ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planned Events between Spring and Summer Terms
Last Friday we emailed a Special Issue of the Observer with a grid, and description, of the activities scheduled for the weeks between the two terms, including some that have already begun. Since then, some activities have been added and some are now filled. To see the updated grid and description of all the still-open activities, click here. Here’s an account of the changes and the ongoing events.

Sessions Added

Advances In Civilization
• Beginning Thursday April 30, 4PM
Reuven Opher and Steve Kalinsky have formed a group (unofficial, but quite serious) called the “Advances in Civilization Society: From Aristotle to Stephen Hawking.” They will host a discussion group on ALTERNATE Thursdays beginning April 30 at 4PM. Each session will be a brief presentation followed by discussion about a great thinker (Aristotle, Hawking…. perhaps Bertrand Russell or Hannah Arendt or Leibnitz or Teddy Roosevelt or Marie Curie or Jane Adams or Barbara Jordan) who has contributed to the advancement of civilization.

We talk, we present, we raise a glass (your choice of beverage), we philosophize …or we refrain from philosophizing, and we look at advances in civilization. We hope you can join us on April 30th (and perhaps going forward) every other week: April 30, May 14, May 28 for the inter-term period and then continuing June 11 and June 25.

If you are want to attend, RSVP to Steve at stephenkalinsky@gmail.com and you will receive a zoom invitation. We think it will be fun. One more thing, if you are willing to give a 12-15 minute presentation on a great thinker and then lead the discussion on April 30, that would be terrific.

Sessions Now Full and Closed

MovieChat with Sheila O’Connell is full. Members have expressed great interest in a second film group. If you are willing to lead such a group, email Jan Adler at: adlerjan@optonline.net

Book Discussion, Flu Pandemic with Bernie Belkin is full.

Ongoing Sessions

Current Events, Wednesday 4PM, stephenkalinsky@gmail.com

Women’s Group, Thursday 3PM, lesda683@newschool.edu

Pour at Four, Friday 4-6PM, Chat Room https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff

Voices Special Edition
For over three decades, the annual issue of Voices has been the prose, poetry and photography showplace for our members. This year we are in the midst of a life changing experience as we find ourselves isolated yet united. While creative activity is no guarantee of safety or health, it is a wonderful way to cope with, and
understand, the changes in our lives. Voices encourages IRP members to memorialize some of their feelings, perceptions and experiences about the current crisis through writing and photography and share their work with others.

The deadline for submission to this special edition is May 31. You may send two poems, two prose pieces, and two photos. There is no minimum length for the prose, and we will accept all submissions, publishing the work as soon as possible after we receive it.

Attach the work to an email, that includes your name and contact information and send to the Voices mailbox, irpvoicesonline@gmail.com. Please use Word format (.docx) or Rich Text format (.rtf) for prose and poetry, not a .pdf file, which cannot be edited. Photographs should be in JPEG format, large size, with a title either as the file name or in the body of the email. If the title does not obviously invoke the current crisis, add a short statement making the connection.

If you have technical problems with the submission, send a note to this mailbox and someone will contact you.

If you can contribute to this effort by assisting in copy editing, please contact one of the prose editors: Mary Houts at houtsmary@hotmail.com or Eric Roper at eric@ericroperesq.com.

If you want to contribute to Voices but choose to submit work not dealing with the current crisis, we will consider your submission for the edition of Voices that will come out later this year.

### STAYING IN TOUCH

**Expect a Check-In Call from IRP**
Beginning April 28, the Community Committee will be organizing phone calls to ALL IRP members to see how things are going during these months of the COVID-19 plague. More than 40 members have volunteered to make the calls. Expect to hear from one of them, perhaps even a member you do not yet know. All callers will identify themselves as members of IRP. Stay healthy!

**Reminder: Summer School Schedule and Proposals**
The summer program will be in two sessions
- Session 1: May 26-July 6
- Session 2: July 13-August 21

Classes will be scheduled throughout the week. If you are willing to offer a 6-week summer study group in either or both sessions, email Jonathan Gaines at jegaines@att.net by May 8. The committee encourages first-time coordinators.

**Reminder: Arranging Your Own Zoom Sessions**
If you are interested in hosting a zoom session for a social get-together, you can proceed by sending an invitation to specific people by signing on to https://newschool.zoom.us and following the prompts. You can also use the 24/7 Chat Room via https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff.

**Chat Room**
We are scheduling some events to encourage use of the Chat Room:

**Pour at Four on Fridays.** Hosted by Susan Rubens; enter the chat room at any point between 4 and 6PM and stay as long as you like.

**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

If you have other ideas for using the chat room, email Jan Adler at: adlerjan@optonline.net.

**Need Help with Zoom?**
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. The Tech Committee has
adopted policies regarding security that can be found at: https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff.

Online Art Show  
Susan Winston provides our sixteenth contribution to the online art show.

Title: *King of the Jungle*  
By: Susan Winston, Photograph

According to Susan:  
“While on a safari, this lion caught my eye.”

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 difficult weeks. Please keep them coming to Leslie Davis at: lDavis7104@yahoo.com.

Reflections

We are happy to include more thoughtful pieces from Charles Troob’s Writing Workshop.

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**Eileen Brener: Tyranny**

Did you ever wonder how small-time tyrants come to power? I never did, but I’ve learned how anyway in the last few weeks when I’ve seen just such usurpation in my own family.

At first when tiny, these tyrants were simply grand. They were able to insinuate themselves into our hearts by imitating our speech and mannerisms. How we loved them. Then they grew and began power lessons. We never suspected anything. Their school years flew by with trophies and trips, recitals and graduations. We were there applauding. Suddenly they were taller than we and knew about arcane subjects such as installing fire sticks in old TVs.\[1\] We were so appreciative.

Everything changed when the coronavirus hit. They showed their true colors: they—the six of them—were power hungry. First a gentle granddaughter suggested that we give up our abode and move to theirs. It was a well-meaned request but showed an absence of awareness of our status as senior rulers of the family. We of course declined the offer, laughing quietly to ourselves. Then they determined we should go out as little as possible and only when wearing gloves and masks. Their rule was imposed before the government’s, but we bowed to their wishes. Next they announced a stringent new rule: we were never to leave our apartment building. If we agreed to be under such a lockdown, they would provide food, meds, and all necessities. What could we do but acquiesce?

You’ve heard the stories of the princess in the tower waiting for a lover to rescue her? Well, we see ourselves as the grandparents imprisoned in a tower by a sextet of adult grandchildren. We’re waiting for a vaccine to release us.

\[1\] A fire stick is a device that enables an ordinary TV to become a smart TV.

**Lorne Taichman, April 3, 2020**

For a bit of exercise that day, Ettie and I took a walk through the Stony Brook University Campus. Just aside the football stadium we came upon the Army Corps of Engineers erecting two giant facilities that were to serve as temporary...
quarters for the expected coronavirus-overflow. We knew these structures were being added to hospitals, but it was eerie to actually see them going up. Ettie shuddered when she realized that the six large refrigerated trailers parked in an inconspicuous spot off to the side were morgues-in-waiting. I imagined this is how it might have looked in the early years of WWII when the concentration camps of Eastern Europe were being set up. It seemed inconceivable that people now alive would soon be warehoused in those facilities.

That evening, as is the custom on Friday evenings, bikers descended upon the Village of Port Jefferson. They come weekly to schmooze and tell motorcycle tales. They arrive in a loud roar and take over the Suffolk County parking lot that borders the harbor. I am often tempted to start a chat with one or two, but their menacing black, silver-studded leather jackets usually keep me away. This time I stayed clear; they were not practicing proper social distancing. They were enjoying an evening of close fellowship seemingly oblivious to the pandemic and pandemonium around them. I wanted to shout – “Hey Guys, there are morgues just a few miles down the road.” I also imagined their response – “Hey Man, this is a free country.”

Alix Kane, Shhhh
We are hunkered down in our country home out east. I have been no closer than six feet to any human save my husband for the past four weeks. I wave from a distance to my neighbors – people who, like us, need exercise, fresh air and an outdoor activity to look forward to each day.

Yesterday morning we had no hot water, so we both forfeited showers. No new gas valve available for the hot water tank; we will need to install a new tank. Not to be delivered until mid-day today. Our exterminator is also coming today to attack our suddenly-explosive ant population. A mild winter and too much moisture – and now we are overrun with ever-populating ants. Our cleaning crew will arrive to clean up after the HVAC and exterminator crews. No shower again this morning.

It is mid-day and suddenly we are surrounded by people in our home. We are all hiding behind gloves and masks – what do they even look like below their eyes? The company I had been lacking is now a bit overwhelming. I’m passing people in my hallways, they are using my bathrooms, I worry about their Corona-type germs on the faucet handles and bannisters. Drilling, vacuuming, constant chatter.

The house is now empty but for the two of us, left shell-shocked. We are no longer seeking external companionship. We now have hot water, we are not ant-free, (the exterminator will return on Monday with a more powerful weapon), our home is clean. I long for a soothing hot shower in celebration of alone-ness.

Entertainment/Enlightenment
Gently Down the Stream
Here’s the latest batch of streaming recommendations from our IRP community.

From Carol Groneman: Van Schouwendam 12 (2019) on Acorn TV. A man claiming amnesia returns to a traditional Dutch village where 25 years ago a girl and boy disappeared. Murders ensue.


And Lesley Herrmann and Ken Witty add their enthusiasm for the Netflix series Unorthodox, first recommended by four IRP members in the April 6th Observer. Clearly this is one not to be missed!

Keep your streaming recommendations coming. Send your favorites to Miriam Lawrence at miriamiar@aol.com.

Music, Talks, Exhibits
From Rica Fujihara: Here’s an uplifting video of Japan’s musical response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The video features both celebrities and ordinary folk singing “Ue wo MuiteAruko,”
which many IRPers may know by the song’s English title, “Sukiyaki.” It was originally sung by Kyu Sakamoto when it was released in 1963, and to date has been the only Japanese song to reach #1 on the U.S. Billboard Charts.

Over the years, it has become the de facto national anthem of Japan in times of crisis, most recently during the 2011 earthquake and nuclear accident. During the dark days of this global pandemic, the comforting melody and lyrics once again give hope. Here’s the link: https://youtu.be/lBNJIhfa9Zs.

From Leslie Davis: In its most ambitious effort yet to bring the joy and artistry of opera to audiences everywhere during the Metropolitan Opera’s closure, the company will present a star-studded virtual gala Saturday, April 25, at 1PM, featuring more than 40 leading artists performing in a live stream from their homes all around the world, available for free on the Met’s website. General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin will host from their homes in New York City and Montreal, respectively. Mr. Nézet-Séguin will also participate as a pianist and as conductor in pre-recorded performances by the Met Orchestra and Chorus, created from individual takes from the homes of each of the musicians.

From Susan Sabatino: My niece (of whom I am justly proud) is Executive Director of the Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center in Bellingham, Washington. She did an interview for the local TV station, sharing some insights that can be useful for all of us, whether hunkering down with others, or by ourselves. https://youtu.be/xw9nUTYGKyY

From Rosalie Frost: I currently have an online, virtual photograph exhibit at: http://www.sohophoto.com/, titled After...the Big Bang --- until April 25. It consists of a few images in a slide show format that is part of a larger exhibit of actual black and white prints. (Note: because of technical difficulties, it may be hard to see parts of the image.) My artist statement for the online exhibit is: This body of work was inspired by the vastness and beauty of the night sky, which inevitably gave rise to a curiosity about the origin of the universe and its possible fate. From vast walls of light created after the Big Bang that condensed into stars to the flickering out and darkness at the end ----.

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.

Fun Check out this set of funny pictures from Judy Goldman.
RESOURCES

IRP Zine
- For the fall and spring calendars, click here.
- Observer Archive: https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer1-1

CUNY Events
- Graduate Center Spring Public 2020 Events—To view the lineup, click here: www.gc.cuny.edu/publicprograms
- School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) public programming schedule, 2019-2020
- Public programs in Midtown Manhattan