LiR Offerings for Spring 2024

March 1 (Friday) AM: Cycling Across America--Bill Penn

Be there with Bill on his 2023 cross country bike touring trip, including the planning, evolution and events of the journey.  Learn about the bicycle touring experience, including highlights of the adventure, such as Washington State (including Olympic National Park), Montana, railroad tunnels and trestles, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, wildlife, the USA heartland, the Erie Canal Trail and more.

March 1 (Friday) PM: Costa Rica**--**Beth Desjardin

Beautiful, lush Costa Rica was the perfect setting for an idyllic family vacation. An informative side trip to Nicaragua enhanced the experience for all. Leave Connecticut behind, and join us as Beth shares her favorite photos and memories of volcanoes, tropical rainforests and wildlife in these two beautiful countries.

March 4 (Monday) AM: From Garbage to Garden: Compost! Jean Vose

If you have a garden, it’s the right time for composting. Compost works like a magic potion for the soil. It is a soil conditioner, mulch and fertilizer all wrapped into one. Composting efforts can become more efficient and rewarding. Come see the why’s, what’s and how’s of making compost.

March 4 (Monday) PM: Hearing Loss and Dementia--Ralph Campagna

Research is finding more and more evidence to support the supposition that untreated hearing loss can contribute to early dementia. There is also new advances in the science of hearing. **Auracast - the future of public wireless broadcast** – is a breakthrough in Bluetooth technology**.** Hearing in public places such as theaters, places of worship, airports, taxis, and more will be better for those wearing hearing aids and audio devices.

March 18 (Monday), AM: History Embedded in Quilts--Dawn Adiletta

Dawn, a noted CT historian, has had her finger on the pulse (do we dare say "Needle") of New England History from many perspectives, including co-authoring a hardbound book published by Mass Quilts titled *"Massachusetts Quilts, Our Common Wealth."*Myths abound about quilts, and Dawn is ready to support those which deserve merit and debunk some others.

March 18 (Monday) PM: 65th Anniversary of "Operation Sunshine” by the USS Nautilus--LCDR Bryan Chapman, OIC and Austin German, U PO1 USN

In 1958, the world’s first nuclear-powered submarine reached the geographically precise location under the North Pole; many of us remember the auspicious news! To celebrate the anniversary, learn the details of her construction at Groton’s Electric Boat Shipyard, and her half million mile/25-year career. A National Historic Landmark, she is berthed at **the (free) Submarine Force Library & Museum.**

March 22 (Friday) PM: Our Magnet High School, Right Here! Principal Ted Keleher

Explore the reasons and goals for the founding of the Quinebaug Middle College High School, integral to and actually connected to QV College itself. Principal Keleher will introduce the concept, then take us on a tour of the facility including interesting nooks and crannies, where students from the entire area flourish in an environment which promotes each student’s unique talents. (Please note: we will meet in the cafeteria for this tour.)

March 25 (Monday) AM: Steve Veilleux, Thompson's First Poet Laureate

Often irreverent, sometimes playful, always insightful, Steve Veilleux, the author of *Event Horizon,* brings to life angels and demons, gods and humans onto kaleidoscopic, often terrifying landscapes, inviting readers to journey along a horizon of myth and science, history, politics and fiction, ultimately daring them to a place of new discovery, just beyond the edge.

March 25 (Monday) PM: Hungarian Heritage & Culture--Esther Lowell Jagodzinski

Have you ever passed by the Hungarian Social Club in Ashford and wondered about their customs and activities?  Esther Lovell Jagodzinski will explore the distinctive cuisine and folk traditions of the Hungarian people, including music, dance and traditional embroidered garments.

April 1 (Monday) AM: The Magnificent Mekong--Pam Rodgers

A 19-day mom and son Viking cruise trip to Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangkok, Thailand included travel through Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, ancient Angkor Wat and other temples, Ho Chi Minh City, wartime tunnels, and giant Buddhas. Such a different culture, such different foods and markets.

April 1(Monday) PM: The History of Photography--Hunter Neil

There were several main plateaus in the history of early photography up until the late 1800s, with certain technologies and techniques extant in that period, that we will examine. Additionally, we will enjoy a showcase of original photographs made by Benjamin Grosvenor of Pomfret in 1905-1915 and Douglas Holyoke (from a separate family collection) of the same period.

April 8 (Monday) AM: Letters to Uncle Eb--Mary Brown

Imagine living on farms in Pomfret in 1812 before telephones were invented. Enjoy a collection of handwritten letters from Harriet and Elizabeth Putnam to their cousin Ebenezer Grosvenor. Eb’s diary entries are interwoven with the letters. This book will be available to purchase with proceeds donated to the Pomfret Historical Society.

April 8 (Monday) PM: Teaching in China & Egypt--Amanda Crocker

Amanda Bettencourt Crocker is a Plainfield native who has dedicated her life to young children and their families. After moving to Shanghai, China in 2017, she taught Kindergarten, opened numerous schools as a Foreign Principal and worked in Curriculum Development. In 2022, she chose Cairo, Egypt for her next chapter, teaching 4th Grade English at an International School. Join her as she shares her journey.

April 12 (Friday) AM: Fraud Watch Network, Inside the Criminal Mind- AARP’s Harry Moms & John Coates

Learn how to proactively spot scams, get guidance from AARP fraud specialists if you’ve been targeted, and feel more secure knowing that they advocate at the federal, state, and local levels to protect consumers and enforce the law. Come with your questions!

April 12 (Friday) PM: Spring Social—save the date!

Back by popular demand: our Fall Social “Elvis,” Robert Black, tribute artist, will serenade us with songs by other famous singers from our younger days.

April 15 (Monday) AM: Indonesia--Caroline Sloat

In April 2023, Caroline Sloat visited Indonesia, where her daughter is posted with the US Department of State. An historian, Sloat knew about the Spice Islands in the colonial era and wanted to learn more. Her illustrations will show some of the natural beauty and cultural treasures of the area and consider the challenge of blending the seventy former sultanates on these islands into a modern nation.

April 15 (Monday) PM: Quilts of Valor--Pat Altmeier

The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing quilts. With Pat, see the display of 2023 Quilts of Valor awarded to veterans as well as other quilts from around the world in the American Quilt Museum in Paducah KY. She may even share some of the quilts she has made!

April 19 (Friday) AM: Who, Really, Was Rufus Malbone? Maureen Holland-Herrara

Do you have a cemetery on your property? Maureen is fascinated with researching ancestry and history. Upon moving to Putnam, she found a mystery lurking in her side yard, where a private cemetery containing only the grave of Rufus Malbone and his horse, Dolly, is located. There is much more to this local legend than previously known.

April 19 (Friday) PM: *Gravity Hill --*author Susanne Davis

***Gravity Hill*** is a story about Jordan Hawkins, her family, and a small town in nearby Connecticut wrecked by the tragic death of three boys on Gravity Hill. But what first appears to be a tragedy of drunk driving leads back to a mysterious accident that has plagued that town for years, sending Jordan on a journey to clear her brother's name. What she discovers-a hidden toxic waste site-sends the whole town on its own bumpy road to self-awareness and healing.

April 29 (Monday) AM: Financial Decision-making: How do YOU define Living Well in Retirement? Holly Wanegar, CFP & Michael Baum, CFP, RICP

With an ever-changing backdrop of the financial markets and changes in Washington, up to date information leads to better financial decisions. Leaders from Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic Wealth Advisors will review these very changes and how best to navigate them using their strategic *Plan Well. Invest Well. Live Well.*TM process.

April 29 (Monday) PM: Saying both “Alzheimer’s” and “Good News” in One Sentence! CT Alzheimer's Assoc Community Outreach

The latest research brings positive news about Alzheimer's Disease including the **first verification by the FDA of a drug that targets the underlying disease process.**At the same time, we’ll receive updated information on the difference between Alzheimer’s and dementia, stages and risk factors.

May 3 (Friday) AM: Beavers--Ginny Apple

Wonder why Beavers are called “eager” or why they gnaw saplings—even large trees—to build their dams and lodges? DEEP Master Wildlife Conservationist Ginny Apple will discuss this keystone species, beaver biology, behavior and history, and describe the unique role of nature’s engineers in shaping North American landscapes, explain how Beaver ponds and wetlands can help us fight environmental problems from water pollution to erosion and climate change.

May 3 (Friday) PM: The Magic of Finland--Anita Smiley

For the past six years, Finland has been recognized as the “Happiest Country in the World.” What is it about this small and humble country that makes it so special? Anita Smiley, who has led 27 tours to Finland, and members of the Finnish American Heritage Society discuss the appeal of this unique and beautiful country and encourage you to add a trip to Finland to your bucket list.

May 6 (Monday) AM: Value of Antiques & Collectibles--Wayne Tuiskula

Do you have antiques and collectibles? How about your options for selling or donating them? Uncertain about what has market value anymore? As we downsize or right-size, Wayne, Auctioneer/Appraiser/Antique Dealer from Central Mass Auctions, will explain what is selling well and what isn’t in the antiques and collectibles world. Sometimes items that we have tucked away may surprise us!

May 6 (Monday) PM: The Campaign to Polarize America: Nixon & the Middle America Committee--Dr. Tom Army

A favorite LiR history presenter, Dr. Army will review the unsettling events of the 1960’s and 1970’s and highlight the role President Nixon and his Middle America Committee played in creating the engine that has pulled us into the disquieting nature of politics in the 21st century.

May 10 (Friday) PM: Annual Meeting

Additional information will be coming as the date nears.

May 13 (Monday) AM: Roseland Park Restoration--Pam Brown

What was Henry Bowen, Woodstock’s native son and its greatest benefactor, thinking, in 1876, when he created the park on 203 acres in South Woodstock along Roseland Lake? Initiatives are underway to restore the Park with the goal of encouraging groups and families to utilize the site. The park is still open to all, free of charge, 365 days a year, as Henry planned.

May 13 (Monday) PM: Coyotes--Paul Colburn

We are pleased to welcome back Paul Colburn, a certified Master Wildlife Conservationist, with a presentation that focuses on the natural history of “Eastern Coyotes in Connecticut,” including an overview of coyote habitat, diet, behavior, and reproduction. It also provides practical recommendations for optimum coexistence with our coyote population. Coyote artifacts will be shared with the audience.