

INSTITUTE FOR RETIRED PROFESSIONALS
The Observer, October 5, 2020

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear all,

I hope you saw the special message on Friday encouraging you to do your part in this extraordinary peer learning program by bringing your ideas for spring study groups to the workshops today and Wednesday of this week.

The curriculum committee and your peers offer a supportive environment if it is your first time coordinating or if on a topic that's newer to you that you would like to explore in a collaborative format.

The **Let's Get Started workshop** will jumpstart the support you will receive in developing your ideas, and the committee will suggest resources, help you to find a co-coordinator (if you want one), and answer your questions about the study group proposal process.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5 from 3:45-5:00PM
or
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7 from 3:45-5:00PM

RSVP to Linda Anstendig at lanstendig@gmail.com with your preference on day and you will receive a Zoom invitation.

I hope you will join us this Thursday evening at 7:30PM, when we welcome two exceptional individuals and writers, Lee Child and Professor Heather Martin in conversation about her new biography on Child, who created the # 1 international bestselling hero Jack Reacher, the protagonist of his crime thriller series revered by dedicated and loyal readers worldwide. Register for this free event at <https://reacher.guy.eventbrite.com/?aff=IRPObserver> to receive Zoom webinar information.

Yours,
Mariel

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR ADVISORY BOARD

Nominations for 12 positions on the Advisory Board are open now through Friday, October 23. The election will take place during the week of November 9-13, by electronic voting.

The positions will be open to all members of the IRP community, without exception, who have been members for at least one year. For this election only, in order to create a staggered cycle, positions will be divided into 1-year, 2- year and 3-year terms, and one position will be reserved for a newer member, that is, someone in the second or third year of membership in the IRP.

All members are eligible to vote in the election. The nomination form can be accessed on the Zine or by clicking this [link](#). Forms can be returned to Michelle Harris, Mharris@qc.cuny.edu

**Urgent! Check Your Absentee
Ballot!**

**Many NY voters have received
envelopes with another
person's name and info.**

The envelope you get in the mail will be correctly addressed to you. Inside that envelope are three things: 1) the absentee ballot; 2) an 'Official Absentee Ballot Envelope'; and 3) a larger return envelope in which to mail the 'Official Absentee Ballot Envelope' to the Board of Elections. Examine the 'Official Absentee Ballot Envelope' carefully. On one side it has a place for the voter to sign it. On the other side, there are instructions printed in English and two other languages. If you turn the instruction side of the envelope sideways, you can see the voter's printed name, the date of the General Election, the voter's Election District number, voter ID number and a barcode.

Make sure the name on this envelope is yours. Many Brooklyn voters-- including IRP members -- have received envelopes with another person's name, ED number, Voter ID Number and barcode on them.

You are supposed to put your completed ballot in the 'Official Absentee Ballot Envelope,' seal it and sign the back of it. Then you put it into the larger return envelope addressed to the Board of Elections and put a stamp on that return envelope.

But if your name and voter ID aren't on the inner envelope, you will effectively be casting someone else's vote. And the person with your correct envelope will be casting your vote. One or both votes may be invalidated.

In some cases, you may know the person whose ballot you have received. Do not return the ballot to that person. Hang on to it until you receive further instructions.

The Board of Elections says the incorrect ballot inner envelopes were part of a single print run that was mailed to an estimated 100,000 voters. The BOE has promised to mail a new, correct ballot package to every voter who received incorrect materials, along with a letter of explanation.

It is encouraging everyone who received the wrong ballot materials to email the Board of Elections at Apply4Absentee@boe.nyc, or call 1-866-VOTE-NYC and demand a correct ballot **right away!**

You also have the option to vote in person, either early (starting October 24) or on Election Day. Applying for and receiving an absentee ballot does not mean you are forced to vote that way.

Even if you mailed a 100 percent valid and accurate ballot, you still have the option to vote in person, since absentee ballots don't get opened and counted until about a week after the election. (The BOE will simply throw out your absentee ballot once that counting process begins because election workers can see you cast your vote in person.)

If you decide to vote in person, whether on Election Day or any of the **nine early voting days** from October 24 to November 1, that vote will count. Early polling sites can be found [on the BOE website](#), You can search for your assigned polling place for early or Election Day voting at <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/> .

Early voting is considered the safest way to vote in person, as you can go during off hours during the week, and it also ensures that your vote is counted on election night if that is important to you. (For more information, go to <https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/campaigns-elections/what-know-about-nys-latest-absentee-ballot-debacle.html>).

Lynn Brenner
Voter Registration Project

SURVEY SHOWS DECREASED ISOLATION

The second telephone survey that included calls to all IRP members and looked at how people were dealing with the pandemic, shows that isolation was reported to have decreased from the original round, perhaps because of the two IRP summer sessions. In addition, the question about people reading the Observer opened up a discussion about difficulties people were having using GC email. Many thanks to Mariel Villere and others at the GC who quickly set up online technical help with this problem.

The survey was done in two parts: the first in May before the IRP summer sessions and the second after the summer session concluded. A lot of people helped in this effort, but Jan Adler, Barbara Marwell, Arlyne Le Schack, Michael Hill, and the 38 volunteer callers who reached 262 out of 301 IRP members are all to be thanked. The results are included at the end of the Observer (pages 9-12).

But one of the best things to come out of the two surveys was the positive experience reported by both the callers and the people called. Clearly being in touch, speaking directly to people, and

listening, helps. Finally, the overwhelming effect of reading the responses is how adaptable and resilient IRP members are. We are a community that knows how to cope and make the best of things, even in a pandemic.

Aileen Gitelson

CURRICULUM WORKSHOPS THIS WEEK

The IRP relies on its members -- you! -- to step forward to lead study groups. Right now we are short on study groups for the upcoming Spring '21 semester. If you have an idea for a study group, let us help! Attend one of the Curriculum Committee's workshops this week. We can support the development of your ideas, suggest resources, help you to find a co-coordinator (if you want one) and answer your questions about the study group proposal process.

LET'S GET STARTED WORKSHOPS

MONDAY OCTOBER 5 (3:45-5PM)

or

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 7 (3:45-5pm)

RSVP to Linda Anstendig at lanstendig@gmail.com

Let us know which day you'd like to attend, and we will send you a Zoom invitation.

The IRP needs you! Please sign up!

HOW'S IT GOING?

Current coordinators are invited to a Zoom session to discuss **HOW IT'S GOING** with your present study group--what's working and what...not so much. The date is Wednesday, October 14, 3:45-5PM. Come and share insights and techniques with your colleagues. These meetings have proven very helpful! RSVP to Linda Anstendig, by Monday, October 12; Zoom invitation will follow.

lanstendig@gmail.com

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS FOR TWO IER COMMITTEES

The Board of Directors of the Institute for Education in Retirement (IER), the IRP's fund-raising arm, seeks qualified IRP members to join the Finance and Investment Committees.

The responsibilities of the Finance Committee include:

Develop and maintain the organization's budgeting and financial planning,

Monitor the organization's internal controls,

Prepare and distribute to the board timely, accurate and user-friendly financial reports.

Prepare and file financial documents as necessary.

The responsibilities of the Investment Committee include:

Find and recommend to the board a qualified investment advisor, who will recommend for board approval the best investment strategy for IER's assets.

Monitor the performance of the investment advisor and investments over time.

Work with the advisor to develop policies, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, regarding the IER's Investment objectives, risk tolerance, and reporting.

We are looking for people with investment experience for the Investment Committee and financial, budgeting or accounting experience for the Finance Committee. Nonprofit experience is helpful but not essential.

Please send letter of interest and brief statement of your experience and qualifications to Colette Siegel at treasurer@iernyc.org.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

There will be no IRP study groups on Monday, October 12, Columbus Day, and Wednesday through Friday, November 25-27, for Thanksgiving. The last day of 13-week classes will be Monday, Dec. 21. End dates will vary depending on the day of the week.

NEED TECH HELP?

From IRP: Direct your browser to the IRP tech stuff webpage -- <https://sites.google.com/view/irpte/chstuff> -- for advice on setting up emails and Zoom accounts, among other things. If you want additional help, send an email to tech@iernyc.org. From GC: Send email to engagement@gc.cuny.edu. Accessing GC Email: Direct your browser to <https://wa.gc.cuny.edu/owa>

Live Virtual Helpdesk Available Friday, October 9 10-2PM. To sign-up for a time - follow this [link](#) and select an available time. Click this [Zoom link](#) at your selected time.

OBSERVER SCHEDULE

Please submit your items to Leslie Davis at ldavis1@gc.cuny.edu by the end of the day on Friday for inclusion in Monday's issue. Items submitted after Friday will be saved for the following week.

ONLINE ART SHOW

Marshall Marcovitz: Hands



Marshall Marcovitz was a regular contributor to IRP's art shows. In his memory, we are printing the photograph he submitted for the 2013 art show in the West 12th Street building. He titled it "Hands." We will miss his many contributions.

**Calling All Painters,
Photographers, Block Printers,
Textile Artists, Collagists, and
Sculptors**

Did you spend the lockdown making art? Show us what you did by displaying it in the Observer's Online Art Show. Take a photograph of your work, add a title, and a sentence or two about how you made it -- or why or where.

Send to Carol Millsom
carolmillsom35@gmail.com.

Artwork is published in the

EVENTS

Pour at Four returns on Friday, October 9. Susan is excited to bring the Pour back from vacation. Join her from 4 to 5PM for an end-of-the-week gathering on Fridays in the 24-hour chat room at: <https://sites.google.com/view/irptechstuff> Want to co-host? Contact Susan at srubens@gc.cuny.edu

The Women's Group meets at 3:45PM on Thursdays. Email Arlyne LeSchack at aleschack@gc.cuny.edu.

The Men's Group meets every Wednesday at 3:30PM. Email Jay Fleishman at efleishman@gc.cuny.edu.

MEMBER FORUM

From Carol Borelli: Parli italiano? Perhaps you would like to enjoy an aperitivo and conversation together, once every month on a designated day at aperitivo time? (Parliamo solo in italiano, per favore!) If you are interested, be in touch with your ideas at: cborelli@gc.cuny.edu.

UPCOMING & ONGOING CUNY EVENTS AND RESOURCES

The Reacher Guy: The Authorised Biography of Lee Child by Heather Martin on October 8, 2020 at 7:30PM.

Heather Martin and Lee Child will have a lively discussion about Ms. Martin's book and a Q&A with the audience will follow. This event is by registration only, to register please click [here](#).

The Graduate Center Presents Music from Copland House, October 13, 1:00 – 2:00PM.

"Illuminating essential truths about the music." *The New York Times*. Aaron Copland wrote the homespun Sonata for Violin and Piano during his downtime on the backlot of Hollywood's Samuel Goldwyn Studios, where the composer was working in 1943 on a feature film, *The North Star*.

Despite not wanting to write an overtly virtuosic or folk-influenced composition, Copland managed to include elements of both in a gracious, lyrical piece that dazzled with a homespun, vernacular approachability.

Legendary critic Virgil Thomson called the Violin Sonata one of Copland's "most satisfying pieces [with] a quality of calm elevation and of buoyancy that is ... irresistibly touching."

Pianist and Copland House Artistic & Executive Director Michael Boriskin joins violinist and Graduate Center Doctoral candidate Magdalena Filipczak for an in-depth discussion of the piece, followed by a complete performance, and then a live Q&A with viewers. Music from Copland House Artists: **Michael Boriskin**, pianist. Graduate Center Artist: **Magdalena Filipczak**, violinist

Register [here](#) to attend this free event.

NON-CUNY ONLINE RESOURCES AND EVENTS:

El Museo del Barrio has published numerous [exhibition catalogues and brochures](#) to enjoy from home.

Jazz at Lincoln Cente offering [free weekly online programs](#).

The Jewish Museum has made their [audio tours](#) available online.

MoMA is offering free online [courses and specializations](#).

The Whitney Museum of American Art is offering from artist talks to art history courses, webinars and creative projects for everyone, see what's coming up [here](#). Explore exhibitions online [here](#).

BRIC Rotunda Gallery is offering free Media Education Courses. More information [here](#)

IRP Community Values Phone Survey 2nd round.

Total enrolled IRP members on call list, 301; of that number 239 members were reached and completed the survey. Varying numbers of members answered specific questions.

Question	Number	Percentage
Are you spending time mostly in your primary NYC area residence or have you moved to a second home (asked in late August/early September)?		
<i>NYC area primary residence.</i>	195	76%
<i>Moved to second home</i>	60	24%
Are you getting the Observer regularly through the GC mail?		
Yes	185	76%
No	58	24%
Overall how are you feeling now?		
<i>Fine.</i>	91	35%
<i>Ok</i>	86	33%
<i>Generally Ok</i>	69	26%
<i>Some depression, loneliness, anxiety</i>	13	5%
<i>Much depression etc.</i>	3	1%
Compared to how you felt in April/May, how are you now?		
<i>More isolated</i>	47	20%
<i>About the same</i>	95	40%
<i>Less isolated</i>	93	40%

Did you participate in Zoom summer sessions?

Yes	188	78%
No	53	22%

How are Zoom study groups going?

<i>Very well</i>	18	26%
<i>OK</i>	43	61%
<i>Not well</i>	9	13%

What's one thing the IRP could do to make Zoom better for you?

Keep class size under 30

<i>Very Important.</i>	103	49%
<i>Somewhat Important.</i>	66	31%
<i>Unimportant</i>	43	20%

Use mute all and electronic hand-raising.

<i>Very Important</i>	148	69%
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	51	24%
<i>Unimportant</i>	15	7%

More opportunities for participation.

<i>Very Important</i>	87	42%
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	85	41%
<i>Unimportant</i>	36	17%

More interactive discussion (breakout)

<i>Very Important</i>	73	38%
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	64	33%
<i>Unimportant</i>	56	29%

More slides, videos

<i>Very Important</i>	65	34%
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	84	44%
<i>Unimportant</i>	44	23%

Stretch break

<i>Very Important</i>	39	18%
<i>Somewhat Important</i>	50	24%
<i>Unimportant</i>	123	58%

What's one thing the IRP could do to make Zoom better for you?

Most Frequently Mentioned:

Allow or arrange use of Zoom for IRP social gatherings.

More tech training for coordinators (and users).

More SIGS on Zoom.

More non-study group sessions on Zoom (book groups, special topic groups, political or current events.)

Smaller classes.

In the committee's view IRP members show a remarkable level of adaptability. Although the pandemic's danger for older adults is high, it is apparent that IRP members see this time as a challenge and are "pushing through," "moving on," and "making the best of things." Being isolated from human contact is hard for many, but these same people are coming up with strategies to make their lives better, zooming with friends and family, walking daily, writing, even painting, but mostly looking forward to the future.

First vs. Second Survey Data Comparisons		
Data	First Survey	Second Survey
Number of people called	304	301
Number of people reached	247	239
How are you feeling?		
Fine	125/50%	91/35%
OK	69/28%	86/33%
Generally ok	44/18%	69/26%
Some depression	4/4%	13/5%
Depression	5	3/1%
Isolation		
More isolated	13/17%	47/20%
About the same	61/78%	95/40%
Less isolation	15/18%	92/40%