much. Now, time just expands to fill in the spaces. I have time to do those things that I really enjoy! They’re not work now…just fun!”.

So, enjoy the friendships, classes, and fun that ILR offers.
You know how the song goes. Same could be said for retirement! The living is easy!

~~Don Christensen

The pessimist complains about the wind.
The optimist expects it to change.
The realist adjusts the sails.

William Arthur Ward
**Board Members, 2016-2017:**
- President: Don Christensen
- Vice President: Carolyn Schmick
- Secretary: Betsy Coffelt
- Treasurer: Stan Weisberger
- Historian: Bill Moyse
- At-Large Board Members:
  - Susan Jones
  - DeeDee Rockefeller

**Committee Chairs:**
- Communications & Technology: Dave Hamby
- Curriculum: Jane Martin
- Diane Prince
- Nominating: Jack Kotvas
- Social: Susan Clarke
- Travel: Betsy Blank
- Volunteer: Fran Scott
- Administrator: Theo Rozdilsky
- Admin. Assistant: Theresa Burgess
- Bookkeeper: Robert Chapin
- Newsletter Editor: Carolyn Schmick

**ILR ART SHOW**
The ILR sponsors a yearly Art Show in the Atrium at the VBHEC (Virginia Beach Higher Education Center). This year’s art show will be in October and for Newcomers, you will not be disappointed in the many talents of our members as they display their works. Our show includes many mediums: paintings of all types, needlework, photographs, models (such as ships—not humans), and we are open to more. This event is scheduled for October 9 -28. Mark those dates. The Art Show always hosts a Reception during this event to recognize our gifted members and show our appreciation for all their hard work. For more information, please email cschmick@cox.net.

**In this issue** we find how several people planned, or didn’t plan, to experience significant events in their retirement lives. Robert wrote an essay concerning the very human process of evolving throughout life, ending with a challenge to us all. Mike had an unexpected travel opportunity, which resulted in profound experiences in Israel, and relates in such a timely manner to today’s world problems. Our featured volunteer, Don, tells a deeper story of commitment and dedication to his effort to better the retirement experience. And last, Anne’s “In Memorial” lightly touches on the life that was so dedicated and driven to make us all happier and fulfilled.

The common strain of optimism and open thought prevails in these featured ILR members.

~~ Carolyn Schmick, Editor

**WELCOME NEWCOMERS**
*March 1, 2017 - May 31, 2017*
*We hope you will participate in our classes and volunteer your time and talent.*

**Chesapeake**
- Henry & Rosa Holava, Debra Jones, Robert & Dina Meissner, Patricia Niven, Irene Perkinson,

**Norfolk**
- Rebecca Repass

**Virginia Beach**
- Carol Arnette, Richard Bachta, Linda Camp, Sandra Cowden, Roy & Susan Cunningham,
- Christie Doss, Dennis & Paula Firestone, Julia Guill, Warren & Heather Hill, Nancy Kesler,
- Carol Keller & James Lee, John Lynn, Shelly McGinnis, Barbara Morris, Catherine Morrison,
- Dorothy Ridge, Janice Rogowski, Linda Savage-Tuttle, Sara Schauer, Judy Semo, Jim & Sylvia Smith,
- John & Donna Soderberg, Marjorie Tobias, Theresa Tumas, Jean Whittaker
Annual Meeting

This year’s annual meeting was held at Westminster Canterbury on March 31, and many from ILR considered it the best meeting yet. The business agenda was short and sweet, ably chaired by outgoing President Sandy Barczak. Thanks, Sandy, for setting a great example as President! You’re my new hero!

The slate of new officers, put together by Jack Kotvas, chair of the Nominating Committee, was unanimously approved. Guests from ODU were present (Diane Leegwater and Renee Olander), as was our current scholarship recipient Dexter Warren. The food that Westminster staff prepared was outstanding, and it was excellently presented by their wait staff, and then the entertainment! Frank Sings Frank, a unique Frank Sinatra-style singing/entertainment act presented by local entertainer Frank Cubillo. It was all so enjoyable, and informative, and well worth the price of admission, $22 this year…$25 next year. (Yes, the price is going up a bit.) Kudos to the Social Committee for a job Well Done!!

April 12

Much time was spent reviewing the implementation of ProClass, our solution for moving our technology into the 21st Century! Dave Hamby, Communications and Technology Chairperson, is leading the charge on this project, and prepared slides detailing issues that the Board needed to be on top of prior to overall implementation.

Stan Weisberger, Treasurer, presented the proposed budget for next year. Unfortunately, this was a deficit budget and the Board asked him to go back to the drawing board and make suggestions for a more balanced budget, which was to be presented at the May meeting.

Also on the agenda was discussion of a proposal put together by a subcommittee of the Long-Range Planning Committee on Managing Membership. ILR continues to grow by leaps and bounds virtually by word of mouth, and over the past several months. Various suggestions have been offered as to how we should best manage this issue, since resources were being drastically stretched. The heart of the proposal was to put a cap on membership at some predetermined number. After much consideration, the Board voted to postpone consideration of the proposal for another 6 months, at which time ProClass would have been in effect for several months, and the new budget would have also been in effect for several months.

May 17

The Board continued to hear from Dave Hamby on ProClass implementation issues, including future plans for online registration. (Ahh, closer to the 21st Century!)

Stan Weisberger came back to the Board with recommendations that improved the budget numbers. It was still a deficit budget, but now, less-so. Recommendations included using the actual Membership number of 945 to reflect proposed revenue more accurately, increasing the price of the Annual Meeting to $25, thus reducing the subsidized amount, and charging $5 for Coffee and Conversation. A recommendation for increasing the cost of classes from $10 to $11 did not pass. The budget was approved with the 3 changes of a more realistic membership number, a charge for Coffee and Conversation, and increasing the price for the Annual Meeting to $25. These changes reduced, but did not erase, the proposed deficit. The budget passed.

Carolyn Schmick, Vice President, had been tasked with reviewing the Committee structure of ILR. She reported on the process of this task, and will be meeting with board members for a final recommendation. Committee heads and officers made their reports, with no surprises. The work of ILR continues unabated!

-Splinters from the Board

The purpose of this article is to offer the membership enhanced access to the issues discussed at the meetings of the Board of Directors, by providing a brief description of the more important matters that came before the Board since the last newsletter.

-Don Christensen, President
Looking on Retirement: Many Perspectives

Looking Forward Years Ago. When we were working five to seven days a week to earn our daily bread, we thought that when we were retired we would travel, maybe go fishing, go sailing, play tennis or golf, read books and have fun every day. At the time, we got up before the sun, made breakfast for the kids, got them to school, worked 8 to 12 hours a day, commuted one to two hours a day, made supper, and paid the bills and crashed. If you were lucky on the weekend, you mowed the grass, cleaned the windows, and washed the laundry. At the time, our perspective of retirement was as substantive as a rumor.

Looking Around. The last years of our jobs were tumultuous. We were excited and scared. If you were in the armed services you had even more anxieties. Somewhere in your late thirties with small children, to your early fifties with children in high school or in college, you needed another full-time job. The armed services' culture is very different from the civilian culture. Those in the armed services were not competing with contemporaries down the hall, you were competing with your contemporaries around the world. Also, in a year or two you would move across the country or around the world with a very different job. Those of us leaving the armed services were very flexible and had a wide perspective but no experience in the civilian culture. My senior friends told me that it takes about four to five years to get comfortable in the civilian culture. My own first five years after retiring from the Navy were turbulent.

Looking Forward Now. If you’re lucky, you’re not still working full time and mowing your lawn. In retirement, you’re busy but not working in an office 40 to 60 hours a week, not driving 10 hours a week in terrible traffic. You’ve made your choice where to live, not where your employer wants you to live. Some of us work from dawn to dusk on things that interest us. We help our charities, our communities, our schools, and our neighbors. When we were adolescents, we pursued a degree and looked for a profession to support our ego and our family. Now we chase our interests. Our bodies have changed and our brains have changed. We’re not competing. We don’t need the biggest house, the newest car. If we’re lucky in retirement, we are living comfortably, spending time with our family, sitting down with our friends, and we are reasonably happy.

My challenge to our readers: if you are not happy, change your perspective!

~~ Robert Chapin

ILR SiteSeers

The ILR SiteSeers was formed in 2016 with 57 ILR members who love to travel internationally and throughout the US. Our members have traveled around the globe and are ready to explore more places! We share stories about our travels to learn the good, the bad, and the ugly about tour companies, cruise lines, and whatever is associated with traveling. Some members have matched up to travel together and some of us took a Spanish course through the Virginia Beach Adult Learning Center.

We do not set up tours, but are working with the ODU alumni travel department for future tours, such as ODU’s spring 2018 tour of Ireland.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month from 1:00 – 3:00 pm at the Virginia Beach Higher Education Center (VBHEC), Room 133. Our next meeting is June 6. We are adding speakers on travel topics and will occasionally meet for lunch instead of having a meeting. There are no meetings in July and August. Our first meeting in the next academic year is September 5. Come join us!

For more information, or to join, contact Nancy McWilliams, njm622@icloud.com

~~ Rosemarie Hughes
Many of us have a “bucket list” of things we would like to do before we are unable to do anything at all. Mine includes travel destinations or personal accomplishments that have so far eluded me. Honestly, I must tell you that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was not an item on my “list”; however, that all changed in the fall of 2016 and here is my story.

The rector of my church had expressed a desire to take an adult group on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but had been unable due to his busy schedule to turn the desire into reality. In mid-2015 I approached him and asked if I might help.

Now, I have planned annual vacations for my wife and me, but never have I put together a trip for a group of people. I searched out about a dozen companies advertising Holy Land tours and began contacting each, providing what little details I had at the time and requesting that each provide me a general itinerary, questions for me and, if possible, a guesstimated price per person, exclusive of airfare, and details of what the price included. After narrowing the list down to three, and much back and forth communication with these three, we settled on Breaking Bread Journeys (BBJ) to plan and manage our pilgrimage. We selected BBJ primarily because of their unique ability to offer us interactions with the people of the communities we visited.

Our pilgrimage began late October, 2016 with two nights in the West Bank city of Jericho. From there we journeyed north through the wilderness of Samaria to our next stop in Tiberius on the shore of the Sea of Galilee where we spent three nights. After touring the Galilean area we headed back south toward our final stop in Jerusalem. We spent our last five nights in Jerusalem, visiting the sites in and around that ancient, religiously significant city.

I could go into endless detail of the events of each day, but that would probably be boring reading, so I won’t. Needless to say we visited most of the important sites relating to Jesus’s life and numerous other biblical sites, including the renewal of our Baptismal Covenant in the River Jordan, renewing wedding vows in Cana, and having stops for the celebration of the Eucharist at many sites along our journey. All of this was meaningful and spiritually important, but it was the interaction with the people along the path of our pilgrimage that made a more lasting impression on me.
The Reluctant Pilgrim, Continued

We spent the better part of our first morning in Jericho visiting with the founder of Seeds of Hope, a non-profit Palestinian aid agency, who had converted to Christianity after serving as one of Yasser Arafat’s assassins. We met with a “good” Samaritan at the Samaritan Museum on Mount Gerizim near Nablus. We had a late morning meeting and wine tasting with an Israeli West Bank settler and vineyard operator. We had a meeting with an Anglican priest at his church in Nazareth. We were hosted for lunch by the Druze (a monotheistic 11th century offshoot of Islam) community. We enjoyed lunch hosted by a Palestinian Christian family in their West Bank home in Beit Jala. We met with a representative of the Sisters of Zion Monastery in Ein Karem. We experienced a joy filled, traditional Shabbat Dinner hosted by an Orthodox Jewish family in their Jerusalem home. We met with an Armenian artist in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City. Our farewell dinner was hosted by a Muslim family in their West Bank home in Beit Safafa. In each and every occasion we were able to have open and honest discussions regarding their life and culture and the current situation in Israel and the West Bank territory. It made the pilgrimage a far more rewarding and enlightening experience. At no time did any of us feel threatened or unsafe.

While this trip was not a “bucket list” check-off it was an experience I will long remember, made more so by being able to share it with 24 friends and members of my church community. While most of us began our journey as tourists, it did not take us long to shift into the pilgrim mode.

but . . .

The ILR Board listened when new members said they wanted to know how ILR got started and how it is structured, but they wanted to hear this information in a more relaxed setting, not a classroom. During a Board planning meeting for the year, Bill Moyse, Historian, suggested that we host a coffee social to deliver that information. Betsy Blank, Travel Committee Chair, and Susan Clarke, Social Committee Chair, volunteered to work with Bill to plan for the event. Basically, they were looking for a format that allowed participants to mingle, ask questions one on one, munch on pastries and sip coffee, and still hear about ILR origins and structure. Twenty-five new members responded to the invitation in ILR’s Spring packet.

The first New Member Get-Together was held on Friday, May 19, 2017 at the Princess Anne Gardens Condominium. Robert Chapin, Past ILR President and current Bookkeeper, gave a concise presentation about how ILR got started i.e. Toby Netherton and 12 friends met on May 11, 1993 to organize, and Toby became the first “administrator”. Fast forward to 2017 and our present membership of 945!

Board members also attended the orientation on May 19th. Each gave a minute introduction and invited questions during the break held immediately after those introductions. New members then had a one on one chance to ask questions and get information. Several volunteered to help in some capacity. Others stored that information for possible future use.

In feedback from the new members in attendance there was a resounding “it worked!” Yes, a few things will be tweaked, but another New Member Get-Together for the latest newcomers to ILR will be held in Fall 2017. The moral of this story is that it pays to speak up - “we want the information but . . . in a more social setting.”

~~ Susan Clarke, Social Committee
Living in the Moment with Surprises
A very special ILR class
Presenter: Father Jim Parke

Father Jim is currently retired from the priesthood. He was recruited to become the Volunteer Director of the Office of Volunteer Services for the City of Virginia Beach.

One of the best parts of taking classes at the ILR is that each class is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re going to get (Forest Gump). This class was an amazing surprise for me and I’ll guess for most of the attendees as well. Centering his remarks around the idea of finding happiness, Fr. Parke showed two insightful video clips. The first was a TED talk by Mark Killingsworth entitled “Living in the Now”. Mark gave us an overview of very powerful research data indicating we are most happy when we are paying attention to what is going on around us at the time. Mind wandering was a strong indicator of unhappiness. The second video, also a TED talk, was by David Steindl-Rast entitled “Want to be Happy? Be Grateful.” He suggested that every moment is an opportunity to appreciate the wonderful things in your life and be grateful for them, even in the mist of extreme hardships. The really good news is that if you miss this opportunity, another is right on its heels!

The videos are available on line and will really make you think. It turns out that counting your blessings (being grateful) is a path to happiness that surpasses our cravings for material gains. Expecting surprises is another way of thinking about the future that helps maintain a positive attitude and mindfulness (the power of now). I am very grateful that I had the chance to hear Father Parke.

~~ Contributed by Betsy Coffelt

Seas, Shore, Shots (photo) and Saving Natural Surroundings
Presenter: Capt. Debbie Ritter

This was a very enlightening and enjoyable class led by someone who truly loves the fauna and flora of the Eastern Shore. Capt. Debbie shared pictures of the wildlife that inhabits Assateague Island, the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding areas and told us why it’s important to save these beautiful habitats. Her enthusiasm sparked a desire in her listeners to visit this important place.

~~ Contributed by Pat Maurin

Songs, Tales, and Tunes of the Banjo, From Africa to Appomattox
Presenter: Bob Zentz

This was probably the most “fun” class I’ve attended. Bob Zentz brought a load of instruments to demonstrate the evolution of the banjo. We saw items made from gourds, wood, animal skins and even something fashioned from a cookie tin and a broomstick with strings attached. He talked about his experience and career, he played and sang, some familiar songs, a few of his own compositions and got us joining in on such things as Kumbaya and When the Saints Go Marchin’ In. Interesting, informative, and a good time was had by all.

~~ Contributed by Pat Maurin

IN MEMORIAM
Russell Henry Burt, Virginia Beach
David H. Jackson, Virginia Beach
M. Lee Payne, Norfolk
Who Are We?

The ILR offers outstanding classes, trips and social events, and is a very well run organization. How does this happen? Who are the people that take care of the details that make us gratefully enjoy their efforts? Below are two of our long-time volunteers. Don is still active. Anne, a founding member, recently passed but was volunteering in the curriculum committee until recently. Both are examples of the dedication and personal satisfaction received from serving our fellow retirees.

My birthplace is Norfolk, so you can say that I am a “true” native. After graduating from Norfolk Catholic High School, I enrolled in Fordham University in New York City. Upon graduation from Fordham, I was a menswear buyer in Manhattan at Bloomingdale’s Department Store before returning home to join our family business, Sullivan’s Menswear.

While on a Florida vacation, I met my wife, Faith (my LIL - Long Island Lovely). I explained to her that the South hadn’t lost the war; we were just waiting for supplies. She thought it over and decided it would be fun to live in Virginia.

When we both entered our retirement phase, we were encouraged by a dear friend of ours, Maryann Pate, to join ILR. Maryann was one of the initial ILR members. This was a wise decision we made twelve years ago. We have gained knowledge, been to social events and visited interesting places that might otherwise have been ignored.

Under Anne Blanchard did she did to the max! She is the only lady I know of that regularly took the “Chinese bus” to New York City a couple of times a year to visit family. She loved the adventure of the trip!

Seriously, Anne was a great asset to any organization she joined. ILR benefited from her organizational talents as Co-chairman of the Curriculum Committee from the Spring of 2007 to the Fall of 2014. Her speaker recruiting talents spanned a much larger time span. She made good use of her Art History degree to become a Master Docent at the Chrysler Museum. Anne also served on the Board of Directors for the Hermitage for years. On top of all that she oversaw a luncheon/book club of former teachers and friends that has lasted for decades. When she retired from that position last year it took two people to do her job! (Shared with me by one of them)

On top of that she really stayed involved with her three daughters, her sons-in-law, and a wonderful group of grandchildren.

All I can say is thank you Ms. Anne for including ILR in your list of fun things to get involved with during your “retirement years”.

~~ Contributed by Judy Schooley
Eastern Shore Extravaganza –  
A Wallop of an Adventure!

Fifty-four seniors on a bus happily toured NASA’s Wallops Island compound and other Eastern Shore highlights on Thursday and Friday, March 30 and 31. “Happily,” due to the remarkable preparation and organization of Arlene Ingram and her supportive committee: Janice Clark, Bill Deal and Ingrid Leland. The trip participants also deserve a lot of credit for the smooth unfolding of this delightful educational experience due to their faultless punctuality and cooperative spirit.

Our first stop was the Barrier Island Center in Machipongo, for which we had been prepared en-route via a video, “Our Island Home,” featuring former residents of the now uninhabited islands off Eastern Shore’s Atlantic coast. Each described an isolated, self-sustaining, albeit idyllic, way of life, now gone due to relentless erosion. Once a favorite vacation and hunting destination for the rich and famous, including President Cleveland and Andrew Mellon, this area of Northampton County is currently one of the poorest in Virginia.

A stop at the Blue Crab Bay Company’s warehouse and specialty food store in Melfa provided an opportunity to hear insights from Pam Barefoot, the award-winning founder. The visit was enthusiastically embraced by the gourmet cooks in our group who enjoyed an opportunity to taste their products; it was a prelude to a delicious lunch at Mallard’s at the Wharf in Onancock.

Then it was off to Wallops Island for a bus tour of NASA facilities and a visit to the visitor center’s educational exhibits. But first we had to pass the “sniff test” conducted by a K-9 security expert and his sharp-looking handler.

Capt. Debbie Ritter later boarded our bus and treated us to lively commentary, as we toured the Chincoteague/National Wildlife Refuge. A highlight was the sighting of numerous wild ponies, illuminated by stories of personal encounters with several, whom she knew on a first name basis. That evening, after dinner at Don’s Seafood Restaurant in Chincoteague, Capt. Debbie regaled us with a beautiful slide show of her photographs of the ponies and insight into their behavior. A social, with wine and snacks, followed. But participants soon disappeared to their comfortable accommodations, having enjoyed a very full day.

Next morning we toured the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art in Salisbury, MD. Our docent was excellent, adding brilliance to this little known Eastern Shore gem, where we were all tempted to ask, “Is that really carved out of wood?.” We then headed for Berlin, MD, the charming home of 47 structures noted in the National Register of Historic Places. Well-preserved and renovated, these structures date from the Federal and Victorian eras and include the Atlantic Hotel, built in 1895, where we had a delicious, elegantly served lunch of a Maryland crab cake on a salad, complete with Lemon Lust for dessert.

Our last stop, or so we thought, was the Chatham Vineyards at Church Creek (Machipongo), Eastern Shore’s only commercial vineyard. We were greeted by a beautiful rainbow and Jon Wehner, our host who owned the vineyard with his wife, Mills. We were treated to seven wine tastings, accompanied by a variety of delicious gourmet cheeses and breads. Jon educated us about the proper way to taste wine and enjoy it, and he candidly described his experience as a wine grower on land that has been a working farm for four centuries.

As we approached the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel on the final leg of the trip home, there was a Level 4 alert and the Bridge Tunnel authority provided us with an unplanned stay at the Welcome Center Parking Lot. There we sat, while some consulted their phones for the latest reports on the weather including a tornado warning. We were happy to get home a little later knowing we were safe and savoring the memory of a wallop of a trip.

~~ By Fran McLean, Traveler

To The NASA Facilities
Some Upcoming Classes
- Explore Brazil and meet natives who live surrounded by tourists
- Learn of medicines accidently discovered in strange ways.
- Explore archeology around our area’s Fort Monroe, going back 400 years.
- Why is our own Chesapeake Bay Tunnel one of the “Seven Structural Engineering Wonders of America for the 20th Century” (ASCE)?

Travel Plans for 2017
September    Petersburg Battlefield
November     Asheville NC (Overnight)

Some Upcoming Events
July         Dolphin Discoveries Boat Trip
August       Dinner Overlooking the Chesapeake Bay and the Bay Bridge Tunnel
September    Virginia Tech Agricultural Research and Extension Center and Garden and Arboretum tour, lunch

Check course mailings for full information

These are some events our committees are organizing. Check them out, along with so much more in the packet. Online...oduilr.org