

THE VOICE

Volume 25 Number 2 A Publication of the Veritas Society, Bellarmine University: The Next Great Learning Experience Fall 2020

The Veritas Voice newsletter is again publishing online. Because of COVID-19 related production issues, we cannot do the usual printed edition to mail out. We're still packed with news!

VERITAS COURSES TO CONTINUE ONLINE THIS FALL

Veritas members will have a hard time choosing from an eclectic roster of fascinating topics when they go to register for the upcoming fall term.

Classes are online again. But as anyone who took part in our summer programs knows, Veritas is maintaining its high standards for enriching and stimulating classes. The fall term will begin September 28 and run for six weeks.

Course catalogs will be emailed next week, August 19. Registration will open at 9 a.m. September 2 and will close on September 16. Enrollment confirmations will be emailed September 21.

If you were a Veritas member last spring (meaning you paid the \$60 membership fee), your membership fee for the fall term will be waived because of the sacrifices you had to make when classes were abruptly ended when Bellarmine shut down. The registration system is set up to waive the fee, but ONLY if you use your Bellarmine credentials – your username and password – when you log in to register. If you don't use your credentials and register instead as a "guest," you will be charged the membership fee. Be on the lookout for an email very soon that will answer questions regarding your credentials.

For new members and returning members who did not take courses in the spring, the membership fee will be just \$30, not the usual \$60, because of our unusual circumstances brought on by the pandemic. This discounted membership fee applies only to Fall 2020 at this time.

The fee for each course remains at \$15 for the fall.

Another change is that our popular Friday speaker's series, known as Lunch and Learn, is dropping the "lunch" aspect since we won't be eating on campus. This fall all six sessions will be bundled and offered as ONE class for \$15; it will begin as usual on Fridays at 11:00 a.m.

Also note that start and end times for classes will differ from what you're used to. The new times are 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.; from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.; and from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m.

While we all love our in-person sessions on the Bellarmine campus, you'll discover there is a hidden advantage to online courses – there is no cap on the number of students in the classes because we don't have to restrict enrollment due to classroom size. That's happy news for those who've been disappointed a desired class filled quickly after registration opened.

As always, the course offerings are tremendous. Many focus on current events and social and political issues. One course will look at court decisions that have created controversy or changes in American lives. Other courses will focus on the U.S. presidency and the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as ongoing issues of racial justice. Health care ethics in times of a pandemic also will be offered.

In the literature and arts arena, there will be a study of the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" plus a virtual tour of great museums. Several French plays will be studied as literary works and the authors' historical legacies will be discussed. Another course will explore the role music plays in the movies, while another will survey the golden era of comedy troupes.

Other courses will cover Tai Chi, an introduction to gerontology, and a look at animal intelligence, consciousness and emotions. And the Chautauqua experience will feature recorded lectures on a wide range of topics.

The lineup for the Friday speakers program is still being finalized; look for details in the course catalog next week. And the Friday afternoon film series will feature movies based on the work of Rudyard Kipling, the India-born English author and Nobel winner.

SOME INTEREST GROUPS STILL "MEETING"

By Gay Ellison

Veritas Interest Groups are a great way to stay connected and socialize with other members. Some have stopped meeting altogether because of COVID-19, but several are now meeting online. Here's a look at who's doing what and when, and how to join if you're interested.

Ethnic Lunch Group

Because the Ethnic Lunch Group's members missed their camaraderie and fellowship, their meeting evolved into an occasional get together at lunch time via Zoom. The online gatherings provide an opportunity to socialize and share, but no set day or time has been established. They're investigating when to meet in September, and if you're interested please contact Mary Helen Thompson at thompsonmaryhelen1@gmail.com

Movie-Dinner Group

This group no longer includes dinner, but it meets via Zoom on the first Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. with each meeting lasting about an hour. The group boasts a membership of 35, with 12 to 15 typically meeting to discuss movies that are available on PBS or Kanopy, the library's free streaming service. Recent movies include *Forrest Gump*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, *The Bookshop*, and *Summer in Genoa*. For more information on the next movie, please contact Linda Miller at linda.loves.walking@gmail.com

Mystery Book Group

They meet via Zoom on the first Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. The group enjoys between 12 - 20 members and always welcomes new members. Upcoming books include the Brother Cadfael mysteries by Ellis Peters, Rabbi Small books by Harry Kemelman and the Hanne Wilhelmsen series by Anne Holt. Meetings at the Highlands-Shelby Park library branch will resume when the libraries reopen. Contact is Rebecca Beyerle at beyerler@gmail.com

Thomas Merton Interest Group

This group reads Thomas Merton's books and discusses his philosophy and life. The group hopes to resume meeting via Zoom on the first Friday of the month, beginning October 2, with the time to be arranged. For more information and/or to be put on the mailing list, contact the Merton Interest Group at MertonInterestGroup@yahoo.com

The Interest Groups listed below have suspended meeting until further notice:

The Moveable Feast Literature Discussion Group

The Hiking Group

The Healthy Eating Group

The Eat/Talk Group

The Deal the Cards Games Group

VERITAS LEARNS TO “PIVOT” IN THE COVID ERA

By Leslie Ellis

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic invaded our lives last spring, we've heard story after story of how everything from restaurants to schools and medical facilities are “pivoting” to adapt.

Veritas, too, has been “pivoting” ever since.

And it's happened because of quick action and behind the scenes work by Veritas staff, board members, presenters and volunteers on the curriculum and production committees, who have kept our program going. Here's a look at what went on behind the scenes of all the changes that had to be made as Veritas pivoted to online programs.

Spring classes – They had just started when the Board of Directors voted at a quickly called meeting in mid-March to cancel the rest of spring classes after learning Bellarmine was shutting down. Board President Dennis Wiseman and Abigail Walsh, Veritas's coordinator and interim director of Bellarmine's Office of Continuing Education, came prepared with a letter that was sent to members. Instructors also had to be notified. But everyone was already looking ahead -- there was discussion of somehow finishing spring courses in late summer.

Distance Dialogs – More planning quickly followed. Curriculum Committee chair Judith Skretny surveyed a dozen lifelong learning programs around the country; she learned all planned to continue online. There was a flurry of emails, phone calls and Zoom meeting with Dennis, Abigail and several board members. Would Veritas members accept an online version? So they decided to run a “test” to see.

Abigail, Dennis and board member Marilyn Schorin set up the free summer online lecture series, the Distance Dialogs. They brainstormed ideas, lined up speakers and figured out how to use Zoom, the online meeting platform, to make it happen. There were 13 lectures; with over 1,200 registrations. More than 250 members participated in a session!

Summer classes – There was already a schedule. Organizer Bud Spalding tweaked the lineup and had to find out if presenters were willing to do Zoom if they had help from Veritas's skilled team of production assistants. They're the Veritas volunteers who make sure we have audio and visuals (more about them later).

August make up courses (currently ongoing) – Eleven of the spring courses that were cut short are finishing this month. Again, flurries of phone calls and emails to find out which presenters could use Zoom to make it work. (Three of the courses actually finished in the spring when those presenters found a way to continue online.) Production assistants' schedules were coordinated to moderate the Zoom sessions.

Fall courses – Throughout the summer, work continued to create the fall lineup of courses. Again, there were dozens of phone calls, emails and Zoom sessions among Dennis, Abigail, and curriculum committee members Judith Skretny and Mary Moll and other board members. More calls were made to presenters to see if they could teach via Zoom. “You had a lot of folks doing a lot of work,” Judith said.

Production Team – Headed by committee chair Ron Gordon, the team has been meeting weekly via Zoom since May 13. Production assistants, who are moderating each Zoom lecture or class, had to master displaying PowerPoints, videos and photos. “We've been experimenting with Zoom at every meeting and learning something new every time,” Ron said. They've worked with presenters to offer them any help they might need.

Presenters – They've had to learn Zoom and rethink how to best present their course online. For example, Ann Nunn, a Veritas member, and Megan Schanie, with the Frazier History Museum, retooled their course on the Underground Railroad so they could complete it online last spring. They emailed questions about the readings, and received virtual answers. They also emailed the many handouts students would have received in class.

OUTREACH EFFORT CONNECTS WITH MEMBERS

Veritas continued to stress the importance of community during these uncertain times when 25 volunteers reached out to our members this summer to check on their well-being and offer some conversation.

One of the great pleasures of Veritas is being on campus, socializing before and after classes, eating lunch together, and joining in field trips. Those group activities came to a halt in mid-March because of COVID-19.

The volunteers who signed up for the outreach program called and emailed Veritas members as part of an initiative launched by the Veritas Board of Directors to keep in touch with our members.

Board member Marilyn Schorin proposed the effort. "I had read articles on the importance of human connections and the negative health effects of loneliness," she said via email to *The Voice*. "Even people with partners can experience negative effects of stress. As I think of Veritas as more than an educational group but a community of caring people who also value education, I wanted to be sure that members could talk with someone and could reach out if they needed something."

Schorin worked with board member Keith Clements, chair of the Volunteer Committee, and Abigail Walsh, Veritas's coordinator and interim director of Bellarmine's Office of Continuing Education. Volunteers had a training session with Gary Petiprin, director of Bellarmine's counseling center, to prepare them for any concerns they might encounter. Each volunteer was assigned eight to 10 people to contact.

"Members appear to have food and meds. Some cannot Zoom (to do online lectures and classes) and some people didn't want to meet virtually," Marilyn said, adding she passed on some names to production committee members who agreed to help them become more capable to Zoom.

The *Voice* contacted a handful of volunteers to see how things went; they said members seemed to be doing well, although they missed classes. Deloris White said of her encounters: "We had good conversations about what we were doing with our time off." She added: "They seemed not to need anything. . . I told them I would stay in touch with them."

Keith Clements reached 14 people. "All appreciated the calls but did not need a follow up call. I think Veritas seniors are a strong group of people with a positive outlook during this uncertain pandemic period."

VILLAGE VOICES SALUTES OUR "PIVOTERS"

By Leslie Ellis

(The Village Voices is an on-going column reflecting the observations and opinions of the newspaper staff.)

Since we last met together face-to-face in classes back in March, it has been a time of challenges and change for all of us. The COVID pandemic has at times left us reeling. But even when I feel overwhelmed, I took around and marvel at those who are adapting and helping others adapt.

And I am so grateful for their work. I am especially grateful for all those in the Veritas community who have pivoted (and pivoted again) to keep our programs and community going. We have a rich 25-year history and we will continue to flourish.

So the Village Voices extends a huge THANK YOU to all those who worked long hours in recent months to keep our program going. Their efforts are described in the "Pivot in the COVID Era" story in this newsletter. They include our talented coordinators in the Continuing Education office, as well as board and committee members. From all of us who have benefited from your perseverance, a standing ovation and THANK YOU.

On a related note, Veritas has always relied heavily on the work of volunteers and their efforts are usually recognized at our spring banquet (which had to be canceled) and in *The Voice* newsletter. So, on the next page we are listing our volunteers who helped out from the fall of 2019 through spring 2020.

VERITAS SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS 2019/2020

Board of Directors

Dennis Wiseman- Pres.
Rebecca Beyerle- VP.
Bud Spalding - Secretary
Sandra Cherry
Keith Clements
Kitty Darst
Leslie Ellis
Ron Gordon
Tony Heitzman
Jerry Hubbs
Mary Moll
Panzi Panzera
Cheri Powell
Deloris White
Marilyn Schorin

Course Presenters

Sandra Cherry
Keith Clements
Jeff Conner
Peggy Cummins
Page Curry
Bill Donovan
Angela Dworin
Steve Franklin
Dean French
Don Graeter
Stephen Graham
Ian Grumeza
Gaye Holman
Jerry Hubbs
Mike Marple
Ronald Mikulak
Mirac Ozkir
Cathy Schaffer
Eric Schmall
Marilyn Schorin
Will Schrader
John Sistarenik
Walter Snowa
Bud Spalding
Evanthia Speliotis
Ken Stammerman
Frank Thackeray
Mil Thompson
Mike Williams
Dennis Wiseman

Discussion Leaders

Arleen Carr
Jennings Mace
Carol MacKay

Barb MacDonald
Ann Nunn
Panzi Panzera
Megan Schanie
Jon Smith
Jim Walsh

Lunch and Learn Presenters

Elmer Louise Allen*
Ben Blake*
Marla Cautilli
Terry Chambers
Juilee Decker
Robert Berry Fleming
Tom Owen
David Ratterman*
Ken Schultz
Frederick Smock
Evanthia Speliotis*

Curriculum Committee

Mary Moll, Chair
Judith Skretny, Co-Chair
Tina Adams
Sandra Cherry
Kitty Darst
Jerry Hubbs
Carol MacKay
Kay Manger
Ann Nunn
Pat Oliver
Panzi Panzera
Cheri Powell
Marilyn Schorin
Roz Shaffer
Jon Smith
Bud Spalding
Herb Zimmerman

Facilitators

Rebecca Beyerle
Nancy Carrington
Linda Carter
Barry Chafin
Sandra Cherry
Keith Clements
Carol Coriell
Leslie Ellis
Maureen Fitzgerald
Carol Hartlage
Debbie Heuser
Mary Ann Hubbs

Gloria Kemper-O'Neil
Barb MacDonald
Jennings Mace
Carol MacKay
Bill Mathis
Linda Miller
Mary Moll
C. A. Munford
Janice Murphy
Ernestine Muth
Pat Oliver
Betty Orton
Harry Orton
Nancy Pollock
Dawn Riester
Cathy Shoemaker
Ruth Ann Street
Mary Helen Thompson
Vicky Ulrich
Mary Vuncannon
Nancy Walker
Rita Williams
Rocky Yates
Herb Zimmerman

Registration/Mail prep

Keith Clements, Chair
Dianne Allison
Annette Amshoff
Rebecca Beyerle
Nancy Carrington
Linda Carter
Carole Cochrane
Page Curry
Ruth Fister
Maureen Fitzgerald
Connie Fondong
Connie Fowler
Carol Hartlage
Debbie Heuser
Marian Lancaster
Mary Lavelle
Linda Lohman
Kay Manger
JoAnn Marquart
Marilyn Meredith
Linda Miller
Ernestine Muth
Ann Nunn
Pat Oliver
Carol Olorunsola
Mary Olsen
Joe O'Reilly

Panzi Panzera
Sharon Portman
Cheri Powell
Judy Rice
Jeanette Rode
Colleen Schweitzer
Herb Shuhafer
Barb Simmons
Don Snow
Lorena Stierle
Ruth Ann Street
Karen Sullivan
Mary Vuncannon
Nancy Walker
Deloris White
Herb Zimmerman

Production Committee

Ron Gordon, Chair
Gary Dodson
Jerry Hubbs
Susan Irving
Mike Marple
Ann McWilliams
Dick Norris
George Street
Dennis Wiseman

Veritas Voice

Leslie Ellis, Chair
Gay Ellison
Ron Gordon
Linda Miller

Interest Group

Organizers

Rebecca Beyerle
Barry Chafin
Margareta Kessler
Amy King
Linda Miller
Marilyn Schorin
Mary Helen Thompson
Dennis Wiseman

*Scheduled - canceled
due to pandemic

If we missed anyone or
misspelled your name, we
apologize. We tried.