



EXPLORERS
LIFELONG
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INSTITUTE

Explorers Compass Newsletter February 2025

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

Welcome to our Valentine's month heart-warming Explorers newsletter!
We hope you enjoy reading this.
These issues will be coming to your computer inbox instead of your snail-mailbox.

Be sure to say Happy Birthday to Dawn!

This is her birthday month; actually appropriately, on Valentine's Day!



Meet Ted Novakowski (*Intersession Chair and Tech Support*)



Ted is the Chair of the Explorers Intersession Committee and with that helpful and hardworking team, he has done much to allow both Explorers members and the community-at-large to sample and enjoy the educational and entertaining lectures Intersession offers. It's a great way for the community to see how diverse and informative the regular semester classes/lectures are. Many a new member has signed on to Explorers after attending the Intersessions and seeking to learn more.

Ted, tell us how long you have been on the Intersession committee and how long you have been their fearless leader. What made you choose to help organize the Intersession lectures?

"I joined Explorers shortly after retiring in 2010 as Technology Manager at Essex Agricultural and Technical High School in Danvers. After seeing a flyer at a local library about the Explorers Intersession talks, I decided to attend one. After seeing what Explorers was about, I thought: "What a great concept! Lifelong learning - providing a way to find out about all kinds of

interesting things!" I also liked the idea of being able to interact with many interesting people in a learning and social environment that greatly appealed to me.

After taking a few classes, I realized that I could volunteer my time doing what I had been doing at my tech support job for many years, i.e., assisting faculty and staff with operating audio-visual and computer equipment and software. It really came in handy when the pandemic hit and the use of Zoom software was so beneficial in keeping Explorers going. I became involved in developing visiting lecturer talks for Explorers after volunteering to help out Jerry Silver, who was doing a "Friday Coffee" speakers' program at Explorers. When Jerry left to move to Florida in 2014, I took over the job, single-handedly for 4 years. I booked approximately 12 speaker topics per year during both spring and fall semesters, for a total of 86 speakers, allowing for some holiday breaks.

In the winter of 2019, I changed over from the Friday Coffees to becoming chairperson of the Intersession Speakers Committee. I took over from Frank Hawke, who decided to step down after ably guiding the committee for a number of years."

Tell us a little about the Intersession committee and the process of selecting and organizing the lectures.

"The Intersession Committee books about 16 speakers per year in the winter and summer months during the "off season" from our regular courses. Currently, the committee includes Harriet Flashenberg, Joan Tobin, and Martha Tache.

Our goal is to keep the momentum going between class terms by presenting a variety of interesting speakers and topics. By also offering the talks free to the general public, we seek to attract new members to Explorers.

During our meetings, we decide democratically on which speaker prospects we would want to contact for the upcoming Intersession cycle. Then, we divide up the task of contacting the speakers, introducing them at the event, and sending thank you notes afterward.

I like to think of Intersessions as a continuation of the Lyceum concept that was very popular in the 19th Century, where visiting lecturers would enlighten local people with interesting topics. This was exemplified in Salem at the original Lyceum building, now Turner's Seafood, which is just a stone's throw from Explorers headquarters.

As chairperson, I write up the flyer of current speakers, and compose weekly emails to members. I also run the equipment and Zoom software at each speaker presentation.

We also do a video of each presentation that is later posted on the Explorers website, as well as over the Salem Cable TV channel.

When we pick the speaking topics, we try to find a good balance between different subject areas. For example, previous sessions have pertained to history, health, art and culture, politics and government, literature, music, local attractions, environment, local businesses, or travel. We basically try to follow the same patterns as many of our Explorer course offerings, but in a time period of a presentation for 60 to 90 minutes."

Ted, any message to the readers about future Intersessions talks? Are you looking for any talks on particular topics? Let us know -our readers may be just waiting for the invite to organize a quick one hour talk for us!

"Our committee would also like to tap into the vast experiences and knowledge of our fellow Explorer members by inviting them to do future Intersession talks. Perhaps this might be a "testing ground" for people to see if they would want to offer a full course at some point for Explorers. We also are happy to offer prospective presenters some training in how to prepare a presentation in light of the audio-visual technology that Explorers has available.

In any event, we are always on the lookout for ideas from Explorer members for future talks. People can contact us in person or via Dawn at the Explorers office, by phone, or by email at Explorers@verizon.net."

What are some of the memorable Intersession lectures, either recently, or way in the past, you

may choose to mention here?

"Some of my most memorable topics from past seasons include a fun talk last year about the "Shenanigans of Shoebert the Seal". It related how a wild seal swam into the mill pond at the Beverly Cummings Center and later made his way to the police station nearby. When the marine authorities later moved him to South Carolina, he swam all the way back to Beverly! Another talk from previous years was by a man who had rowed across the Atlantic in a two-man row boat. I thought that our recent author talk about rethinking how medications react with each other was very enlightening. People also told me they enjoyed my own talk last summer about the history of Doo Wop music.

All in all, I have found that getting involved with Explorers has been a very rewarding experience for me personally and I hope that I will be able to contribute to the group well into the future."

A tremendous thanks for sharing, Ted; we also hope you will continue to stay involved for us in Explorers!

You can find the Intersession schedule on the Explorers web page explorerslli.org. The link for the lectures is also there. Attendees can view all Intersessions by Zoom and most are available in person, as well, at the Explorers headquarters located at 10 Federal Street, Suite 10, Salem. As Ted mentioned, past Intersession lectures are recorded and are available for viewing on the website, a perfect winter past-time.

Meet Liz Curtin

(an enthusiastic Explorers student and now, a newly-appointed Explorers Board member!)

***Liz, how wonderful that you have been an Explorers student since 2017!
Tell us a little about yourself.***

"My 40-year career in the criminal justice field began in a county jail in Western MA, where I taught English to inmates preparing for their GED tests. Prior to my retirement in 2016, I worked for Community Resources for Justice, a Boston-based non-profit, where I provided technical assistance in community corrections programming around the country, and eventually oversaw halfway houses and reentry programs throughout New England for adults and youth involved with local, state, and Federal justice systems.



I was also an adjunct faculty member at UMass/Lowell, North Shore Community College, and for 20 years in the Justice Studies graduate program at Suffolk University. I am on the Board of Directors for the International Community Justice Association, where I chair the Public Policy committee.

I currently volunteer at Haven from Hunger, a food pantry and community meals program of Citizens Inn in Peabody; and at Bridgeworks Boutique, a vintage/used furniture and home goods store operated by Lifebridge North Shore."

How did you learn about the Explorers?

"During an exercise class at the Salem YMCA, my friend Cynthia Hibberd mentioned a criminal justice class she had just taken at Explorers, knowing that I had just retired from working in the justice field. I had never heard of Explorers at the time."

When did you start taking Explorers classes?

"After attending an intersession lecture with Cynthia in 2017, I was hooked and have been an active member ever since."

What did you first like about the Explorers that caused you to join?

"The content and variety of courses offered is what first attracted me - during both the regular semesters and the intersessions. I also discovered that several people I already knew were members, and I felt a comfortable camaraderie among the attendees. The quality of the instructors was also a draw – both those with professional teaching experience and those with a love for their topic."

Which previous classes did you particularly enjoy? And what made them meaningful to you?

"I tend to enroll in classes on literature and politics. I majored in English and love group discussions which you can only get in a well-designed class with engaged students. I love the "my favorite lecture" series with the Salem State University professors, and that connection with our local university. I also find that the intersessions are always interesting, even when the topics are not something I would have necessarily chosen."

What kept you going with your involvement with Explorers?

"Again, there is a sense of camaraderie among the members. Not only are the instructors top notch, but the students also have a wealth of experience and expertise which adds to every session. In 2020, with a huge assist from Ted Novakowski, I presented Explorers' first Zoom class, an intersession class on Police Reform. Then, in the fall of that same year, I taught an adaptation of my Suffolk University class on Community Corrections. I have volunteered as a technical assistant since last year which has upped my active engagement quite a bit."

Are there any suggestions you have for Explorers to improve or add?

"Our in-person numbers still seem to be down since Covid. The hybrid courses are a great addition to keep members engaged, but we still need to recruit new members. I'm afraid I don't have a great suggestion on how to do that, other than knowing we must."

Great idea, Liz! Please join up, if you haven't yet!

Not quite sure yet about joining up for this spring semester?

Roz Eschelbacher shares some thoughts:

"Explorers LLI is growing!

We have added more areas of broad learning, in subject and depth.

Music, literature, film, history, political philosophy, health, language, law....

From Opera, Gustav Mahler to 20th Century Music,

From Everyday Law to the Supreme Court,

From Athenian Empire to Modern China,

and so many more fascinating opportunities for investigation and pleasure.

Our "teachers" have comprehensive background and scholarship or expertise.

Most classes are held in person at the Federal Street location, but many are accessible on line, from the comfort of our homes or offices, whether in Salem, Ft. Lauderdale or Myrtle Beach.

Many other continuing education sources charge for membership and each class has a fee.

But at Explorers, we can choose up to 8 classes plus book groupper semester, winter and summer intersession all included in the membership fee.

Individual Membership is just \$175 per semester or annual \$300.

Domestic Partnership is just \$305 per semester, or annual \$525.

This is an amazing value for continuing education."

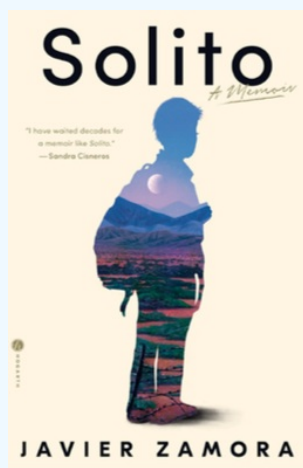
There, you have your answer! It's not too late to sign up at all. (see links below)

Click [here](#) for the Explorers spring catalogue. Click [here](#) to register for courses.

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.

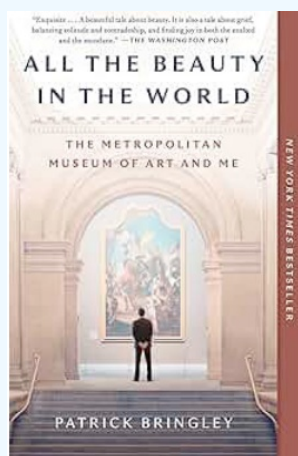


Monday March 3, 2025

Solito by Javier Zamora 2023
416 pages Non-fiction Memoir

The Spanish word "solito" means alone, and in his memoir, "Solito," Javier Zamora shares the perilous journey the author made as a fairly sheltered nine-year-old child from a rural town in El Salvador, through Guatemala and Mexico, to the US.

Discussion led by Merry Glosband



Monday April 7, 2025

All The Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me
by Patrick Brinkley 2023
239 Pages Non-fiction

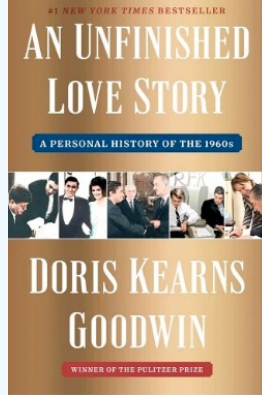
More than just a portrait of an iconic NYC locale and its treasures by a former New Yorker staffer who spent a decade as a museum guard, this book is also a memoir about grief, healing, art, and reinvention.

Discussion led by Peter Sheckman/Roz Eschelbacher

Monday May 5, 2025

An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 60's by Doris Kearns Goodwin 2024
480 pages

"The renowned presidential historian delves into the Kennedy and Johnson eras, drawing from the archives and personal insights of her husband, a



former speechwriter for both leaders.”

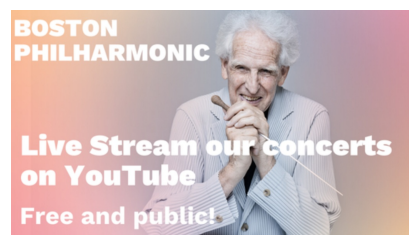
Discussion led by Sandra Lawson

What's new and exciting with our Explorers Board of Directors?

Well, it can be said our vibrant Explorers Board is absolutely not bored at all! We are actively engaged in so many ways. To start, our dedicated, long-time (about 5 years?!) President, Gay Porter, is looking forward to retiring from her presidency; but not before she enthusiastically guides our next incoming president, Jonathan Leamon, to his new role, in about a year. For now, Jon is our board's Vice President. The two are working seamlessly together to make the transition as smooth as can be. Of course, when she is retired from her presidency, Gay will continue to remain active on the Board (and I suspect in other Explorer roles, as well) because she will be our Immediate Past President, a clearly defined role within the Board of Directors.

What is the rest of the Board of Directors doing?

Within the Board, there are active committees for all kinds of tasks for running Explorers. Some new committees have recently formed and some tried-and-true committees are continuing to keep things running smoothly. One new task being addressed is updating the Bylaws. Another is grant writing and fundraising (to assist in keeping necessary tuition increases as modest as possible for our learners). And, of course, with all the work which needs to be done to keep Explorers running, we **absolutely welcome** Volunteers. Reach out to ExplorersLLI@verizon.net with "Volunteer" in the subject line and let us know how you'd like to help! *And, thank you so very much.*



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 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.](#)

2. [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.](#)

3. [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.](#)

2025 MUSIC Center for Creative and Performing Arts
Concert Series
Pre-concert lectures with Peter Sheckman



FEBRUARY 9
Trio Oko: Mina Kim, cello
Emma Powell, violin
Charles Overton, harp


MARCH 9
Joshua Peckins, violin
Eliko Akahori, piano

PERFORMANCES
Feb. 9 and March 9, 2025
All concerts begin at 3 pm.
Pre-concert lecture with Peter Sheckman begins at 2:15pm.

LOCATION
Salem State University
Recital Hall,
Harrington Campus
71 Loring Avenue,
Salem, MA 01970

For more information visit salemstate.edu/arts.
For accommodations and access information, visit salemstate.edu/access.

FREE, limited tickets available. Register in advance to explorers@verizon.net.

Co-sponsored by Salem State Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute and JCC of the North Shore.

Winter is the perfect time for music. The above-mentioned concerts are virtual to savor in the cozy warmth of your home, but perhaps you would you like to enjoy music in-person, as well? The February in-person concert was cancelled due to weather, so we hope you can attend the March 9 event.



It is with heartbreak that we tell you of the passing of Michael Eschelbacher on December 31. He was an active member of our Explorers Board of Directors, an advisor, and a course presenter, with Tom Mela, of the much-loved Explorers SCOTUS Friday class. The Explorers and the Eschelbacher family are grateful for the recent and kind contributions made in Michael's name to Explorers.

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 enjoyed our third 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 co-editor 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, who proofread the entries. 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.

February 2025, *Sami Lawler* (editor/interviewer)

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