

SPECIAL ISSUE, OBSERVER
APRIL 17, 2020

From the Community Committee

As the Spring Semester comes to a close, we all can take pride in what we have accomplished. It is wonderful how we have adapted to virtual learning in a world that seems surreal. Our study groups and committee activities have maintained some structure and connection in a lonely, unstructured and uncertain time.

If you've been reading the *Observer* (a must reading these days), you know that we have become a virtual community with our regular study groups, now expanded to include auditors, and a full complement of other activities.

Our recent survey has shown, nevertheless, that this experience of sheltering in place is becoming more difficult for many of us. The month of May could be particularly difficult because classes will be over and the summer session will not begin until the end of the month.

To deal with this period, the Community Committee is developing a program to continue as many of our book clubs, groups, SIGs, reflections, and social get-togethers as we can and to add some new ones. The attached calendar and descriptions provide information on the activities planned thus far that can enroll more members, including topic, leader, and how to sign up. If you have other ideas for sessions during May, or can volunteer to lead one, please email Jan Adler at adlerjan@optonline.net.

Here's one idea: Remember the days when we had a lunch room and often continued the discussion in small groups after class? Have you ever felt that you wanted to further discuss the subject with classmates after the semester ends? Now is your chance. Think about organizing your classmates who are interested in continuing the discussion in one or more sessions, either structured or unstructured. It's easy to do either by hosting your own meeting or reserving the chat room for a specific day and time.

Stay safe and healthy

IRP ACTIVITIES DURING BREAK BETWEEN SPRING & SUMMER

APRIL

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
20 3PM: Chat Recently Widowed Members -Susan Sabatino						
27	28	29 4PM: Current Events Discussion -Steve Kalinsky	30 3PM: Women's Group -Arlyne LeSchack			

MAY

				1 4PM: Pour At Four -Susan Rubens	2 4PM: Reflections on Virtual Life -Jan Adler	3
4 10AM: Book Discussion 1918 Flu -Bernie Belkin	5	6 4PM: Current Events Discussion -Steve Kalinsky	7 3PM: Women's Group -Arlyne LeSchack	8 4PM: Pour At Four -Susan Rubens	9	10
11	12 4PM: Virtual Tour Folk Art Museum -Carol Millsom	13 4PM: Current Events Discussion -Steve Kalinsky	14 3PM: Women's Group -Arlyne LeSchack	15 4PM: Pour At Four -Susan Rubens	16	17
18	19	20 Noon: Great IRP Read -Arlyne LeSchack 4PM: Current Events Discussion -Steve Kalinsky	21 3PM: Women's Group -Arlyne LeSchack	22 4PM: Pour At Four -Susan Rubens	23	24

Planned Events for The Break Between Spring and Summer Semesters and Ongoing Events Which Have Already Begun

Monday

3PM, April 20th—exploratory first meeting

Chat Group for Members Who Have Been Widowed

From Susan Sabatino: As many of you know, I lost my husband suddenly on August 31. Many IRPers have experienced similar loss. With the help of my family and friends from the IRP, especially other widows, I have felt that I was rebuilding a new normal that was bearable. Then this COVID-19 isolation happened, and a fresh hell of longing for my partner descended. You've probably experienced them, those Sudden Upsurges of Grief?

If you want to attend, email Susan Sabatino at ssabati9316@gmail.com.

10AM, May 4th, 1918 Flu Pandemic Book Discussion Group

Read *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* by Nancy Bristow on your own and come together on May 4th to discuss how this major crisis compares to our current Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

If you are interested, email Bernie Belkin at bernardbelkin@gmail.com. Limited to the first 12 members who sign up.

Note: Sheila O'Connell's movie class, **MovieGroup**, on Mondays at 4PM is full. Clearly, there is great interest in a film group. The committee hopes members will step up to volunteer. Email Jan.

Tuesday

4PM, May 12th, Virtual Tour of Folk Art Exhibit

Join Carol Millsom on a virtual tour of "Memory Palaces: Inside the Collection of Audrey Heckler," an exhibit of outsider art recently on display at the American Folk Art Museum.

If you are interested, email Carol Millsom at carolmillsom35@gmail.com and she will send you a zoom invite before the meeting. Limited to the first 30 members who sign up.

Wednesday

12 noon, May 20th, The Great IRP Read

Join with us in our first Great IRP Read. Our book will be *Slaughterhouse- Five* by Kurt Vonnegut which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year. Read the book on your own and come together on May 20th to discuss it. Depending on how many people sign up, we will hold one or more Zoom discussion sections concurrently on May 20th.

If you are interested, please send an email to Arlyne LeSchack at arlyneleschack@gmail.com and obtain the book (\$7.99 as a PB or Kindle download at Amazon, 288 pp.) In May you'll receive a Zoom invite before the meeting.

4PM ongoing, weekly, Current Events Group

Join in a spirited discussion of weekly current events. Recent discussions included the many aspects of Covid-19. If you are interested in joining, email Steve Kalinsky at stephenkalinsky@gmail.com and he will send you a zoom invite.

Thursday

3PM ongoing, weekly, **The Women's Group**

Join other women for discussions of current issues, both political and personal. If you are interested in joining, email Arlyne Le Schack at arlyneleschack@gmail.com and she will send you a zoom invite.

Friday

4PM ongoing, weekly, **Pour at Four**

Set up your own "pour" and join your fellow IRPers to toast our continued social connection via Zoom. If you plan to attend, email Susan Rubens at sfarubens@gmail.com. On the pour date just go onto the chat room website—**IRP 24 hour Zoom Meeting Room**: <https://NewSchool.zoom.us/j/381380077>. No zoom invite needed.

Saturday

4PM, May 2nd, **Reflections on Virtual Life**

We've just completed our first month as IRP Zoomers and would like to offer all members an opportunity to reflect and share thoughts and feelings about how this transition has affected our communal and private lives. Let's share experiences and also strategies to survive and even thrive. If you are interested, email Jan Adler at adlerjan@optonline.net, and he will send you a zoom invite.

Events being organized with dates not yet set

Theatre SIG If you miss being able to see and discuss theatre in these challenging times, you may be interested in a Zoom IRP Theatre SIG that Bruce Smith is organizing for spring and summer. Participants will view selected productions available online and then discuss the play production via Zoom. If you are interested, send an email to Bruce at drbsny@gmail.com.