VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Betty Spence

We are on a roll this year! Classes are underway. Learn at Lunches are interesting and well attended. The Cuba trip is subscribed and set for November 2016.

We have a fine slate of nominees for the Annual Meeting: new candidates Paul Heckles and Ed Minch have agreed to 3-year terms; Connie Schroth, a second 3-year term; while Ginny Barker will serve the third year of an unexpired term. Aren’t we fortunate? There will be more information sent out before the Annual Meeting.

The Council has reviewed the 5-year plan created in May 2010, some goals of which have been completed with others on-going. We have identified other areas to continue to develop including a new initiative to strengthen the link between WC-ALL and the college itself. To this end, several WC-ALL members (Bill Low, Connie Schroth, Dick Swanson and Sally Sweetser) participated in a pilot workshop on the Multi-generational Workplace with the Center for Career Development in early March. In addition, we will partner with the Global Education Office on a newly-revamped mentor program next Fall. We are also discussing possible courses to be taught by college faculty and opportunities for WC-ALL members to learn about current research projects being undertaken by faculty.

Thanks for being part of WC-ALL.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR . . .

The last of six outstanding LEARN AT LUNCHES will be held on Tuesday, April 12th and will feature WC President Sheila Bair. This will no doubt be a sell-out, so get your reservations in early to assure yourself a seat. Reservation flyers were sent in March.

DAY TRIP TO HAGLEY MUSEUM & LIBRARY

Save Wednesday, April 27th to visit this gem of a museum just outside Wilmington, DE, the site of the Du Pont Company's original gun powder works. There’s a lot to see as you stroll along the Brandywine River, visit the lovely E. I. du Pont home and gardens, and learn the history of one of our nation's earliest industries. A buffet lunch at noon in the Soda House will follow the two hour morning tour with time reserved in the afternoon for another hour of touring and to explore the Visitors Center exhibits and Museum Shop. Cost (includes bus, tour, lunch, driver tip) is $65 for members, $75 for others; reservations due April 18th. Be on the lookout for the reservation flyer.

WC-ALL Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12th from 5 to 7 pm in the Gallery of the Casey Academic Center. Always a classy event, this year’s “Academy Awards” will again honor our terrific instructors. Enjoy good food and drink, socialize with WC-ALL friends as we wrap-up another stellar WC-ALL season. Invitations will be mailed in early April.
Dick Swanson, Curriculum Chair, has announced the Request for Proposals for Fall 2016 courses. Be adventuresome! Even if you have never taught before, Dick would like to hear your ideas. The online proposal form is available on the WC-ALL website and submissions are due June 1st. Contact Dick with questions. 443-282-1160 or rcswan47@yahoo.com

Special Events Chair Ginny Barker is delighted to announce that Dr. Sebastian Gorka, whose Learn at Lunch presentation, Why ISIS is More Dangerous than Al Qaeda, was cancelled last fall, will be on campus on Wednesday, October 5th. His lecture will be an all-college event and is scheduled for 7:00 pm. Watch for further information.

WC-ALL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Ellen Plummer, Publicity Committee

A LITTLE HISTORY
Each year since 1999, in recognition of the support the College provides our organization, WC-ALL has sponsored scholarships for Washington College students. President Sheila Bair acknowledged the College’s indebtedness to WC-ALL in a December, 2015, letter to Chair Betty Spence, writing “Students are my number one priority, and I intend to lessen the financial burden that comes with the superior education Washington College provides.” She has said, “Now, more than ever, you really need a liberal arts education” to learn how to think critically, analyze and prioritize. Through its scholarships, WC-ALL is helping young people to hone those skills.

Each spring, the WC-ALL Council determines its contribution to the College’s WC-ALL Scholarship Fund based on WC-ALL’s fund balance. These donations have been $10,000 or more in the last three years. A 5% draw of the last three-year fund average is used to support students each year.

More than 17 WC-ALL scholarships have made it possible for students to complete their degree studies. Some students have received more than one scholarship. The College selects the students, based on the criteria which it uses in awarding all scholarships; these include need, academic record, and proven leadership.

CURRENT RECIPIENTS
Junior Isaiah Chapman, a physics major from Aberdeen, Maryland, and senior Caitlin Byrnes, from Crofton, Maryland, are the current recipients. (See the Spring 2015 WC-ALL Newsletter for a profile of Isaiah.) Caitlin is majoring in international studies and Spanish, with a concentration in Latin America, and has a minor in economics. In thanking WC-ALL for its scholarship award, Caitlin wrote “I would not have been able to return to college [for my senior year] without it.” Last year, she spent a semester abroad in Peru and, this spring, attended the Harvard World Model United Nations in Rome where she represented Guatemala. Her senior thesis, in Spanish, deals with violence against women in Latin America. Caitlin is currently interning with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, a non-profit which helps disadvantaged children, and she has applied for a Peace Corps assignment upon graduation. Caitlin hopes to make a career in the field of civil rights, perhaps as a lawyer.
About 25 years ago I accompanied my mother to her Shakespeare class at the University of Delaware Academy of Lifelong Learning; it was an enlightening experience that stayed with me while my husband and I looked for a retirement location some years later. The Academy of Lifelong Learning at Washington College was part of our decision to make Kent County our home in 1998.

Lifelong learning has become a possibility for seniors across the US. Intellectual stimulation, social interaction, and educational excursions are the usual fare for over-50 students. Three models I investigated to compare/contrast with our program are: Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes “for seasoned adults,” Fromm Institutes of Lifelong Learning (California), and Senior College (Maine).

Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (119 in all across the US) benefit from a $2 million endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation, based in California. All are attached to a college or university and have received financial start-up funding. They form a nationwide network and provide program options very similar to ours. The Foundation is not currently offering monies for programs outside their network but will accept applications if and when they accept new sites.

Fromm Institute of Lifelong Learning at San Francisco offers 90-minute classes, two days a week at 10 am and 1 pm for three sessions a year. Senior College in Maine is affiliated with Elderhostel Institute Network, offering 2-hour classes in Fall and Spring and a Winter session with one-day courses.

So you can see that we are in good company and lucky, indeed, to be affiliated with Washington College in the midst of a vibrant community of learners.

MOVING TWO INITIATIVES FORWARD

Connie Schroth, Vice Chair

At her Fall inauguration President Sheila Bair informed the audience of two initiatives she would undertake this first year of her tenure—Dam the Debt and George’s Brigade. Both focus on changing the paradigm around access and affordability to higher education. So what progress has been made?

As noted in a recent college publication, “Total student debt in America today stands at $1.3 trillion with 40 million Americans carrying at least one student debt loan . . . [S]tudent debt is now the second largest category of debt, just behind home mortgages.” Dam the Debt aims to adjust the financial award for every senior who is carrying debt at graduation and seeks $1 million in scholarship funding annually to support the program. “The expectation is that Dam the Debt could reduce student borrowing by one-third.” As of late February, several organizations have already directed $950,000 toward the initiative.

George’s Brigade seeks to “help high-ability, high-need students attain a private liberal arts education” at Washington College. To date, $2.75 million has been raised in endowment funding. Between endowment earnings and additional current use gifts, the College has secured over $800,000 towards the $1.6 million needed to see the first cohort of 20 students through their four years at Washington College.

Special invitation from The Starr Center for summer project

WC-ALL members are invited to work with students and faculty of The C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience to help collect, explore, and preserve oral histories of World War II through the Center's StoryQuest Oral History Project. It’s a real opportunity for WC-ALL to join with the college in an important venture.

No experience necessary. Training and orientation provided. Minimum commitment five hours/week, June and July. Opportunities to work from the Custom House or at home. For more information, please contact Michael Buckley, StoryQuest Program Manager at (410) 810-7156, or by email to mbuckley3@washcoll.edu.
INTRODUCING . . . DRUMROLL . . . OUR NEW SPRING INSTRUCTORS

Missing in the line-up is Mark Connor. Also new to the WC-ALL roster of instructors last Fall: Ken Collins, Kevin Hemstock, Kathleen Hurd and Peter Sweetser. And special thanks to all our “old timers” – an illustrious group!

Marc Castelli    Joe Hickman    Trey Hill    Sue Kenyon    Hanson Robbins    Steve Frohock

PHOTO GALLERY

WC-ALL’s December visit to Nemours Mansion and Gardens in Delaware.

“THE ACADEMY AWARDS” at the WC-ALL ANNUAL MEETING

A Special Celebration of the 2015-16 Academic Year
Thursday, May 12 from 5 to 7 pm, Casey Academic Center

ACADEMY of LIFELONG LEARNING

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