

MILE FALL 2021 Calendar
Middlesex Institute for Lifelong Education
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Programs will be presented on ZOOM this fall. You will receive weekly emails regarding the programs and concerning any changes in the schedule, along with the ZOOM address.

September – Week 1

Tuesday, September 28 – World Café with Handler & Levesque: *International Music for Guitars & Mandolin*

Join us and experience an exuberant celebration of cultures with this exceptional program of music from around the world for guitars and mandolin. Husband and wife duo, Handler & Levesque, have performed over 2,000 concerts together over the past 25 years throughout the United States and Europe. Their unique and expressive arrangements will include music from the United States, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Audiences have responded with great enthusiasm to their extraordinary sound, amusing anecdotes, and joyful spirit.

Presenters: Judy Handler received a Master of Music in guitar performance from the Hartt School of Music, a Bachelor of Music from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, a Diploma of Merit from Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, a Certificate from Curs Internacional de Musica at the Vila-Seca i Salou Conservatory in Spain, and a Diploma from the Aspen Music School.

Mark Levesque has taken courses at Central Connecticut State University and the Hartt School of Music as well as private instruction with guitarists in a variety of genres. He has performed on guitar, mandolin, and Cuatro in numerous ensembles throughout New England, most recently with the City Singers of Hartford. Additionally, he has played and arranged world, jazz, Latin, and blues music and has worked with synthesizer orchestration.

Thursdays, September 30, October 7, 21, 28, November 4

First session September 30, Great Decisions: China in Africa 9:30-11:30

Great Decisions is a discussion forum that follows a curriculum developed by the Foreign Policy Association (www.fpa.org). The program is supported by the Great Decisions program materials which presents basic information on each topic. Participants read the topical section for that week, then come to the sessions to discuss their various points of view with one another. Active participation is encouraged, but not required.

We will have 4 sessions using the Great Decisions materials and 1 open discussion on current events with the topics chosen by the participants.

In an age where our political discourse has become more polarized, Great Decisions provides an excellent opportunity for open, fair, objective discussions, and helps the participants understand multiple perspectives on these topics.

Topics and schedule for the Fall are as follows:

- September 30: China in Africa
- October 7: The two Koreas
- October 14: No Session
- October 21: Role of the WHO
- October 28: End of Globalization?
- November 4: Open Discussion

Sessions will run on Thursdays from 9:30 – 11:30 AM, conducted via Zoom.

Participation is limited to 20, so register soon!

Participants are expected to obtain the Great Decisions program materials from FPA.ORG and to read the topic sections prior to each session. The materials are purchased separately. Those who participated in the Spring session already have the book – our topics are chapters 5 through 8. The books are available in print (\$32) and various e-book formats (est \$20-25). Contact the moderator for details at budsielaff@sbcglobal.net and to reserve your space.

Moderator: Bud Sielaff, a retired business executive with degrees in engineering, marketing and finance. Bud is a member of MILE and has been a moderator of the Great Decisions program since Fall 2018. He has a business strategy background, has had extensive international travels, and closely follows world events as an interested citizen.

Thursday, September 30 —A New Englander in the Ozarks: *She Hath Done What She Could.*

This program explores the impact of Massachusetts-born Sophia Sawyer (1792-1854) who was a missionary teacher whose career as an educator of Cherokee children took her from New England to Tennessee, Georgia, Indian Territory, and finally, the Arkansas Ozarks. Strong-willed and independent, Sawyer was a devoted teacher whose mark on education can still be seen in Northwest Arkansas today.

Presenter: Susan Young is the outreach coordinator at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in Springdale, Arkansas, a position she has held since 1994. Susan is a lifelong resident of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and a fifth generation Ozarker. Her history interests include traditional folkways, religion, and cemeteries. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas.

October — Week 2

Tuesday, October 5 – Fake News and You

How do we recognize fake vs. real news? We are awash in this information age, but how much of this information is valid? We learn how to spot a bot and how to vet information before we share it with others.

Presenter: Susan Campbell is a distinguished lecturer at the University of New Haven. She has a Masters of Religious Studies/Hartford Seminary.

Thursday, Oct 7 Great Decisions: The Two Koreas 9:30 -11:30 AM

See program details – September 30th

Thursday, October 7 — Wildlife and Connecticut’s Changing Landscape

This presentation provides a brief natural history of Connecticut and addresses the current state of wildlife in the state, including a discussion of major species, factors affecting their habitats, challenges we face in managing them, and suggestions for what people can do to make a difference.

Presenter: Paul Colburn is a graduate of Wesleyan University, a 2015 graduate of the Master Wildlife Conservationist Program (MWCP), and a certified Master Wildlife Conservationist (MWC). The MWCP is a Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) adult education program that trains volunteers in the fields of wildlife management, natural history and interpretation. Mr. Colburn has provided over 200 wildlife presentations across the state and participated in several wildlife research projects. He is an avid outdoorsman and served honorably in the United States Army.

October — Week 3

Tuesday, October 12 – History of Comedy: *The Early Days, PART 1*

The presenter has the best introduction: *“I am not a comedian, have never taken any comedy-related subjects in school (although once considered a career in politics) and, in general, am a rather poor joke teller. I have, however, laughed several times in my lifetime and have managed to retain a sense of humor despite the aches and pains of old age.”* This is a two-part presentation about the early days of comedy from the political satire of Aristophanes (450 BC) to the antics of court jesters and clowns up through vaudeville and silent movies. It is a PowerPoint supported program with more than a hundred slides, embedded videos, and much trivia about the people who made people laugh.

Presenter: Bob Ellis has a BA in English from the University of Missouri.

Wednesday October 13 – Car Trip: Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum

Hamden, CT.

See Trip Registration Form

Thursday, October 14 - “My Love and Patriarchal Blessing: Mark Twain and the Saturday Morning Club of Hartford”

This program is your opportunity to explore one aspect of Mark Twain’s engagement with his Hartford neighbors that has been relatively overlooked—his role in the Saturday Morning Club, an organization established in 1876 to “promote Culture and Social Intercourse” among a privileged group of young unmarried women between the ages of 16 and 20. Between 1876 and 1891, Twain addressed the Club on at least fifteen occasions and hosted them repeatedly in his lavish “mansion of hospitalities,” becoming, in the words of one of its founding members, their “patron saint.” In 1880, as a surprise gift for the members, he designed and commissioned pins from Tiffany & Co. at a cost of over \$400—the equivalent of \$10,000 today. This talk will discuss the little-known history of the writer’s involvement with the group, as well as the new insights it affords into his views on gender and the importance of female education.

Presenter: Kerry Driscoll has a Ph.D. in English from SUNY/Buffalo and was Professor of English at the University of Saint Joseph, 1990-2018.

October — Week 4

Tuesday, October 19 – Chile Lindo! Travelogue to the Country of Chile

This presentation is a wonderful opportunity to learn about Chile. Chile excels in its geographical diversity which includes the Andes Mountains, islands in the Pacific Ocean, lakes, deserts and even part of Antarctica. Along with a brief history, find out about famous landmarks, flora, fauna, food, and festivals. The presenter has visited Chile multiple times and will share personal photos and an insider’s viewpoint.

Presenter: Christi Rentsch Moraga graduated from Middlebury College in 1976 and received her MA in Spanish from Middlebury’s Madrid program in 1977. She taught French and Spanish in Connecticut and abroad for 36 years. In 2007, Christi was named the ACTFL Northeast World Language Teacher of the Year. After retiring in 2016, she has been very active as a docent at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford and as a member of MILE, the Alliance Française de Hartford, and CT COLT.

Thursday, October 21 Great Decisions: Role of the WHO 9:30 -11:30 AM

See program details: September 30th

Thursday, October 21 - Bessie Coleman: Self-Determination

Learn the history of an early American civil aviator: Bessie Coleman. She was the first African-American woman and first Native-American to hold a pilot license. She earned her pilot’s license from the Federation Aeronautique Internationale on June 15, 1921 and was the first black person to earn an international pilot’s license.

Presenter: Tammy Denease will tell the story of Bessie Coleman. Tammy Denease was born in Columbus, Mississippi where she spent countless hours with her great-grandmother and grandmother. Her great-grandmother was a former enslaved person and lived to be 125 and her grandmother lived to be a 107. Both were known storytellers and passed this gift along to their granddaughter. Ms. Denease loves history and being able to tell others about the past. In her position as Museum Educator, she instructs children through stories of Colonial History, Health,

Medicine, Slavery, and Indigenous People History. In addition, she is a historical tour guide for local Colonial-American homes.

October—Week 5

Tuesday, October 26 – Idylls of the Imagination: American Landscape Painting and the Shape of Memory

This exciting presentation reveals how American 19th century artists helped shape our national identity. For the first two-hundred years of colonial American history, landscape painting was held in low regard. Tastes ran toward European genres, with their rich history of castle ruins and ancient traditions. It was not until the early 19th century, as the United States came into its own as a nation and westward expansion discovered new vistas, that our unique features of forest, mountain and sea became noteworthy in the eyes of an artist. A carefully-crafted, Romantic-era vision of America became foundational for shaping a national identity—one that could offer authentication for ‘who we are’ as a People. This vision of America is one that would be reshaped by events of history such as the Civil War, industrialization, and modernism.

Presenter: Richard Friswell has an MEd from Boston University, an MPhil, and a post-graduate degree from Wesleyan. Richard presented previously for MILE on a topic related to Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School of Painting.

Thursday, October 28 Great Decisions: End of Globalization? 9:30 -11:30 AM

See program details: September 30th

Thursday, October 28 - History of Comedy: The Early Days, PART 2

See program details: October 19.

November — Week 6

Tuesday, November 2 – Genealogy Basics: FamilySearch

Have you thought of tracing your family tree but were unsure where to start? This presentation will help you dive into genealogy research and on a limited budget. The website FamilySearch is the perfect place to get started. Join us for an introduction to this free site, which includes access to records, how to guides, classes, and more.

Presenter: Bryna O’Sullivan is a Middletown based professional genealogist. Bryna earned a MA (Theology - Church History), MA (History), BA (History/French Literature), Certificate in Genealogical Research (Boston University), Certificate in Genealogical Studies (NIGS).

Thursday, November 4 Great Decisions: Open Discussion 9:30 -11:30 AM

See program details: September 30th

Thursday, November 4 –Ancestry Testing Services: Pros and Cons

Many of us have used ancestry DNA testing services. Was that a good idea? The increasingly popular services such as Ancestry.com and 23andMe are interesting and fun and of potential value, but they come with caveats that require some background in genetics, human biological

history, and the concept of ancestry. This talk will cover each of those topics and then apply them (using some of the presenter's personal reports) to those services. Includes recommendations should one want to try ancestry testing services or already have.

Presenter: Michael Park's specialty is in biological anthropology, human genetics, human evolution, and human diversity. He is the author of six anthropology textbooks and one general reader book. Dr Park earned a Ph.D.: 1979 Indiana University and is Professor Emeritus in Anthropology at CCSU.

November — Week 7

Tuesday, November 9 – Author Reading: Award Winning “Father Guards the Sheep.”

This presentation will include a reading as well as a discussion about the writing process. Sari Rosenblatt will read a selection from her short story collection, “*Father Guards the Sheep*,” which won the prestigious Iowa Short Fiction Award for 2020. Her presentation will also include a discussion about the writing process: where ideas come from, how to shape a short story, the process of revision, and where to publish short fiction. She welcomes comments and questions from those Zooming in.

Presenter: Sari Rosenblatt taught creative writing at the University of Iowa, Wesleyan University continuing studies programs, Green Street Arts Center, Middletown Adult Education, and for the last twelve years, Educational Center for the Arts in New Haven, Connecticut. Sari holds a Masters of Fine Arts from The Iowa Writers' Workshop, University of Iowa where she was awarded a Teaching/Writing Fellowship. Her individual stories have been published and won fiction prizes from the following literary journals: *Glimmer Train*; *New Millennium Writings*; *The Iowa Review*; *Nimrod Journal of Poetry and Prose* (The Katherine Anne Porter Prize); *Ms. Magazine*. She was honored as a New Discovery Writer by PEN New England.

Thursday, November 11- From Riverbeds to Outer Space, Journeys and Projects of a Connecticut Scientist

If you have an interest in science, the environment, and space travel, then this presentation is for you! Peter will highlight some of the interesting scientific projects he has participated in, beginning with research involving the environment issues and a lawsuit between Bethlehem Steel and Johnson, PA. He will include a discussion on how major companies can improve their technology and oversight so that the environment is protected. Also, Peter will describe some of the projects done for the Space Station and the Hubble telescope.

Presenter: Peter Formica, after 30 years of scientific research and experiments, earned an MA in Education and taught science in middle school for 10 years. Peter has a BS in Chemical Engineering, Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

November — Week 8

Tuesday, November 16, and Thursday, November 18 – Women in the Abrahamic Faiths

This two-part program will explore women's roles in the three great Abrahamic religions:

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The speakers will provide a panoramic historical view of the roles of women in their respective traditions and discuss their current status.

Tuesday, November 16 – Women in Judaism and Christianity

Presenters: **Rabbi Ilana Garber**, Director of Global Rabbinic Development for the Rabbinical Assembly, will discuss women in Judaism.

Christine Marchetti, Professor of World Religions at Northwestern CT Community College, will speak on women in Christianity.

Thursday, November 18 – Women in Islam

Presenter: **Colleen Keyes**, Chairwoman of the Speakers Bureau at the Muslim Coalition of CT and Professor of Muslim Spirituality at Hartford Seminary, will discuss women in Islam.

Q & A panel discussion on Thursday, November 18

The three presenters will participate and answer questions.