

# THE VOICE

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## VERITAS PLANS FIRST STEPS BACK TO CAMPUS

Veritas will offer four “hybrid” classes this fall, a first step toward getting some of our classes and students back on the Bellarmine campus.

In-person Veritas classes and activities came to an abrupt halt in spring of 2020 when COVID-19 invaded our lives and Bellarmine shut down the campus. Veritas successfully switched to online courses and activities on the Zoom platform.

Those who sign up for the in-person classes will join a bustling Bellarmine community where students returned last week, moving into dorms, gathering in the dining hall and attending full-capacity classes.

The Veritas fall term, which will run October 4 through November 12, will provide a trial run for the hybrid format, with the instructor and some members meeting in the classroom while other members watch from home via the Zoom platform. That format meets the needs of members eager to get back to campus and those who prefer watching from home.

This fall’s hybrid courses are Tai Chi for Beginners, Christian Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, The Federal Bureaucracy: Friend and/or Foe?, and the Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley. They will be marked as “hybrid” in the course catalog that will be emailed next week and members will see both options on the registration page. The 17 additional courses being offered this fall will remain on Zoom.

Enrollment numbers for the in-person sessions will be capped, based on room capacity. If the room capacity is full, members can still register for the

Zoom version which has unlimited capacity and is shown live from the classroom.

There will be two requirements for those enrolling in the in-person sessions this fall; both are efforts to keep people as safe as possible.

- You must wear a mask whenever you are indoors on campus; Bellarmine requires all students, faculty, staff and visitors to wear masks. Veritas members are considered visitors.
- You must be vaccinated against COVID and present your vaccination card to the instructor on the first day of class. This requirement was set by the Veritas Board of Directors at its August 23 meeting.

Bellarmine initially was strongly encouraging students, staff and faculty to get vaccinated; those who were not vaccinated had to undergo routine testing. But the administration also said that, with some exceptions, vaccinations would be REQUIRED once the federal Food and Drug Administration formally approved one of the vaccines, and that happened earlier this week. So all Bellarmine faculty, staff, and students will be vaccinated by the time our classes begin.

Veritas students who register for a hybrid class will receive further instructions in their confirmation email a week before classes begin.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

**September 1**  
**September 8**  
**September 24**  
**October 4**

Fall catalogs emailed  
Registration opens 9 a.m.  
Registration closes  
Classes begin

## FALL COURSES OFFER AN INTELLECTUAL BUFFET

The Veritas curriculum this fall promises a well-rounded selection of 21 courses including literature, history and current issues, plus classes to nurture your well-being and artistic interests.

The fall catalog is scheduled to be emailed Wednesday, September 1. Online registration will open at 9 a.m. September 8 and close September 24. Classes will begin October 4 and run through November 12. The membership fee will be \$30 for the fall term and the course fee will be \$15 each.

In the realm of literature, you can study the life and fiction of Cyrano de Bergerac, or the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Get new historical perspectives in classes on the history of the U.S. Supreme Court (continuation of spring 2021 course) and civil rights struggles in the antebellum period. Or gain a new perspective on the Civil War by studying novels and prose written during that time.

Courses on current issues will cover recent Supreme Court decisions, a look at the federal bureaucracy (friend or foe?), and an examination of today's monopolies. You can also ponder whether we are hooked on processed foods. Or you can delve into a variety of topics discussed in the "critical

conversations" lecture series from this summer's Chautauqua lectures.

For a visual treat, check out courses on northern Renaissance art or great cathedrals of the world.

On the lighter side, there'll be a review of the Kentucky Opera's new season, a look at 21<sup>st</sup> century documentaries, plus an overview of the "best of France" looked at from culture to conversation. The Friday afternoon at the movies series will focus on biographical stories.

Courses on spirituality and wellbeing will include a study of Christian identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Tai Chi for beginners, mindfulness, and life transitions and the dynamics of change. Veritas members also can join a Bellarmine undergrad class on death, dying and grief, that will take place in-person.

The Friday lecture series will include Cindi Sullivan speaking on improving the Louisville tree canopy; Robert Parker from Louisville Ghost Walks; Matt Wallace with Shakespeare in the Park; Kasey Maier from the Waterfront Botanical Gardens; Julie Schmidt on expanding KET programming; and guitarist Pat Lentz.

## VERITAS FEATURED ON WHAS MORNING SHOW



The Veritas Society was featured on the WHAS morning show Great Day Live on August 20 as part of the show's celebration of National Seniors Day (August 21). Abigail Walsh (left), Veritas coordinator for Bellarmine, and Rebecca Beyerle (center), vice president of the Veritas board of directors, were interviewed.

# VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS KEEP VERITAS ON THE MOVE

The pandemic hasn't put the brakes on Veritas's love of field trips. Our new buddy Zoom has taken us on virtual trips from the arts world in New York to the historic halls of Alcatraz in San Francisco.

When COVID hit in the spring of 2020, it scrubbed any prospects of boarding a bus for day-long outings. But since December 2020, Veritas has offered 17 virtual field trips to 16 different locations, with only five of them in Kentucky. A total of 482 "tickets" were sold!

And there may be more virtual outings to come.

The most popular trip was to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. There was so much interest that two tours had to be offered. The other tours that sold out at 40 participants were Ellis Island, Alcatraz and the Jim Crowe Museum of Racist Memorabilia.

For Veritas members, going on a virtual field trip is as simple as signing up and then hitting the Zoom log in. Organizing those trips, however, is a lot more complicated.

A huge "thank you" goes to field trip organizer extraordinaire Chelsea McCarty, our Veritas enrollment coordinator in Bellarmine's continuing education office. We asked Chelsea for an inside look at how all this came together.

"Finding locations that offered VFTs (virtual field trips) was not an easy task. It was a hodge-podge of googling and calling locations across the country that came to mind and that were suggested by different individuals. Occasionally googling 'virtual tours' would yield a museum or two – that's how I found the Museum of Aviation."

The variety of locations was amazing: all kinds of museums, a ballpark, historic sites and homes, farms, a space center and an aquarium.

"But generally, I looked up places I had heard were neat or have been to myself and I reached out directly to see if they could offer us a tour. Several

were already offering VFTs to make money for their organization during the pandemic, like the Jim Crowe Museum, the Museum of Aviation, and the Met. Others were just getting started and we were guinea pigs of sorts.

"A lot of places have pre-recorded tours available, including many national parks. That was the response we received a lot of times when calling places – to go watch their pre-recorded tours. Obviously, we wanted a more interactive experience than that.

"All but one were on Zoom – the one that wasn't was on Teams," Chelsea said. "Some of the 'tours' were presentations given by a knowledgeable expert from their office (or home!) with Power Point assistance or virtual materials, some were literal tours where we were guided by a moving laptop camera through the museums – Mill Ridge Horse Farm was up close and personal on our guide's cellphone as we meandered the farm. For Fenway Park, we were able to see a pre-recorded Drone tour of the ballpark. At the Frazier, we saw a performance between two actors live."

Organizing just one tour might involve days of emails and voice mails to set a time and date. "The Ellis Island tour was supposed to be in December, but the woman in charge and I played phone tag so many times we gave up until this last round and managed to make it happen for May. That was a great one, so I'm really glad I reached out to her one final time."

Veritas member Ann Nunn went on all the field trips. "My favorite was the Titanic Museum. The guide did a great job, not only showing specific items from the ship, but also discussing the voyage itself."

Member Pat Oliver also took numerous trips. "Ellis Island was my favorite. The presenter made it so relevant, especially as most viewers could remember ancestors coming through there to a better life. His photos, historical segments and an online site to access our families' entries were very interesting and informative."

# MEET JOHN SISTARENIK

*(This is part of a series profiling interesting members of the Veritas Society.)*

## **Why and when did you join Veritas?**

I joined Veritas in the fall of 2017. I had just retired fully from Jefferson Community and Technical College. Fred Nett, my friend and Old Louisville neighbor, encouraged me to join, citing the many interesting courses and the chance for me to be a presenter.

## **Why did you decide to teach political science?**

It's a long story: My undergraduate major at Syracuse University was American Studies, where almost any course with American in its title counted toward the degree. I planned to continue my graduate studies at Indiana University until I was informed on the day of registration that American Studies was a minor at the graduate level.

I quickly decided on political science as my major although I could have just as easily chosen another discipline. I always told my students not to sweat the college's demand that they declare a major the moment they step on campus; explore and change your mind if necessary.

## **What Veritas experiences have given you the most pleasure and why?**

Veritas students are bright, prepared for class, have a wealth of life experiences, and speak their minds. What else could a teacher want? I only take classes in topics of which I know little. I have especially enjoyed the literature classes of Jennings Mace and Carol MacKay. They are both great.

## **What is a childhood memory that still impacts you today?**

My parents' labor and political activism probably stirred my life-long interest in social issues and politics. My father was a member of the AFL-CIO International Union of Electrical Workers and served as shop steward of Local 301 at Building 10 at the General Electric Company in Schenectady, N.Y., where he worked as a toolmaker. He and my mother were active in the 10<sup>th</sup> Ward Democratic Party. I loved the Christmas parties thrown by the union for us kids and the ward meetings with free hotdogs and soda.

## **Tell us something about YOU that might surprise us.**

In high school I played the accordion in a band. Don't laugh!

## **Do you have a material treasure that you are particularly attached to?**

I found what I thought was a mud-covered stone in the street gutter in front of my house several years ago. It turned out to be a plastic figurine of Spock, the Vulcan of Star Trek fame. It looks just like Leonard Nimoy and he utters "live long and prosper" when a button is pressed. It cheers me up every time I press that button.



John Sistarenik

## **How do you relax at home? Any hobbies, and if so why that one?**

I relax, sort of, by reading the New York Times every day. My hobby is helping to plant trees throughout Old Louisville and Limerick. It is my small way to fight climate warming, and besides, trees are beautiful.

## **What makes you laugh?**

I am currently binge-watching "Ted Lasso" on Apple TV+. It's funny and genuine; I highly recommend it.

## **Describe yourself in three words.**

Curious, concerned, skeptical.

## **Has living through the Pandemic changed you in any way?**

I realized how important human resilience is when the world changes abruptly and drastically.

# WHY WE LOVE OUR PRODUCTION TEAM

Their faces pop up briefly on our screens as we watch a Veritas class or lecture on Zoom. They admit us into our virtual meetings and they deftly help presenters show Power Points and videos. They calmly smooth over any glitches.

But much of their work is behind the scenes. Our team of volunteer production assistants has been the critical technological engine that has enabled us to continue Veritas programming during this ever-changing Pandemic era. Our need for more assistants will grow as we move into hybrid classes.

Pre-COVID, we were used to seeing production assistants in the classroom as they helped presenters and manned the computers that relayed their visuals up on the screens. But their jobs shifted dramatically in March 2020 when the campus closed, requiring Veritas to switch to online classes.

The “how” of their job continues to be in flux. The Production Committee will pivot again this fall when Veritas experiments for the first time with four hybrid classes, with some Veritas students in the classroom and others watching online. (Other classes and programming will continue online.)

So let’s all “unmute” and send a roaring “thank you” to the production team for its relentless dedication. Ron Gordon is chairman of the Production Committee. Team members during the last year were Jim Blain, Mike Marple, Dennis Wiseman, Gary Dodson, Jan Eastburn, Ann McWilliams and George Street. Abigail Walsh, our Veritas liaison and Bellarmine’s interim director of continuing education, also helps with logistics.

(Field trips are handled by the Veritas office; the Production Team handles everything else.)

The team has been meeting via Zoom almost every week for 17 months. When the campus closed, the PAs learned Zoom and its nuances. That’s because presenters and Veritas members participate on various platforms – phones, laptops, tablets etc. At meetings they talk about any problems, they share tips and they discuss options. Closed captions? Will classroom speakers wear masks? Where will mics and cameras go? They have virtual practice sessions with presenters.

The goal is to make the virtual experience as smooth as possible for everybody, said long-time PA Mike Marple.

Jim Blain, another PA, said, “Working as a team really helps the individual in the learning process.” In the weekly meetings, he said, “I never failed to glean valuable info that I could use.”

And now the focus is on procedures for hybrid classes – an experiment for Veritas. The biggest challenge will be managing both in person and Zoom presentations.

All the current team members had been IT (information technology) professionals or had jobs that required IT skills, Ron Gordon said. But nothing is required beyond basic navigating computer skills.

“You don’t have to be a computer genius to work production,” Mike Marple said. And Jim Blain, a PA since 2014, said he had zero Zoom experience. “It turns out baptism by fire makes you learn quickly.”



## YOU CAN JOIN THE PRODUCTION TEAM

You just need some basic computer skills to become a Production Assistant. And the team would welcome your help!

There’s great satisfaction in being an integral part of the Veritas community. We value our volunteers.

Zooming skills can be taught, said team leader Ron Gordon. Other team members said they’ve increased their own computer skills just by being a part of the team. For more information, email Ron at [rgordonret@yahoo.com](mailto:rgordonret@yahoo.com).



## SOME INTEREST GROUPS ARE MEETING

Each time someone walked into the library meeting room, there were smiles and enthusiastic greetings – a picture of the joyous return of a face-to-face gathering. The Mystery Book Discussion Group was back together in person.

Ten members gathered on August 3 at the library branch in Mid-City Mall in the Highlands and animatedly discussed “The Magpie Murders.” Two members joined via Zoom.

The mystery group is among a handful of Veritas interest groups that have resumed in-person meetings. The Healthy Eating Group had its first in-person meal at “In Seasons” in downtown Louisville. And the Ethnic Lunch Group has met in-person three times; the last gathering was at August Moon. Table discussions were lively, as members caught up on each other’s lives.

Many groups are deciding their meeting status month to month. COVID statistics keep changing, and people have different levels of comfort about in-person meetings. So if you’re interested in joining a group, be sure to check with the organizer. Below is the most up to date information we have on each group.

**Ethnic Lunch Group** meets the second Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m. at various locations for different ethnic food each time. For information and reservations, contact organizer Mary Helen Thompson at (502) 459-5750 or email her at [thompsonmaryhelen1@gmail.com](mailto:thompsonmaryhelen1@gmail.com).

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

The Moveable Feast Literature Discussion Group - Amy King, leader

The Hiking Group - Rebecca Beyerle, leader

The Eat/Talk Group - Dennis Wiseman, leader

The Deal the Cards & Play Games Group - Dennis Wiseman, leader

**The Healthy Eating Group** is meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month, eating at various restaurants that specialize in healthy fare. Contact Marilyn Schorin at [mschorin@gmail.com](mailto:mschorin@gmail.com) or (502) 572-8547 for reservations or additional information.

**Movie Discussion Group (formerly Movie-Dinner Group)** doesn’t include dinner right now, 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 discusses movies that are available on PBS or Hoopla, the library’s free streaming service that replaced Kanopy on July 1. For more information on the next movie, contact Linda Miller at [linda.loves.walking@gmail.com](mailto:linda.loves.walking@gmail.com) or (502) 216-4075.

**Mystery Book Discussion Group** is back to meeting in person on the first Tuesday of the month from 10:30 p.m. to noon at the Highlands-Shelby Park Library in the Mid-City Mall. Contact Rebecca Beyerle by email at [beyerler@gmail.com](mailto:beyerler@gmail.com) to receive notices of future book choices.

**Thomas Merton Interest Group** reads Thomas Merton’s books and discusses his philosophy and life. It will not meet in September and has not decided if it will meet in October. The group has been meeting via Zoom on the first Friday of the month from 9:30 to 10:50 a.m. For more information or to be added to the mailing list, contact the Merton Interest Group at [MertonInterestGroup@yahoo.com](mailto:MertonInterestGroup@yahoo.com).

*Check out some pictures on the next page!*

## INTEREST GROUPS REJOICE! IN-PERSON MEETINGS RESUME

We found lots of happy faces at recent meetings of Veritas interest groups that resumed in-person gatherings. Here's a look at three of them.



The **Healthy Eating Group** met recently at In Season, a restaurant on West Main Street in downtown Louisville. Seated (L-R) are several of the members: Rebecca Beyerle, Debbie Heuser, Roz Shaffer and Marilyn Schorin.



The **Mystery Book Discussion Group** met at the library in Mid-City Mall. Seated (L-R) are Herb Zimmerman, Panzi Panzera, Regina Leitner, Rebecca Beyerle, Linda Miller, Connie Fondong, Susan Arnold and Rocky Yates. Standing (L-R) Mike Marple and Dennis Wiseman.

## The Ethnic Lunch Group at August Moon

Participants at the recent Ethnic Lunch Group meeting were Sandra Neal, Leslie Sanders, Dana Lindley, Nancy Miller, Paul Miller, Bob Wagley, Lorraine Wagley, Susan Arnold, Mike Marple, Mary Helen Thompson, Herb Zimmerman, Debbie Heuser, Kay Manger and Emily Dietz.



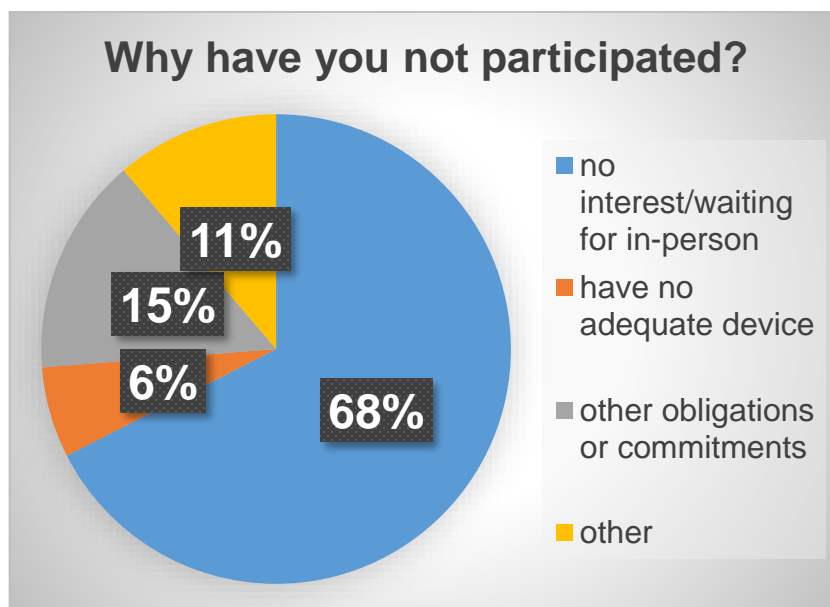
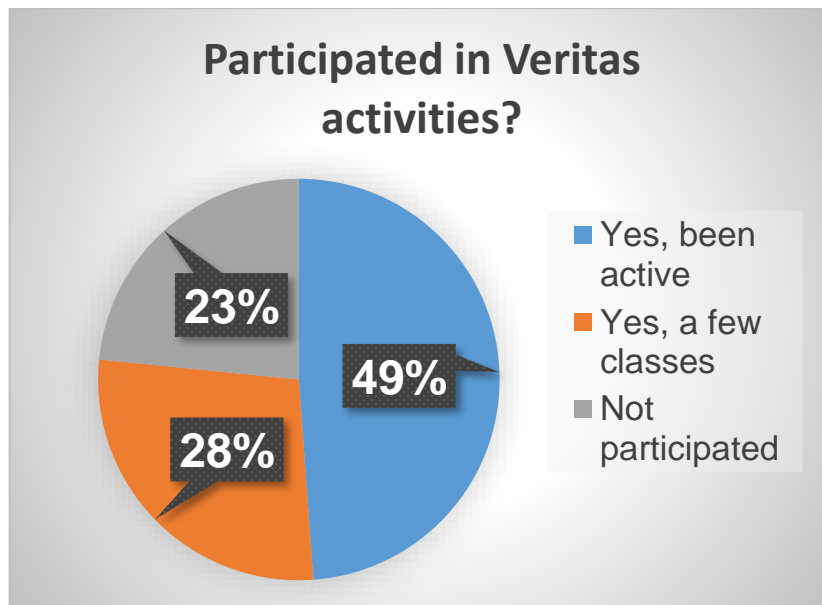


# “MOVING FORWARD SURVEY” LOOKS AT ZOOM, HYBRID CLASSES

This last year has been filled with change for Veritas. On campus classes stopped because of COVID. We shifted programming to the online Zoom platform. And this fall we'll try our first hybrid classes – the presenter and some students in the classroom and others on Zoom at home – with an eye to increasing hybrid classes next year.

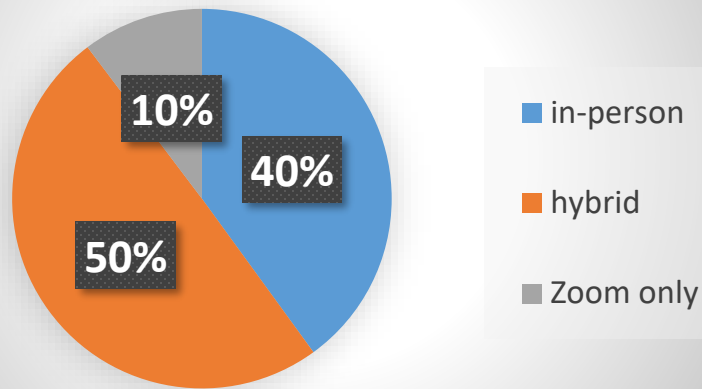
To help guide us in making plans for the future, we wanted to find out how members felt about all this. Last spring, surveys were emailed to 714 people on the mailing list. Some 391 emails were opened; of those 347 members responded.

The survey results are on the next two pages. Thanks to Ron Gordon, production committee chair, for the graphics.



*MOVING FORWARD SURVEY CONTINUED. . .*

## Your preference for future classes?



**If the in-person portion of a hybrid class is full when you register, would you sign up for the Zoom portion?**

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 75% |
| No  | 25% |

**If you would like to remain taking Zoom classes only, what is the reason?**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Mobility on campus/health reasons                      | 12% |
| Live out of town/vacationing                           | 15% |
| Don't feel comfortable back on campus because of COVID | 12% |
| Ease of access/can take more classes without driving   | 58% |
| Other  | 3%  |