STAYING IN TOUCH

NOT RECEIVING THE OBSERVER?
If you do not receive the Observer on some Mondays when study groups are in session, but usually do receive it, please check your spam and junk files and also note that the Observer is posted to the Zine right after it is emailed and can always be accessed there at: https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer1-1. In this circumstance, please also notify Adam that you have not received the email with the Observer.

If you know members who never receive the Observer, or you hear colleagues say they never receive it, please let Adam know or ask them to let Adam know.

Please Note: To help resolve the email issues, Adam will send out two emails to all members today—one, the cover with the Observer attachment as usual, and the other with a cover and a link to the Observer on the Zine. Please email Adam if you DO NOT receive BOTH emails and let him know which you did not receive. If you receive both emails, you need not respond.

ARRANGING YOUR OWN ZOOM SESSIONS
If you are interested in hosting a zoom session for a social get-together with friends or colleagues, you can proceed in two ways:

Send Invitations: sign on to https://newschool.zoom.us and follow the prompts to host a meeting by sending invitations to specific people. All you need to know is your New School ID and password.

24/7 Chat Room: you can also arrange to meet friends and colleagues on the new 24/7 Chat Room that you can access directly at: https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff. Just make arrangements with your friends to meet at a given time and sign on. You can also sign on at any time and talk to anyone who happens to be there.

We have begun to schedule some events to encourage use of the Chat Room. Here they are.

Pour at Four on Fridays
Our second pour at four will be this Friday, April 17, from 4 to 6PM, hosted again by Susan Rubens. The first pour, on April 10, attracted about 25 members who traded insights, advice, and humor about life in physical isolation for about an hour. You don’t need an invitation. Just go onto the chat room at any point between 4 and 6PM and stay as long as you like.

Chat Group for Members Who Have Lost Partners
• Monday April 20, 3PM
Susan Sabatino, who lost her husband last August, wrote in last week’s Observer that “when this COVID-19 isolation happened, a fresh hell of longing for my partner descended.” She suggested a chat group for members who have lost partners and, so far, four IRPers have responded. If you are interested in joining them, please email Susan at: ssabati9316@gmail.com.

Scheduled Chat Hours
You can sign onto the chat room at any time but to increase the chance of finding someone there, we have scheduled some hours every day, including weekends. They are:

- 12-1PM
- 3-4PM and, for those who may at times have trouble sleeping,
- 4-5AM

So, if you want to talk other members and also widen your contacts within the IRP, go onto the chat room at these hours.

Request: If you have other ideas for using the chat room, for example, for a discussion of a book, movie, play, or TV show, please contact Jan Adler at: adlerjan@optonline.net.

Need Help with Zoom?
If you are having any technical or equipment problem with zoom, please send an email to tech@iernyc.org with your name and telephone number, describing the equipment you are using and the problems you are experiencing. If you know the brand of your device, please include that information. A member of the Tech Committee will get back to you within 24 hours.

Please Note: The Tech Committee has adopted policies regarding security that can be found at: https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff.

One recent policy is that our study groups and meetings will not be recorded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reminder: Summer School Proposals
Our summer program will be held online and the Curriculum Committee wants to expand the number of study groups and sessions. The tentative dates for the summer program are:

- Session 1: May 26-July 6
- Session 2: July 13-August 21

If there are enough study groups, classes may take place over a 5-day schedule. Jonathan Gaines, the committee chair, asks members who might be willing to offer a 6-week summer study group to email him at jegaines@att.net, and indicate the session you are interested in: first, second, either, or both. The committee encourages first-time coordinators. To assure a great number of offerings, the committee has relaxed its syllabus requirements, and extended the deadline for submitting proposals to May 8.

Planned Events between Spring and Summer Semesters
This Friday, we will email a Special Issue of the Observer with a grid of the activities scheduled for the weeks between the two semesters. The grid will include dates, times, and descriptions of the activities as well as information about signing up for them. Here is a preview.
Virtual Folk Art Museum Exhibit Tour
• Tuesday May 12, 4PM
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, please send an email to Carol Millsom at carolmillsom35@gmail.com and she will send you a zoom invite before the meeting. Limited to first 30 participants who sign up.

MovieGroup
• Mondays 4PM, beginning May 4
Join other movie lovers for an informal movie discussion on Mondays at 4PM beginning May 4th. Non-depressing movies will be assigned to watch before each meeting. All are available at modest cost or free. If you are interested, please send an email to Sheila O’Connell at: sheilajo@verizon.net and she will send you the movie assignment and a zoom invite for the first session. Limited to first 30 participants who sign up.

The Great IRP Read
Join us in our first Great IRP Read. Our book will be Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut, which celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. Depending on how many people sign up, we will organize one or more zoom discussion groups during the break. If you are interested, please email Arlyne Le Schack at lescsa683@newschool.edu, obtain the book ($7.99 as a PB or Kindle download at Amazon, 288 pp.) and start reading. In early May you’ll be advised of the days/times of the discussion groups and receive a zoom invite shortly thereafter.

Current Events Group
• Every Wednesday, 4PM
Steve Kalinsky hosts a weekly current events group, covering politics, economics and, of course, COVID-19. Last week, 27 members took part in the discussion; if you want to join them, email Steve at stephenkalinsky@gmail.com and he will send you an invitation.

Women’s Group
• Every Thursday, 3PM
If you are not already on the list to receive information and invitations to the women’s group sessions, please email Arlyne Le Schack at lescsa683@newschool.edu.

Request: We are looking to plan more events for this inter-semester period, both on the 24/7 site and by zoom invitation. If you are willing to host a discussion of a book, play, movie, or other topic or if you can repeat a session you gave for our Virtual Learning Center or for Tuesdays With Friends, please email Jan Adler at adlerjan@optonline.net.

Ongoing Events
Reflections on Virtual Life
• Saturday May 2, 4PM
The first Reflections workshop this past Monday drew 14 members, who spoke of their gratitude to the IRP for helping maintain ties and their overall satisfaction with the zoom study groups. Many also grieve for the loss of the world they knew and fear for the future. But overall, participants acknowledged their relatively comfortable lives and shared tips for remaining healthy, exercising, ordering food, and taking advantage of the unscheduled time.

If you would like to participate in the next workshop on May 2, email Jan Adler at: adlerjan@optonline.net.
Theater SIG
If you miss seeing and discussing theater, you may be interested in the Virtual Theatre SIG Bruce Smith is organizing for spring and summer. Participants will view, and then discuss, selected productions available online. If you want to participate, email Bruce at: drbsny@gmail.com. He will hold multiple sessions on a given play depending on demand.

RESULTS OF MEMBER POLL
90 members responded to the Community-Building Committee’s poll on our reactions to the physical isolation required by the coronavirus pandemic. Respondents are coping by relying on email, phone, text, and zoom to maintain contact with family and friends. They find our study groups a great source of comfort and support and most are happy to participate in IRP activities beyond the study groups. The committee determined that 15 of the respondents wanted to be contacted now and they have talked to all of them.

Because a majority of the respondents said they were willing to help with outreach to supplement the activities of the seven committee members (Jan Adler, Jane Case Einbender, Bernie Belkin, Aileen Gitelson, Michael Hill, Arlyne LeSchack, and Barbara Marwell), the committee has decided to contact all IRPers to touch base, assess the need for assistance, and develop new program ideas. The committee is also planning zoom events, both through invitation and the chat room, especially for weekends and for the break between semesters.

ONLINE ART SHOW
Dick Kossoff provides the fifteenth contribution to the online art show.

Title: Helter Skelter
By: Dick Kossoff, Mixed Media Collage

According to Dick: “This collage “Helter-Skelter” is a continuation of art done in Istar Sarlin's collage study group last year.”

MEMBER FORUM
We’re looking for short items about experiences with virtual reality and physical distancing that you find funny or unexpected and also tips on how to negotiate these weeks. Please keep them coming to Leslie Davis at: ldamis7104@yahoo.com.
REFLECTIONS
We are grateful this week to the members who shared their experiences and especially to the participants in Charles Troob’s Writing Workshop. We thank Charles for scheduling the assignment and suggesting publication in the Observer.

From Michelle Harris, A Personal Reflection: Haircut
I am a tailor’s daughter. Growing up, the only person in my house to wield a pair of scissors or a needle and thread was my father. The family joke was that my mother never sewed anything but a chicken. About once a month he was instructed to cut my bangs.

My father was not normally a very dramatic person, but he always made my haircut into an event. First he would bring out the special scissors, the ones with the little metal apostrophe. Then the hamper would be pulled out of the bathroom, and I was lifted up onto it with a big bath towel wrapped around me. All the while my mother would stand in the background, offering unnecessary advice.

Now that the pandemic has me sheltering at home, I’m watching my husband’s beautiful silver hair grow wilder and longer by the day and wondering where those scissors are.

From Ira Rubin, Outside And Inside
I live in a quarantined senior residence in Queens, confined to my room at all times and with no outside social contact permitted. It is frightening, lonely and depressing, but perhaps the most distressing and infuriating thing is being summarily dismissed as expendable by people outside the facility who believe protecting us, among those at highest risk and most vulnerable to the virus, is a less valuable goal than relaxing social constrictions in order to stimulate the economy. It reminds me of the cautionary science fiction movie, Soylent Green, in which people over 30 were processed into food for the rest of the population.

The opposite culture exists inside my residence as management and staff labor overtime to deliver meals, maintain necessary services and bolster morale by improvising ways to keep us connected with our families and each other. They have provided the equipment and taught us how to do video conferencing with our loved ones; coordinate discussions and word games to play while we stand in our doorways within sight of each other, and are tolerant of our complaints about a situation not of their doing or within their control, despite the fact that they must deal with these same challenges, not only within but outside the facility. We can retreat to TV, a book, or sleep, but our caretakers cannot. They are a blessing without whom we literally could not survive, and I’m deeply grateful.

From Rosalie Frost, That New Normal
The phrase, “new normal” begs the question as to what is “normal.” Some memories may help —

Walking on a city sidewalk and being close enough to others that you could detect an array of body odors — a whiff of perfume, hair oil, skin lotion, sweat...

Browsing a store’s produce aisle, not sure what you want or need, until you suddenly find it. If not, you try other aisles, hypnotized by numberless choices on crowded shelves, savoring, delaying any purchase decisions until you are in the checkout line.

Leaving the house on a warm spring day, bare-armed and sandaled,
you raise a hand to scratch an itchy nose before you hug your friends as if you didn’t just see them at last night’s party.

Taking your children to the playground, warning them to be careful as they rush to climb the monkey bars before heading to the sandbox and borrowing other children’s shovels and pails rather than use their own.

Also, just laughing and shaking our heads at the current president’s behavior to avoid anger and depression.

And afterward, “the new normal” and “old normal” may morph into something for which we do not yet have a word.

From Richard Zacks, Numerology
57 - The number of miles from Times Square to the house in the Village of Bellport, on the south shore of Long Island, where Sarah and I hope the coronavirus won’t find us. 57 is also the number of trees on our Bellport property. On a day last week when we had nothing else to do, we counted them.

2,084 - the off-season population of Bellport. There are many more people here now, almost as many as we expect to see in July and August. Then, but not now, the locals welcome a surfeit of city folk who pay inflated rents, empty the shelves of the village shops and fill the local restaurants and bars. This month almost everything on the village’s main street is closed, and most of the locals want visitors and their viruses, to go somewhere else, perhaps to Hell.

3 - The number of miles we try to walk every day through the village and along the shore. 3 is also the number of younger neighbors who have offered to pick up groceries for us when they shop.

7 - The number of discarded rubber gloves we’ve seen on our walks; and also, the number of days we can now buy food at nearby Deer Run Farm. They used to be closed except on weekends before Memorial Day. Janet, the farmer’s wife, tells us by email what’s available. We order by text message. When our order is ready, Janet calls. She leaves our food beside the farm stand entrance in a box labeled “Sara, stay well.”

Celebrating Holidays
Carol Sterling and her puppets find a way to say both Happy Easter and Chag Sameach.

Entertainment/Enlightenment

Gently Down the Stream
Just one more recommendation this week, this one from Michael Switzer: A Place to Call Home (3 seasons on Acorn TV). An Australian melodrama with good story lines and many characters to get attached to, following a family just after the end of World War II and for the next 20 years.

If you’d like to add your favorites to the list of members’ recommendations for streaming, send them, along with a brief description and where they can be accessed, to Miriam Lawrence at: miriamiar@aol.com.
On the Radio
Rica Fujihara suggests that if you’re looking to escape for a moment to simpler times, there is a wonderful radio show every Saturday called the Rhythm Revue! The talented DJ, Felix Hernandez, plays classic soul hits from the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s featuring such artists as Stevie Wonder, the Spinners, Marvin Gaye, Gladys Knight and the Pips, the Ohio Players, Ashford and Simpson, the Tower of Power and, of course, the once ubiquitous Barry White and the Love Unlimited Orchestra. Rhythm Revue is broadcast every Saturday on WBGO (88.3 FM), the preeminent jazz station in our area, from 10AM to 2PM. 
https://www.wbgo.org/programs/ rhythm-revue

Look Who’s Talking
Many institutions are making their archives of talks and lectures available online. If you have suggestions along these lines, send them to Sue Goldman at sgo9898@gmail.com and she will put them together each week for the Observer.

For a start, Carolyn Preiss suggests Road Scholar’s Virtual Learning Library at https://www.roadscholar.org/c/virtual-learning/. And Nancy Small writes that MoMA is offering online courses for free. Oh happy day! https://www.coursera.org/search?query=the%20museum%20of%20modern%20art

Culture From Home
Susan Rauch reminds us of the remarkable variety of ways to stay connected through cultural offerings, even while we stay at home to keep ourselves and our fellow residents safe. Use and follow #CultureFromHome on social media to find and share virtual programming from groups working across the five boroughs and beyond. Here are a few upcoming and evergreen virtual activities.

- The Jewish Museum’s new Passover Art Activities guide
- Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Wednesday with Wynton and From the Archives concerts, 12:30PM
- New York Hall of Science’s digital interactive graphic novel Transmissions: Gone Viral
- A.I.R. Gallery’s Staying with the Trouble: Prompts for Practice | Alternating Evenings
- The Frick Collection offers Fridays@5 with a curator discussing a work, cocktail glass in hand. On Friday April 17, the topic will be Rembrandt’s Polish Rider.

Susan Sabatino recommends the Rubin Museum https://rubinmuseum.org/. Thursday through Monday, practitioners, artists, teachers, and experts alike share 10 minutes of insights and tools to help open a window into our inner world so we can better navigate the outer one. Featuring meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg, Tibetan doctor Tawni Tidwell, meditation teacher Kate Johnson, thinker and philosopher Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi, musicians from the Brooklyn Raga Massive collective, and others, each week the speaker is joined by a Rubin staff member who introduces an artwork to serve as the inspiration for the offering.

Finally, two from Sue Goldman: The Getty Museum offered the following challenge: Choose a favorite artwork, find three things lying around your house,
recreate the artwork using those things. Check out the results here. (You may notice that some of the contestants did not follow the "three things lying around your house" rule -- though the Big Wave did do that -- but the results are pretty good and/or pretty funny.)


Also from Sue, note the museums that allow virtual visits; they will not replace the actual thing, but it will encourage us to go once we can travel.

https://www.buzzfeed.com/andyneenschwander/13-museums-you-can-visit-online-during-your-quarant?origin=relatedmanual

Advice: Paying Taxes, and Being Careful

Tax Filings

Colette Siegel, IRP’s treasurer, reminds us that both federal and state tax filings have been extended from April 15 to July 15. If you are due a refund, file now.

Scams

Susan Sabatino writes: We’d like to think we are too smart to be taken in by scam artists, but both my inbox and calls from friends tell me that scam artists are out in force. COVID-19 is not the only thing seniors are more vulnerable to. The National Council on Aging and the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement has advice at: https://www.ncoa.org/economic-security/money-management/scams-security/protection-from-scams/.

Another useful page is:

RESOURCES

IRP Zine

- To access the Zine, go to www.irpzine.org. To view the directory or IRP Faces, you must login with these credentials:
  - Username: IRPNewSchool
  - Password: Fall2018
- For the fall and spring calendars, click here.
- Member bios: https://www.irpzine.org/news/new-member-bios-fall-2016/
- Observer Archive: https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer1-1