

## LLI Launches 23rd Year to the Tune of Hollywood Combat Music: “Listening (and Crying) in the Dark”

Remember when movies ended on a definitive note, the closing credits merely a cast listing? And just to hammer in the message, the words “The End” popped onto the screen. In the 1970s, however, things began to change as more ambiguity crept into movie endings. “The End” disappeared, replaced by all-inclusive credits rolling to the sound of relevant music. How long, viewers wondered, did they need to sit there?

In the case of post-Vietnam war movies, quite a while. “The combat music works to keep you in your seat,” said Prof. Todd Decker, speaker for LLI’s 2017 Fall Address on Sept. 14. “As the credits roll, usually to violin music, you can shed tears in the dark and experience emotions such as patriotic gratitude, sadness over mistreatment or despair over useless deaths.” Decker is the author of *Hymns for the Fallen: Combat Music and Sound after Vietnam* as well as chair of Washington University’s Music Department.

To demonstrate traditional approaches, he presented clips from *The Longest Day* (1962), set during the Normandy Invasion, and *The Green Berets* (1968), set early in the Vietnam War. Both movies conclude to military rhythms, with American soldiers marching in step, suggesting victory. After Vietnam, such simplistic patriotic messages and music no longer worked.

In marked contrast, *Saving Private Ryan*, Steven Spielberg’s 1998 film about the Normandy Invasion, honors soldierly sacrifice rather than victory. Decker said that, for theatre audiences, John Williams’ musical score served a role that continued beyond the story itself. The end of the narrative was followed



Todd Decker

by a ten-second black gap; then the long closing titles began to the strains of “Hymn to the Fallen,” also the film’s opening piece. The six-minute reprise offered viewers the chance to move “from narrative absorption to post-narrative reflection.”

Oliver Stone based his 1986 anti-war film *Platoon* on his own experience, writing the screenplay to counter the John Wayne version of the Vietnam War depicted in *The Green Berets*. Decker called it a story about loss, with Samuel Barber’s “Adagio for Strings” serving as “a musical bridge that denies easy exit.” He said that the haunting string music offers no final consolation as the credits roll.

Similarly, Kathryn Bigelow’s *The Hurt Locker* (2008) is an ambiguous action movie, this time involving an Iraq War Explosive Ordnance Disposal team. Decker described the elegiac, mournful music by Marco Beltrami and Buck Sanders as “drawing the viewer to the existential plight of the soldiers, expressing the inner human cost of combat.”

In these and other post-Vietnam war films, Decker stated, the closing music serves to point audiences

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 Katie Compton

## Message from the Chair

Dear Fellow LLI'ers,



We opened our academic year this fall with an address from Professor Todd Decker, musicologist and Chair of the Department of Music at Washington University. He spoke on the use of music in war films, contrasting pre- and post-Vietnam films, the music in the latter being much more reflective and personal than the gung-ho marches that characterized earlier films.

At this meeting, we also heard from the dean of University College, Mark Rollins, and from the Chancellor of Washington University, Mark Wrighton, both of whom expressed their support for LLI. Chancellor Wrighton described the ambitious building plans that are underway and are planned for the future at the University.

A major concern that dominated a lot of discussion and anxiety at LLI during 2017 was what would happen to parking since our garage was now going to be used by a wider segment of Washington University. I am happy to report that there has been no shortage of parking spaces available on floors 4, 5, and 6 of the parking garage...Hooray! There have been some delays in getting parking hang-tags from the Washington University Transportation Dept. for those who did not fill out the required paperwork ahead of the beginning of classes, but these problems should be temporary.

What has not been a concern has been the high quality of the courses offered at LLI. These continue to be outstanding. A lot of the credit for this goes to the interest groups of the Curriculum Committee. I have been able to sit in on several interest group meeting and they have been amazing. Ideas for new courses abound and the discussions about these new possibilities are lively and informed. If you are interested in having a particular topic dealt with in a course, please talk to a member of the Curriculum Committee, to Katie, or to a current facilitator.

This fall was the first big test for our new electronic registration procedure and most reports have been that the system was easy to use. One great advantage of the electronic registration system is that when you register, you find out immediately if you are in your desired class or if it is closed. A reminder again to anyone who is uncomfortable with the online system: help is always available. Just come into LLI on registration day and someone will help you sign up.

A Hootenanny was held at the Ethical Society in mid-October to raise funds for the LLI Scholarship Fund. Two groups of musicians led a gathering of over 60 attendees in singing old favorites from the '50's and '60's. A lot of fun was had and over \$1200 was raised to support scholarships to LLI.

--Don Cohn



## Notes from the Director's Desk

When you read this, 2017 will be almost over. Where did the year go? It was a year full of change. Our LLI'ers adapted very well to the registration system. As longtime member Frieda Kusher said to me, "It was the easiest thing! It took me less than five minutes to sign up for three classes. It is a lot more convenient than coming all the way down to LLI and standing in line."

The new university parking system proved to be a bit more challenging, but we worked it all out. Administrative Assistant Denise Zona deserves a medal for registering all those ticket "appeals" for our students!

Meanwhile, in the midst of all this change, our Curriculum Committee has continued to support facilitators and produce wonderful courses in all nine of our curriculum categories. Hats off to Curriculum Chair Dan Ellis for his hard work and also to committee members Anna Amelung, Tom Mitchell, Gene McNary, Nancy Harvey, Dave Matter, Don Godiner, Rob Greitens, David Brown, Leonard Adreon, Sydney Long, Nancy McKee, and Karen Sterbenz.

We wish to express our appreciation to Anna Amelung and Sydney Long who went off the Curriculum Committee this year—thank you for your good work! If you are interested in serving on the Curriculum Committee, please speak to me or to Dan Ellis.

In years past a LLI volunteer has called LLI members before the commencement of the fall term to check and see how they were and to remind them it was time to sign up for a course. This has been a valuable way to gather information for us—new phone numbers, changes of address, illness reports, likes and dislikes. If you would like to participate in this activity, please let me know.

A big thank you to Ruth Siteman who donated a new icemaker/refrigerator to LLI so we could have ice all the time! Our old refrigerator now resides in the LLI library/lounge. Please continue to feel free to put your lunch in it.

Thank you to Dan Ellis, Butch Sterbenz, Nancy McKee, Joan Dellbringge, Jack Karty, Pat Hyland, Sally Kopman, and many others who have contributed books, DVDs and tapes to the LLI library and to the "Take One" basket on the table in the front hall. This basket is one of our favorite ways to "recycle"!

A special shout-out to Myra Rosenthal who re-organized the library shelves over the summer and cleaned the library up. Thank you, Myra, for undertaking this big job and completing it so efficiently.

Hats off to active LLI members Lou Cohen and Earl Schultz, who were among the twenty-two "Ageless-Remarkable St. Louisans" recognized this year by The St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors for providing a uniquely fresh perspective on what it means to grow older.

—Katie Compton

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## In Case of Inclement Weather

**Always call the LLI office (314-935-4237) if you are unsure whether there will be class.** We will leave a message if classes are canceled. You can check KMOV—channel 4 (4Warn Snow Alert Program), KTVI (channel 2) and KSDK (channel 5) as well. LLI will be included on their scrolling lists. We close more frequently than the University for obvious reasons.

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## Don't forget...

...to tell your friends about the Lifelong Learning Institute. We have business cards in the office as well as LLI brochures. Stop by if you would like to have some to pass out to friends. Word-of-mouth is our best advertising!

### Falls are a serious health risk for older adults.

We have several people at LLI who use a cane or a walker. Please be mindful of your fellow students and try not to block the aisles in our crowded classrooms.

If a LLI student falls at LLI, it is our policy to call 911 unless the person is able to get up easily on their own.

Please note: All incidents/falls need to be reported to the Insurance Department. The reporting form can be found here: <https://financialservices.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Visitor-Incident-Reporting-form.pdf>. Please contact Katie or Denise if you need assistance with obtaining and completing the incident report.



# TRIBUTES WINTER 2018

**Many thanks!** A big thank you to all who have given to the General, Endowment and Scholarship funds. Please continue to give generously! Consider giving a tribute gift in memory of the LLI'ers we have lost recently. You can give a gift online by going to our LLI website and clicking on the GIFTS tab. You can also write a check and put it in one of our gift envelopes found on the table in the LLI hallway.

## IN HONOR OF:

**Butch Sterbenz's birthday**

*Sondra & Dan Ellis*

**Shir Ami &**

**Just Strung Out**

*Hootenanny Committee*

**Susan & Robert Levin's  
granddaughter's wedding**

*Hazel & Richard Sohn*

## IN MEMORY OF:

**Jane Elswick**

*Charles Korr*

**Nancy Sachar**

*Alice Watkins*

*Carolyn Henges*

*Harriet Baron*

**Yvonne Logan**

*Karen & Butch  
Sterbenz*

**Patricia Barrett**

*Phyllis Walsh*

**Neil Bromberg**

*Betty Dew*

## GENERAL FUND

*Gloria Kweskin*

*Thomas Wack*

*Harriet Switzer*

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## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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*Rick Blaha*

*Pat Keating*

*Richard Laitman*

*Jeanne Smith*

*Rita Warren*

*Marlene Hunter*

*John & Kathleen Rorris*

*Richard Roloff*

*Tom Habs*

*Nancy McKee*

*Jean Chase*

*John Rava*

*Kitty Bollinger*

*Mary Ann Morley*

*Dennis Smith*

*Edmund Acosta*

*Ellen Mocerri*

*Alene Zawada*

*Louis Beck*

*Anonymous*

*Tom & Cindy Mitchell*

*Pat Hyland*

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*Priscilla McDonnell*

*Norman Essman*

*Neil Bromberg*

*Bill Thomas*

*Stanley Gollub*

*Richard Strassner*

*Lilly Abraham*

A charitable gift annuity is a great way to supplement your income and support Lifelong Learning too. Establish a gift annuity with \$5,000 or more in cash or appreciated securities and receive:

- Fixed lifetime payments to you and/or your spouse or another beneficiary based on the age(s) of the recipient(s).

- A charitable income tax deduction for a portion of your gift
- A portion of the payments are usually tax-free
- Capital gain tax savings when you use appreciated securities to fund your gift (Many alumni and friends have funded charitable gift annuities with appreciated securities that were generating minimal dividends.)

- Support for Lifelong Learning or another purpose at Washington University.

Contact Toni Reel at 314-935-6917 for more information. If you would like a confidential illustration including specific payment rate, tax deduction and capital gains tax benefits based on your age, please contact the Office of Planned Giving at 314-935-5373 or email [plannedgiving@wustl.edu](mailto:plannedgiving@wustl.edu).

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toward ongoing gratitude, not to the wars but to those who served the nation. "It encourages recovery, reflection and respect for the fallen," he concluded.

Other guests for the occasion included Mark S. Wrighton, Chancellor of Washington University, who opened the session for the 23<sup>rd</sup> year, and Mark

Rollins, Dean of University College. Chancellor Wrighton updated LLI members on the university's successful capital campaign and discussed the status of the building projects on the Danforth Campus. The new underground parking garage will greatly improve the entrance to the university, he said. Dean Rollins welcomed members to a new year and introduced the guest speaker, Professor Decker.

# A Facilitator's Story: Ben Sandler

Ben Sandler is branching out. For 10 years, this poetry enthusiast facilitated a series of LLI classes devoted to the sonnet, a 14-line, centuries-old form that is still alive and well. But last summer, for a four-week class, he chose for his syllabus three contemporary, free-verse poets – Mary Oliver, Billy Collins and Louise Glück. He couldn't entirely forsake his old loves, however, so he slipped in a batch of poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay, including a couple of sonnets. He is a great admirer of her poetry, and in any class, love adds spice.



Ben Sandler

For the winter session, Ben will expand his summer syllabus and include, for further contrast, Elizabeth Bishop, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century poet now enjoying a small renaissance. He has found he enjoys free-verse poetry more than he had anticipated. In fact, as he remarked recently, finding a good poem, whatever the form, is a pleasure. "Every good poem tells you something you already know, but in a new and interesting way."

For Ben, one of the rewards of facilitating is the preparation process. "I like searching for poems, typing them for the course booklet and thinking how to make each poem easier to understand," he said. "I think about word choice, look up obscure references or words and mentally unscramble the grammar if

necessary." His goal, he stressed, is to help class members feel the pleasure of the poem, to appreciate its sounds, the link with the poem's sense and imagery, and the pace of its rhythms.

After laying out ground rules on the first day, Ben runs his class with what one of his LLI students describes as "quiet authority." He tries to call only on those who raise their hands to speak. And when multiple hands go up, he exercises his knack for remembering the order of the bids for attention. One especially important tenet is that students should defend their comments and understanding according to the words on the page rather than with outside information – the poet's life, for instance. Often, he said, a student knows a poem better than he does, and he welcomes such insights. "I learn a lot about the poems from class members. We are collaborators in opening up a poem."

Ben spent 37 years in administrative positions at Washington University. Yet, running through those years was his interest in poetry, first nurtured by his undergraduate days as an English major at Bowdoin College in Maine and several years of teaching high school English. "Facilitating at LLI has unexpectedly and gladly brought me full circle," he said.

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## WANTED! Knitters and Yarn Donations

A group of LLI knitters needs your help. They are looking for volunteers to knit or crochet children's scarves for the Harvey Kornblum Food Pantry.

Scarves should be 4" x 40" or 5" x 50". (Any color and the color of your choice.)

The group is also seeking yarn

donations. This is a good opportunity to get rid of all your leftover yarn! If there isn't enough yarn to complete a scarf, it can be used for trim or a scarf of many colors.

You may knit in the comfort of your home or join a group of knitters in the cafeteria (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) every Wednesday Noon—2:00 p.m. The

group meets every week, all year long.

Completed scarves and yarn donations may be dropped off at the LLI office or call Susan Levin at (314) 721-2500 for pick-up.

For further information, please contact Norma Rader at (314) 863-1285.

**Overheard in the Hallway:** "They said it couldn't be done. But (facilitator) Anna Amelung keeps packing in the students over in A-B classroom without the benefit of coffee and treats."

Please note: Anna Amelung is taking the winter term off, but she promises to be back in the spring!

# Who Can It Be?

What is it that makes certain kids want to venture beyond their known circle, never thinking they should tell someone? Whatever it is, our mystery LLI member seems to have possessed a hearty dose. At age five, he got the notion to explore a wheat field near his family's small St. Louis County farm, accompanied only by his trusty companion, a German shepherd named Von. Spotting the twosome, a neighbor recognized the dog and phoned the family, wondering about the boy roaming through the wheat.

For our mystery person, memories of World War II abound. He recalls listening with his parents to FDR's radio speech about the attack on Pearl Harbor, "a date which will live in infamy." Later, when the U.S. Army Engineer Corps formed a regiment in St. Louis, his dad decided to join up, a tenure that would last four years.

One vivid wartime memory centers on a scrap metal drive sponsored by his grade school. Determined to bring in the most scrap metal, he and several buddies combed the area, ending with a fortuitous discovery: an old car stripped of tires and engine, rusting in the woods. Attaching a rope to the axle, they dragged that automotive remnant to their school and – no surprise – claimed the top honor!

Our mystery person says he liked all his high school studies, and while he played on football, basketball and baseball teams, he secretly loved baseball best. In various years he played third base, outfield, catcher and first base. One of his favorite teachers was Mr. Hecker, who taught English. A former newspaper proofreader, he insisted on exactness and conciseness, traits his admiring pupil would incorporate into his own writing.

When the war ended, the family moved to a farm near Springfield, Ill., where our classmate's job history begins. One summer, he worked as a union common laborer, digging ditches for a plumbing company.

Another summer, he became a runner on the trading floor of the Chicago Board of Trade. A third summer was spent as a farm worker, milking cows and baling hay on a famous writer/conservationist's farm in eastern Ohio.



During college at Princeton, he realized that economics was his favorite subject. He liked its practical rationality in dealing with everyday aspects of life, such as prices and markets. That led him to go on to earn an MBA at Harvard with a concentration in corporate finance.

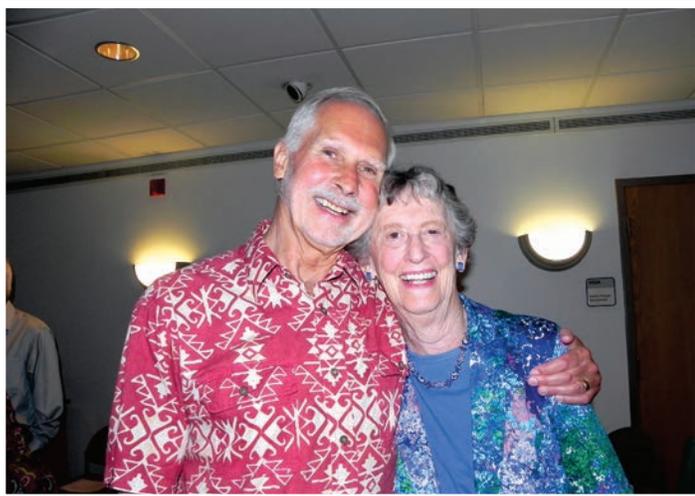
Before leaving for those East Coast colleges, though, he had met, in her hometown of Springfield, the woman who would become his wife. Both received degrees at the end of the same spring term and were married the following September. They began their life together in Fort Wayne, Ind., where our classmate learned grain-buying at a soybean processing firm.

Then one day he answered an anonymous ad that led to his employment at the Pet Milk Company. His time there included two and a half years in Brussels, Belgium, where his projects took him to Spain and Sweden. Upon returning to St. Louis, he joined Pet at its new, modern building on the riverfront. For many years, he worked on mergers and acquisitions, later leading strategic planning and investor relations. Eventually, however, Pet itself was acquired, the headquarters staff dispersed, the building sold and the various brands and products spread among other food companies. Fortunately, by that time our mystery person had reached retirement age.

When asked to name the favorite of all the places he'd lived, he replied that perhaps it was the small farm in St. Louis County where he rode his pony, Silver, played ice hockey with his friends on the frozen pond and learned to milk a cow.

– *Dolores Friesen*  
(Answer on Page 8)

# What the Dickens: Over Two Million Words So Far, but Who's Counting?



Nancy and Mike

Eight years ago, when Nancy McKee and Mike Nolan joined forces to facilitate a class on Charles Dickens, they decided to debut with *Bleak House*, one of the writer's richest and lengthiest novels. Many of its plot twists stem from a long-running legal case, Jarndyce and Jarndyce, which Dickens uses to satirize the English judicial system.

"As it turned out," Nancy recalled recently, "we had seven or eight lawyers in that class, and a couple of them took umbrage at the way the law is depicted. It made for lively discussions!" Most, however, took the legal bashing in stride, with some becoming ardent Dickens fans. Not surprisingly, *Bleak House* has a history of creating a stir, beginning with its publication in England in the 1850s, when it helped fuel a movement that eventually led to legal reforms.

This winter, *Oliver Twist* becomes the eighth – and, to date, the shortest – Dickens novel that Nancy, Mike, and now a third facilitator, Alan Hamilton, have offered. The class's loyal following will be joined by new students, some of whom may be reading Dickens for the first time. The facilitators, as usual, will fill their chosen roles, Nancy and Alan focusing on close readings of the text and Mike specializing in themes and characters.

But what is so masterful about Dickens? For Nancy, it is the way he invented and handled multiple subplots,

ultimately bringing them all together. Meanwhile, Mike delights in Dickens' memorable characters and can spout from memory some of his liveliest dialogue. For Alan, too, the characters reign. "Even people who have never read the books know figures like Ebenezer Scrooge, Uriah Heep, Micawber, Tiny Tim and, from *Oliver Twist*, Fagin and the Artful Dodger," he said. "If only I could request, like Oliver, 'Please, sir, I want some more.'"

Since there are 14 completed novels, Dickens lovers potentially have plenty of good reading and LLI class time ahead. Who knows, maybe the featured book will one day be *A Tale of Two Cities* – at a mere 300 pages – which, despite yearly requests, the facilitators have thus far resisted. After all, back in the day, didn't most of us read it in high school?

## New garage technology

The West Campus Garage will be updated with new gate arm access technology by the end of the year. The new system relies on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and will be able to read the RFID technology that is embedded in the parking permits of those who have access to the garage.

With a permit, you will simply pull up to the gates at both the entrance and the exit and the RFID-enabled parking permit hangtags will trigger the gate arms to open automatically. Therefore, it is very important that LLI members hang their permits from their rearview mirrors. Please check with the LLI office if you have not already picked up your ParkSmart permit.

Visitors will be able to pull a ticket to enter the garage and pay when exiting. The rates will be: \$2 for up to two hours; \$4 for two-to-four hours; \$6 for four-to-six hours; \$9 for six-to-10 hours; and \$12 for 10-15 hours.

# NEVER A DULL MOMENT AT LLI

The first LLI Hootenanny was held on Sunday afternoon, October 15, 2017, at the Ethical Society of St. Louis. Over sixty people attended and \$1300 was raised to benefit the LLI Scholarship Fund. Two local musical groups, Shir

Ami and Just Strung Out, supported the enthusiastic singing of the assembled LLI-ers. The planning committee included: David Brown, Don Cohn, Nina Kaplan, Helen Schrader, Esther Smoller, and Karen Sterbenz.



Just Strung Out band members



Jay Burns, Marty Einig, Karen Albin



Ed Kniep, Kathy Holman, Gene McNary, Susan McNary



Susan Dee, Dan Kweskin, Harvey Solomon, Miriam Solomon, Gloria Kweskin



Carol Kaplan of Shir Ami

