

**FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT**  
**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 11, 2014**

**The regular meeting was held at the Five College Center, Spring St., Amherst at 2:15 pm.**

**Present Council:** Jim Averill, Marybeth Bridegam, Rafe de Lima, Michael Greenebaum, Carol Jolly, Sheila Klem, Ellen Peck, Jim Perot, Zina Tillona, Tyll Van Geel, Fran Volkmann

**Absent Council:** Susan Beer, Betsy Loughran, Dean Poli, Jim Scott

**Committee Chairs/Others:** Ruth Kosiorek (S/W), Ina Luadtke (SP), Betsy Siersma (CC), Henny Lewin (MS), Jacob Greenburg (GD), Liz Tiley (OM)

**Minutes:** the minutes from June and August were approved as presented.

**Past President's Report:** Carol Jolly reminded us that her job is to organize the two Previews and the January Memorial Service. She is also responsible for the previous year's annual report. In looking over previous years' reports, she has wondered how detailed these reports need to be. In October we can take up the question of the function and necessary length of such reports.

**Committee Reports:**

**Summer/Winter**—Ruth Kosiorek summarized the activities of both the Winter and Summer programs and the numbers who attended each event.

Winter had **eight** programs: 1. Legislators' Forum (35); 2. Boars Head Festival (17); 3. Ars Cantoria Concert (20); 4. *Les Miserables* (34); 5. 500 years of art tour (63 which needed two groups); 6. German film *Toxi* (20); 7. Ma Jong (4—snow day); and 8. Drama "Street Scene" (30). **This gave us a total of 233 members who registered and paid.**

Summer had **nine** programs. 1. Down the Garden Path tour (21); 2. Vermont overnight art trip (35); 3. Bus trip to de Cordova museum and Gropius House (30); 4. Chester Theater production (33); 5. Russian Ikons and African art in Clinton (29); 6. New Century Theater play (30); 7. Skinner Museum tour (35 which needed two groups); 8. Connecticut River Trip (45); and 9. Tanglewood rehearsal (30).

**This gave us a total of 288 members and guests who registered and paid.**

**Total for the year was 521.**

**Special Programs:** Ina Luadtke told us that the committee will have its first meeting on Sept. 18.

**Member Services:** Henny Lewin reminded us of the annual picnic which is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 16 with Wednesday, Sept. 17 as a rain date. It will be held from 12 to 2 at the home of the Gaustads in Northampton. The Member Services committee will call all new members and introduce them at the picnic. If it looks like rain, the decision to change the date will be made the night before.

**Great Decisions:** Jacob Greenburg handed out a list of eight possible topics for the year. Members will be asked to choose five. A survey will be sent out along with a call for recommendations for speakers on these topics. Finding good speakers is always a challenge.

**Technology:** Jim Perot reported that the fair about using tablets was a success and had even convinced some people to buy them. The committee has helped Liz buy and set up a new printer which is already proving its worth. LIR has been given a slide scanner which is already in use. Jim is the one to schedule the use of projectors for seminars. Sherri Meade will be the new chair of this committee.

**Curriculum:** Betsy Siersma reminded us that the deadline for seminar proposals is October 11—earlier than in the past. They have nine proposals so far. Usually the committee schedules two moderators' meetings per year—one in the fall for all moderators and one in the spring for new ones. This year the first meeting would fall on Oct. 3 which is too early to organize. The committee requested that this year we have only one meeting in the spring which can combine the two agendas. **The Council approved this request.**

**Vice President's Report:** Sheila Klem passed out a sheet with all the current committee members. The Public Relations committee is in abeyance for the moment. According to the current by-laws committee members are supposed to have three-year term limits in order to insure turn-over. Not all committees have been following this pattern. It has been important for the finance and curriculum committees which have to restrict membership for ease of functioning. The Great Decisions Committee, which has needed the help of members whose terms have expired, has called continuing members "consultants." Since by-laws can be changed, the Council needs to think about whether all committees really need term limits.

**Public Relations:** Joan Wofford has prepared a map of the parking at Lathrop, Northampton, as a public relations gesture since this parking has been an issue for residents.

Ruth Kosiorek reported on a PR event that took place at Loomis when Ruth, Joan Wofford, Honore David, Joan Davis, and Gordon Wyse talked to the residents about our programs and answered questions. Special programs and summer/winter activities seemed to be of special interest. There were the expected questions about having to make seminar presentations. This event, which was organized by the ad hoc committee on retirement communities, was attended by about 40 people. The idea of a speakers' bureau still generates interest and can be taken up later in the year.

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**Road Scholar Event:** Marybeth Bridegam passed out material on the proposed Cuba trip. Those interested will meet at the Smith Library on Friday from 4:30 to 5:30. There will also be a \$500 raffle for those attending.

**Office Manager:** Liz said she was happy with the new printer. In the last weeks she has been busy with the many changes in seminar registrations.

A long discussion ensued about the effect on Liz's time if we accepted payments monthly or quarterly instead of whole or half year. This issue came up originally during past discussions of how we can diversify our membership. For those on limited budgets, paying over time instead of all at once might be an inducement to join. However, there are financial considerations in offering this possibility.

- People often forget to make monthly payments or are late doing so. This affects our cash flow.
- Paying through credit cards insures regular payments but may cost us extra to use. We currently do not accept credit card payments. Five Colleges would have to set this up.
- Using pay pal will be an extra cost.
- Using automatic deductions from a bank account is regular but requires set up time.
- Keeping track of monthly or even quarterly payments means more work for Liz and perhaps the Five College People. Would we need to increase dues to cover this kind of cost or would we charge extra for people who pay this way?
- Currently, the policy is for people in difficult financial circumstances to pay up to half the dues.

The Council finally decided to table this issue until we can get more information about the costs and the effect on Liz's time. Michael asked Council members to email him questions that need to be answered before making the decision on how to proceed. The finance committee will also have to report on how partial payments will affect our operating procedures.

**Old Business:** We continued discussing the complicated issue of membership categories, especially for new members. Currently, we have **trial memberships** for people who join either semester. These are a popular way to get to know the organization. Liz gave the Council a statistical history of trial memberships. This year of the 40 new members, 23 were trial memberships. These new members pay \$100 the first semester and then, if the person wants to continue as a full member, they pay \$145 for the second semester. Trial members do not vote, do not join committees, and do not get new member preference in the lottery.

The main arguments for having trial memberships is that it is good PR, it is a good deal financially, and it is popular. But it is confusing.

Fran Volkmann presented a proposal that we allow half year memberships at half price (\$125) for new members each semester. Currently, this is available only in the spring. People taking this option get full membership privileges including new member priority in

the lottery. Some people have wanted this system since they go away in the spring. **The Council voted 6 to 3 to approve this change.**

Questions about these possibilities: 1. Trial memberships may be cheaper, but if they do not include lottery priorities, are they really a good deal?

2. Could we call the half-year memberships “trial” and avoid the lottery problem? This would simplify our categories.

3. Should we change the description of “trial” memberships to include lottery priority? This may undercut the idea of half year memberships.

Tyll Van Geel suggested that we need a table showing the differences between the various membership categories. An ad hoc committee composed of Betsy Siersma, Marybeth Bridegam, and Sheila Klem will prepare such a table of membership categories for the October meeting. Most of this information is in the catalogue and on the membership form. “Special Status” will not be on such a table since the Council voted to abolish it last year.

An ad hoc committee composed of Carol Jolly, Miriam Whitney, and Sara Wright has agreed to reconcile the by-laws with changes in the Operations Manual.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15. Next meeting is October 9.

Respectfully Submitted, Ellen Peck