



EXPLORERS
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Explorers Compass Newsletter November 2024

The Explorers LLI is ever-grateful to Salem State University for being our generous sponsor.

Welcome to our second on-line 2024 Explorers Compass newsletter!
We hope you enjoy reading this. Next issue will be in 2025!
These issues will be coming to your computer inbox instead of your snail-mailbox.

FALL SEMESTER 2024

Fall semester is up and running thanks to our presenters, tech assistants and members. When I take time to think about all that Explorers is and all that it does for us, what I find most astonishing is that we are an all-volunteer organization. That is what distinguishes us from other similar programs. Our volunteers and members are the heart and soul of Explorers.

I often speak about how, when meeting someone who would be a great presenter, I twist their arms until they finally agree to sign on. Over time, we've seen a vastly diverse selection of course offerings: literature, foreign language, politics, antiquities, music, poetry, travel, wines, a book club, a writers' group, current events and much more.

As Explorers, as well as participating in classes, we are also socializing, sharing ideas and experiences and communicating with our peers both in person and remotely. We, individually and collectively, represent the adage that you're never too old to learn.

To all of our presenters, tech assistants, directors, members and of course, Dawn, our office administrator, thank you for taking such good care of Explorers!

Gay Porter

President

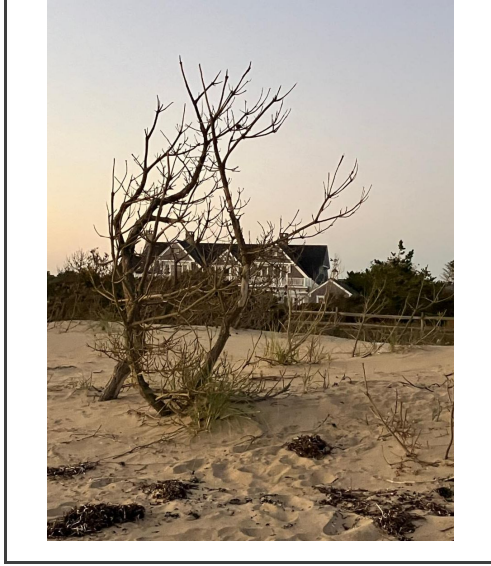
November, 2024

November Gray

There's something about November Gray.
Leafless, skeletoned trees are bare,
fragments of summer swept away,
while frozen promises clutch the air.

November teaches me to Pray.

Something about a November Day,
its deliberate, colorless retreat
from sparkling skies, unweighted play.
My faith tested; will summer repeat?



South Beach, Martha's Vineyard

November teaches me to Pray.

by Clem Schoenebeck
published Reader's Break
December 2000



Meet Carol Damon

(One of our dedicated Explorers Board Members and Coordinator of the May/June and December Danversport Explorers Luncheons)

Carol, first, please tell us a little about yourself.

For instance, what was your retirement job and what are your hobbies, interests, etc.?

I grew up in Wayland, Massachusetts. My forefathers, dairy farmers, settled in South Reading from England in the mid-1600's, eventually moving to Wayland, a dairy farming community, in the early 1700's.

Wayland, still a small town, in the 1940's, offered limited opportunities to the children of the town. I spent my childhood climbing trees, rock structures that seem so small today, and walking barefoot on the rocks of the small brook at the edge of the property. Mother's groups were popular and provided the best way to meet age-appropriate peers. "Old Glory" provided wagon and sleigh rides; when saddled up, "Honey Girl" was always ready to provide rides. The horses were a favorite of my sister's and mine. It was a small world. My educational experiences and opportunities to make new friendships increased upon joining the Girl Scouts and entering the public school system. I always enjoyed school and, as my experiences broadened, my thoughts of the future eventually centered on teaching and nursing.

Deciding to pursue teaching, I spent my college years studying Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and finally focusing on Special Education. After getting a Master's degree in Special Education, I began teaching in Lynnfield, Massachusetts, continuing in Lynnfield until I retired in 2004. When retired, I finally had the opportunity to travel. Traveling in Europe expanded my education with first-hand experiences visiting places that once seemed so far away. Vacations were often spent on the islands south of the USA. Teaching was rewarding, but also demanding and time-consuming. Vacations at home or away were always welcome.

Had you been an Explorer student prior to joining the Board?

After retiring and spending many years being called on to fulfill long-term substitute positions, it was time to move on. I wanted something new and different. Living in Peabody, I began to explore local opportunities at the Public Library. Through a Peabody library administrator, I learned of Explorers Life Long Learning Institute in Salem. After visiting Explorers and speaking with the president at the time, I knew I had found something quite unique. This member-run organization offered me a wide range of classes, as well as the opportunity to interact with members socially. I began classes in September of 2017 and have continued to the present time.

What made you interested in joining the Board? Tell us about your Explorers Board position, such as how long have you been on the Board, etc.? Aside from organizing the Luncheons, had you had any other specialized responsibilities for the Explorers?

Realizing the magnitude of the opportunities and the High quality of the classes that Explorers offered, I soon became interested in how Explorers managed to do so well in what they were doing. This led to my first experience as a member of the board. I joined the Explorers Board in 2017 as an at-Large member, joining the Curriculum Committee in 2018, moving in 2019 to the task of scheduling of our volunteers, and finally in 2021 becoming the chair of the Events Committee. Explorers love our events!

Tell us about the history of the Luncheons (had they been at held other locations, etc.?)

Historically, Explorers has two luncheons each year, both held at the Danversport Events Center in Danvers. The Holiday luncheon in December comes at the close of the Fall Semester and the Spring luncheon, at the close of the Spring Semester. The Danversport Events Center offers the perfect setting for our luncheons. Their staff is accommodating, helpful and fully enjoy making everything as perfect as possible for our members. They take pride in their offerings, with the owner often saying when we arrive to confirm the final arrangements, "We love Explorers." We couldn't ask for more.



The December luncheon is coming up next month.

Tell us about it and how we can sign up to go! Yum!

The invitations for our December 12th Holiday Luncheon will be sent before Thanksgiving and the returns will be due by December 2nd. The cost remains at \$42.00 per person, a price that cannot be matched for what we receive.

*Thank you, Carol!
We'll see you there!*

Meet Jonathan Leamon

(Explorers long-time Student, Teacher, and Board Member

-with his many Explorers involvements, we are happy to focus particularly on Jon's role as a Teacher in our interview)

Jon, (our enthusiastic instructor of the Frank Lloyd Wright classes), are you planning to teach again this upcoming spring?

"Actually, I'm taking a break from teaching next semester. After offering various courses on Frank Lloyd Wright for 7 years, I'm finding I need to pause occasionally to wait for new students to join Explorers." (Well, there you are: If you haven't yet joined us, this is a good reason to sign up as a new Explorer student!)



What are you teaching this fall?

This fall semester, I have been offering the original course that I developed in 2018 with some modifications. Initially designed as an 8-week course, I discovered fairly quickly that I needed 10-11 sessions to cover all of the material in the syllabus, and the participants agreed to attend a couple of additional sessions at the end.

I found the course evaluations very helpful for future offerings. Several participants recommended that I break up the course into a two semester offering, so I did that for a couple of years. Over time, I had developed 44 hours of material, all on one architect: Frank Lloyd Wright. While this is great if you are a true fan of Frank Lloyd Wright, for those who may prefer a survey course, this may be too heavy on detail.

As a teacher, have you made some changes over time? (if so, describe those)

A few years ago, we experimented with a short-course format for Explorers. This was a great idea that originated with Gay Porter. We recognized that people travel at various times during the year, and some members prefer taking lots of shorter courses. Zoom hybrid courses helped reach more members, one of the only benefits of our experience with COVID!

To address the short-course format, I developed three new courses on Frank Lloyd Wright, focusing on specific areas: (1) Sacred Spaces (churches and one synagogue), (2) How Wright's personal life impacted where he worked/built...I called that "Bad Boy" and (3) Lost Works. The lost works course focused on buildings that were either torn down or Wright designs that were never built for one reason or another. This last course also provided me the opportunity to point out a variety of misinterpretations of Wright that I have discovered having continued to research him in depth over the past 7 years.

What drew you to consider teaching a class at the Explorers?

In my course evaluations at Explorers, I recommended (twice) that other instructors offer a course on Frank Lloyd Wright. Initially, it did not occur to me to offer a course. I had always been interested in his architecture (since elementary school) and had written a couple of papers by High School, but I did not really do any additional research until after retirement. I found myself following articles in print and on the web.

In the meantime, after taking courses for a few semesters, I was asked to offer a future course at Explorers. Typically, the course is in a field you worked in. I worked in Human Resources, specifically compensation & benefits, and the last course we worked on collectively was "Change Management for Organizations." Like most retirees who volunteer, I no longer have compensation to worry about and we are pretty much all on the same benefits: Social Security and Medicare! As for "Change Management," the reality is that by our age, many people aren't interested in changing much of anything!

My last job prior to retirement was in Human Resources at Road Scholar. What a great organization! In fact, the Lifelong Learning Institute concept was initially developed by Road Scholar, then known as "Elderhostel" at the University of New Hampshire. I briefly thought about working on tours centering on Frank Lloyd Wright but quickly realized that much travel would be involved because the closest homes open to the public are in Manchester, NH. By offering courses at Explorers, I was able to fulfill a lifelong ambition and share my research with others. Early on (before COVID), I offered optional field trips to Wright's "Zimmerman House," owned by the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH. The museum has since acquired "Kalil House" next door, another Wright home of a different style.

Had you ever taken a class at the Explorers before, as a student?

I started at Explorers taking classes, and it has (and continues to be) a wonderful experience for me.

Do you have any particular hopes for your students as, or after, they take your class?

My objective for my students is to help them familiarize themselves with Wright's work so that they have a better understanding of what they are looking at when they visit a site. Wright was very deliberate in his design, and it shows in the details.

We have many copies of his work, objects and style right around us in surrounding towns! I try to show that in class when I see it. Wright's influence in the work of other architects is significant.

Tell us a little more about yourself: perhaps travel, etc., anything you care to share about things you enjoy doing outside of the Explorers.

At the time I retired, I became interested in the Swampscott Historical Commission when I realized it was too late to save White Court (formerly Marian Court College and the summer White House of President Calvin Coolidge) from demolition. While a replica of the former mansion was built on part of the new property, it is just that, a replica, and much (if not most) of the historic aspect of the home has been lost.

The Historical Commission has been actively trying to save the General John Glover farmhouse, which sits within the restaurant that many of us fondly remember. Unlike White Court, which was famous for its architecture and interiors, the Glover farmhouse, a fairly simple structure is famous because it housed a Revolutionary War hero who essentially started (and staffed) the US Navy with General George Washington. Recent publications reveal that Glover deserves far more attention than might have been afforded him in the past. Most locals are probably more familiar with the fine restaurant that operated on that same site for many years under the ownership of famed restaurateur, Anthony Athanas. Athanas, an immigrant who started as a dishwasher in Lynn and eventually bought the restaurant (his first of a small dynasty) is a fascinating story unto itself. I would very much like to save both the structures, General Glover's story (and others who occupied the property) as well as Athanas' fascinating story.

I have just opened an exhibit with the Historical Commission called *Celebrating Swampscott Schools*, coinciding with the opening of our beautiful new Elementary School. The exhibit covers the history of Swampscott's Public School System, beginning in 1814 when Swampscott was still part of Lynn and runs up to the present. I have learned so much by working on the exhibit; there were so many small schools most people would never know about because they have been gone for so many years. And the educators were legendary! While I greatly enjoy working on the exhibits, in terms of the Commission, I feel the visual displays serve the purpose of highlighting our primary responsibility of protecting and preserving Swampscott's historical heritage and resources.

I am very much in favor of the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which was on the ballot, which, in addition to improving our parks and public spaces would help to preserve our historic landmarks. Swampscott has paid into this fund for over 20 years; it's time to take advantage of all CPA has to offer by voting "yes" to participate. I am hoping that this time around it will pass. Not a single community who has adopted the CPA has subsequently approved a vote to drop out of participation. It really works!

Editors note: **Swampscott passed the CPA!!**

Anything else you care to share or would like included?

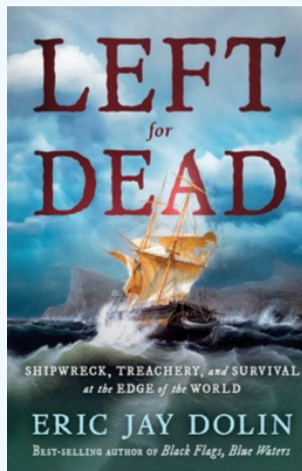
Should I ever decide to relocate to Madison, Wisconsin, I have a standing offer to become a docent at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1938, it was finally built 59 years later in 1997. I think Wright would be very happy if he saw it now.



"Eddie's House," designed by **Frank Lloyd Wright** pro-bono for a dog at the request of a 12-year old boy to match the design of his parent's house.
Photo by William Storrer.

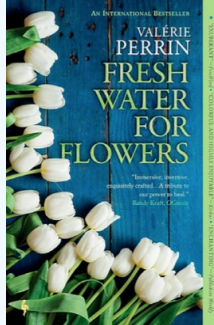
Explorers Book Corner by Roz Eschelbacher

Every Explorer member is invited to join our Book Group discussions which take place the first or second Monday of the month at 10:00 am. If you sign up for Book Group (it does not count as one of your course choices), you will automatically receive emails, updates and the link. We ask our members for suggestions and each semester select from the rich and varied choices submitted.

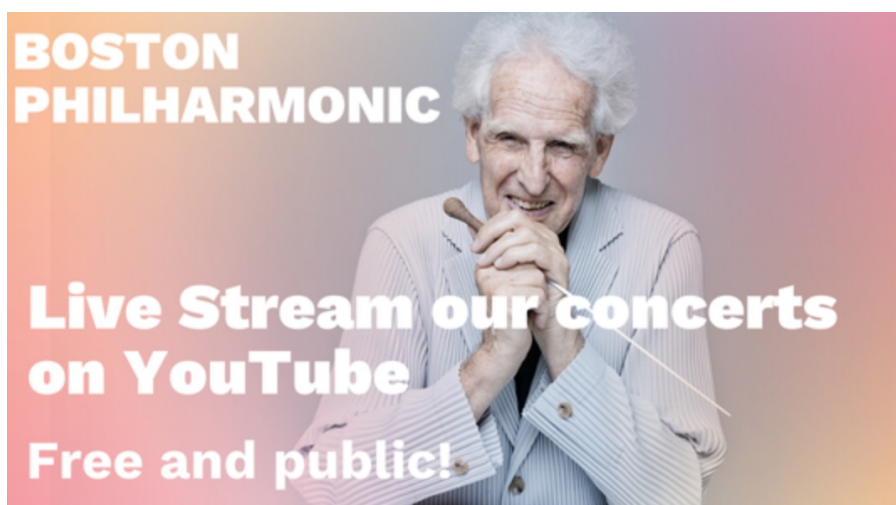


November 4th brought us to local author Eric Jay Dolan's Left For Dead. We were enlightened by Richard Sides and his fascinating sailing study and background knowledge to help comprehend the non-fiction account of this true tale of abandonment of seamen in the remote Falkland Islands in the early 1800's during the French and Indian war.

December 9th's Fresh Water For Flowers by Valérie Perrin is a masterful novel translated from the French. Explorers' president and writing class leader, Gay Porter, undertakes this insightful story.



Looking forward to January 6th - we have Table for Two by Amor Towles, short stories and a novella by the brilliant writer of A Gentleman in Moscow and The Lincoln Highway. Always a rich undertaking, which will be guided by Judy Arnold.



Peter Sheckman, our classical music presenter and a member of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, is inviting Explorers to live stream the orchestra's schedule. Please see the invitation below!

1. [Live stream link for the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra's Strauss / Mahler concert](#)

Sunday, February 16, 2025

3:00 PM / Symphony Hall

There will be a pre-concert Guide to the Music with Benjamin Zander at 1:45 PM.

[View more about the concert here.](#)

2. [Live stream link for the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra's Mahler Symphony No. 6 Concert](#)

Sunday, March 2, 2025

3:00 PM / Symphony Hall

There will be no pre-concert Guide to the Music with Benjamin Zander however, he will talk about each piece before it is performed.

[View more about the concert here.](#)

3. [Live stream link for the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra's Mahler Symphony No. 2 Concert](#)

Friday, April 18, 2025

8:00 PM / Symphony Hall

There will be a pre-concert Guide to the Music with Benjamin Zander at 6:45 PM.

[View more about the concert here.](#)

4. [Live stream link for the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra's Debussy / Walton / Rachmaninoff Concert](#)

Thursday, May 1, 2025

8:00 PM / Symphony Hall

There will be no pre-concert Guide to the Music with Benjamin Zander however, he will talk about each piece before it is performed.

[View more about the concert here.](#)

Now that you've met Carol (our Luncheon coordinator and Explorers Board Member), and Jon (a course teacher and Explorers Board Member), why don't you further Explore (*pun intended!*) our volunteer options? We welcome your good help doing more of what what we do.

Helpful Senior Resources for Explorers

Have you stopped by your local Senior Center recently?

Lots of great opportunities await you!

(If you have any to add for our next Compass newsletter, please let us know. We're happy to share.)

[Beverly Senior Center](#)

[Danvers Senior Center](#)

[Lynn Senior Center](#)

[Lynnfield Senior Center](#)

[Marblehead Senior Center](#)

[Nahant Senior Center](#)

[Peabody Senior Center](#)

[Salem Senior Center](#)

[Swampscott Senior Center](#)

[Topsfield Senior Center](#)

We hope you've enjoyed our second on-line [Explorers Compass](#) newsletter. The editor is grateful to the kind people who allowed themselves to be interviewed to share their stories with the Explorers readers, to Gay Porter and Michael Eschelbacher, who had the vision to re-create [The Compass](#) as an on-line communication with our Explorers community, to Roz Eschelbacher, who assisted with lots of great ideas (such as providing helpful links for resources) during our brainstorming sessions, and also preparing the Book Corner writing, and to Liz Curtin, for being one of our readers. If you have any ideas/thoughts for items you'd care to see introduced or expanded in our future newsletters, please let us know. Our newsletter is an evolving creation designed to be meaningful to you.

November 2024, *Sami Lawler* (editor/interviewer)



A beautiful rose from our last June Explorers luncheon

Best Wishes for a
Peaceful, Happy
Thanksgiving!

EXPLORERS LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

978-744-0804

explorers@verizon.net

explorerslli.org

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Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute | 10 Federal Street Suite 10 | Salem, MA 01970 US

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