

A Quarterly Publication of the Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute of Salem State University



*Jeanne Louizos*

## President's Column

Greetings.

I can't believe that the Fall 2016 semester is behind us. It was terrific! Thank you for your enthusiasm and wonderful comments.

You will be receiving the Spring 2017 catalogue at the beginning of January. As you browse through it, take a minute to think about what went into producing it—a lot of hard work by individuals who volunteer their time and effort.

Explorers is a volunteer organization and has only one paid staff member, **Dawn**, our office manager. Our Board of Trustees and committee members are all volunteers. Our class

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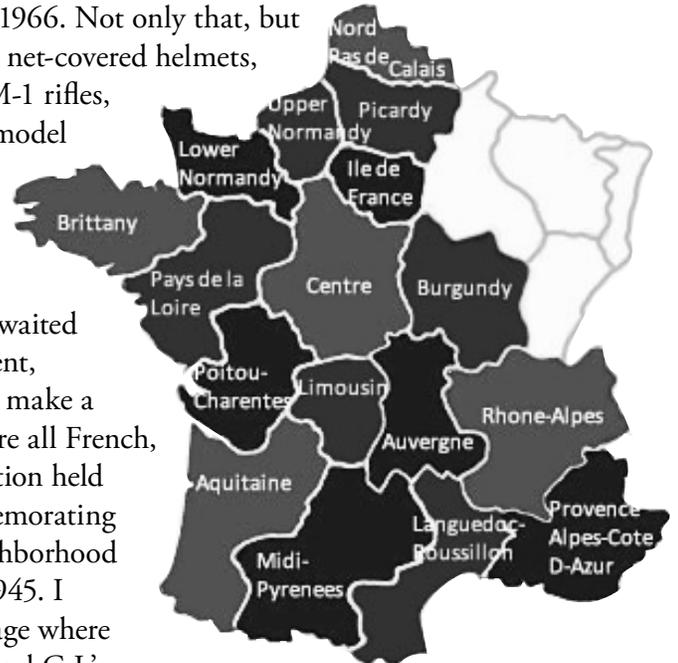
## À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU\*

by **Monty Morris**

Although superhighways radiate out in all directions from Paris, traveling between them is apt to be on two-lane macadam roads, and if you find yourself behind a bicycle road race, as I did, it's best to forget American standards of highway speed and enjoy the scenery. Finally at Etampes the bike racers took a break and allowed traffic to pass.

Sometime later I passed an American military convoy, also driving east. I was slightly surprised to see it but didn't give it much thought. Something peculiar about the appearance of the convoy and the soldiers nagged me, although I couldn't quite put my finger on it. A few miles farther, I spotted a jeep by the side of the road with a couple of G.I.'s having a smoke. Maybe my subconscious curiosity was prodding me, maybe I was nostalgic for my own days as a G.I. in the 50s, maybe I was lonesome for an American voice, maybe I was bored.

For whatever reason, I pulled over, stepped out and said, "Hi. Where ya stationed?" Almost before they replied I was suddenly struck by the realization that there have been no American bases in France since DeGaulle withdrew the country from NATO in 1966. Not only that, but it finally sank in that the net-covered helmets, the khaki leggings, the M-1 rifles, even the particular jeep model hadn't been used by the US Army in 30 or 40 years. Half expecting to hear the theme from "The Twilight Zone," I awaited the G.I.s' reply. "Comment, monsieur?" they said. To make a long story short, they were all French, all part of a local celebration held each year in June commemorating the liberation of the neighborhood by American troops in 1945. I drove on to the next village where even more trucks, jeeps and G.I.'s



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## **President** *(continued)*

leaders are all volunteers, and they are not necessarily members of Explorers. Many of them have been teaching at Explorers for many years. Consider how much time, effort, and dedication they represent.

I'm prompted to write this because **Judy Arnold** is resigning as Membership Chair as of January 1, 2017. Judy has been volunteering for as far back as I can remember. She's always there: ready, willing and able to help with a smile and her trademark, Ola! Thank you, Judy.

Our new Membership Chair will be **Marilyn Cassidy**, a very dedicated person who, like Judy, has been teaching Spanish for a long time. Marilyn, welcome aboard. We look forward to having you serve on the Board.

Fellow Explorers, I wish you all a happy holiday season.

Best, Jeanne

## **À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU** *(continued)*

were gathering. When I pulled over to take a picture, the local gendarme waved me away, but when I said, "Je suis Americain," he broke into a smile and let me snap away.

The equipment and uniforms were completely authentic as far as I could see: two-and-a-half-ton trucks, three-quarter-ton trucks, jeeps, M-1 rifles, M-1 carbines, walkie-talkies, right down to tech sergeant chevrons, service bars and even a fully uniformed WAC. Except that no one spoke English. The only anachronism I spotted were some 50-star flags, but I decided it would be ungracious to mention it. My French is limited, but I congratulated them on their authenticity and continued on my way to Fontainebleu, thankful that my Twilight Zone experience had a logical explanation.

\*A REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

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## **NEW MEMBERS COFFEE**

*By* **Judy Selesnick**

In October, the Board of Trustees and Curriculum Committee hosted the third annual "New Members Coffee." The purpose of this event was to:

- Welcome our incoming "freshman class"
- Introduce them to other members
- Tell them a bit about Explorers classes and events
- Speak and mingle with new members

Answer any and all questions, comments, and concerns.

First, our new members were welcomed by Explorers' President, **Jeanne Louizos**. Then Board members and committee heads were briefly introduced. They explained their roles within the Explorers organization to familiarize new members with the inner workings of Explorers and see if perhaps they may be interested in joining some of the committees. Next, our new members were invited to introduce themselves and share a little of their background: how they became interested in joining Explorers and what they hope to get out of their membership. WOW, what a treat to hear about the talents and backgrounds of our incoming "freshman class"—medicine, law, education, nonprofit agency work, and many other occupations.

The thirty attendees enjoyed bagels, muffins, coffee, and juice. This successful event was coordinated by members **Judy Selesnick** and **Frank Hawke**.

So Explorers, please look for our new members (they have a colored dot on their name tags), introduce yourself, and make them feel welcome.



## PROFILE...

# STEPHEN SPANO MAKES EDUCATION PERSONAL

By Don Tritschler

Stephen Spano's course is personal. Its title, "What you Need to Do Now to Be Safe and Prosper," speaks directly to us as seniors who want to make the best of our final years and our legacy. His law office focuses on estate planning and laws that protect elders.

Spano has convincing credentials. He is Board Certified as an Elder Law Attorney by the National Elder Law Foundation and is an adjunct professor in the post-doctoral Estate Planning and the Elder Law LL.M. Program at Western New England University School of Law. He regularly attends conferences to train others in his specialty.

He made our class personal not only by inviting questions about our concerns, but he brought many personal experiences as examples from his practice. Spano does this especially well because his mind works so quickly—everything seems ready to him for recall. Of course he doesn't divulge confidences, but he describes what he knows vividly. His mind is active, precise, and he has an amazing memory for cases, even the numbers of the paragraphs in law that apply to those cases.

Sometimes that active mind wanders off the subject of the day. On a day we were to learn about writing wills and establishing trusts to protect our estates, he related



*Stephen Spano*

fascinating descriptions of mistakes lawyers can make. Yet there it was, up on our PowerPoint screen—the topics covering wills and trusts. Instead, Spano described errors made “on behalf” of clients who had come to him after discovering their own lawyers' mistakes. He described the difficulties of correcting such errors and of having to tell some of those people that they wouldn't be able to win a malpractice suit.

Those cases were fascinating, and oh yes, he did finally dig into the subject of the day. He used cogent examples to show us how wills need to be protected since they are exposed to unexpected claims when they go to Probate Court. He spoke of the protection of one's legacy by a revocable trust.

As a raconteur, Spano also sees himself clearly. When we found ourselves laughing at one of his stories, it was sometimes about himself. All nine professionals in his law firm are women. He spoke specifically about each of them and what each brings to the firm. One indication of their value to him is his practice of sending them, at the firm's expense, to conferences to enhance their knowledge (and give them some time off from the office routine). He identified the one who has just become a partner and will lead the firm when he and his wife Francine Dawicki, his professional partner, retire. As the only man on staff, he says he works well with these women because of the feminine side in his character.

Another side to Stephen Spano is his fascination with the internet and the devices that access it. He has given our class many internet sites to visit for information about the topics he covers. To interact with Stephen Spano is an education, and it's fun.



# ROAD WARRIORS' TWO-WHEELED TUSCAN ADVENTURE

By Mike Evers

On a warm day last September, I pulled up to the edge of the rental parking lot, released the brakes, and moved cautiously into traffic. I was ready to descend into the maelstrom commonly known as the Italian roads. In Italy. On a motor scooter.

My friend Harriet and I had made all the ordinary tourist stops on our two week tour to Florence and Tuscany. We went to the Uffizi, walked the Ponte Vecchio, sampled the winery products. More than that, we used our guidebooks and maps to find our ways through the streets of Volterra, Siena, Pisa, Lucca and San Gimignano, the town where we stayed after Florence. Among the places we visited were the Museo Ebraica in Florence, a nineteenth-century domed temple whose hushed interior provided a relief from the noise of the overrun tourist sites; the Palazzo Viti, a plush art-filled nineteenth-century mansion of a family made rich by Volterra's alabaster industry; an exquisite concert of religious songs by classical composers in an out-of-the-way church in San Gimignano; and the bridge over the River Arno in Pisa, where we escaped the clicking cell phones homed in on the Leaning Tower.

Visits like these involved planning and, we learned, cultivating an intimate relationship with our GPS lady. Her soothing voice helped us navigate the narrow winding roads and hairpin turns of the steep Tuscan hills and the crowded medieval streets of the local towns. But with twenty years of experience as a U.S. licensed motorcycle rider, I yearned for more: to ride a motorized two wheeler on these roads.

Not just any two-wheeler, but the scooter, *the Vespa*, the signifier of Italianic   for

all those Americans and their children who remember, or think they remember, how Gregory Peck chauffeured Audrey Hepburn in the 1953 movie, "Roman Holiday."

Still, sometimes you have to scratch the legacy itch, and so the day Harriet was taking a cooking class I went to a rental agency in San Gimignano near where we were staying and reserved a Vespa for the next day. My choice was not the one ridden by Gregory Peck, but the more contemporary Vespa GTS 300, with a considerably larger engine, anti-lock brakes and bigger wheels.

The night before my jaunt I stewed over whether my seventy-two-year-old self and my diminutive icon could manage the high hills and sharp curves that made Tuscany famous. Then I worried that my ignorance of the roads and my handful of Italian words would get me lost in a place where fewer people knew English. The rental agency had mapped out a suggested tour of the

nearby Chianti region, a 95 kilometer circle composed of several different roads through six small towns. However, the photocopied map didn't show the town streets I would be riding or where the roads connected.

I showed Harriet the map and we agreed that she would drive our GPS-equipped car and I would follow. We would decide when to head back after lunch at Castellina, the second town on the route.

I arrived at the rental agency the next day at 9 am and met the manager, who I will call Tommaso, a young man with a fashionably clipped sided haircut and a sober disposition. Another man somewhere between 80 and 90 hovered nearby with his head of bushy white hair and a suit that looked like it



*Designed to be a bell tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa stood upright for over five years. But just after the completion of the third floor in 1178, it started to lean.*

had seen every funeral in town for the past twenty years. We would encounter this gentleman again later that day.

Tommaso brought out a white GTS 300 and perched it on its center stand. I took a few minutes to admire it. Despite the few dings and other signs of normal wear and tear, it was a gorgeous piece of work. Tommaso showed me how to turn on the scooter and pointed out the levers attached to the handlebars which controlled the brakes. I signed the paperwork, put on my helmet, released the center stand, and sat on the seat. Turning the key, I heard the purring engine, quiet, clean and smooth, and it propelled me forward.

I followed Harriet rounding a rotary past the city limits of San Gimignano. The road took us to our first stop, Colle di Val d'Elsa. When the ascending and descending hills and sharp curves began, one after another, I was pleasantly surprised at how skillfully the Vespa took them. Passing tilled fields, olive groves and replanted forests, rarely exceeding 90 kilometers (about 55 miles per hour), I felt seated on a friendly roller coaster. My uneasiness withered and my confidence grew with every turn I made.

The prospect of an easy ride vanished, though, at the edge of Colle di Val d'Elsa, the first town on the map. I found myself on streets that converged onto a crowded one-way rotary occupied by circling cars, buses, bicycles and other motor scooters. I had to anticipate the moves of my fellow riders and drivers while following Harriet with our devoted GPS. I lost them twice, but found them again when a car between us turned in a different direction. A truck then slipped in, blocking my view once more. When it turned, Harriet was nowhere to be seen.



*Tourists at the Piazza del Duomo in Florence*

Continuing on the same road, I looked for a spot to stop, one with visual cues that I could describe when I called Harriet. The road led out of town and after wisely avoiding a rotary exit that fed onto a four-lane highway, I picked another that brought me to the town of Poggibonsi. Getting off Vespa, I pulled out my phone and turned on the roaming button.

After a couple of tries, I heard a very relieved-sounding female voice answer. I told Harriet where I was and how I got there, and she told me that she had turned into a parking lot in Val d'Elsa to wait for me, apparently when I was behind the truck.

The call was interrupted when a stocky middle-aged man dressed in denim pulled up beside me in a Vespa that was exactly like mine but with fewer scratches and dents. Taking off his half-helmet he revealed a head of grey hair and a two-day-old beard. On his chest (appropriately) over his heart was a patch for the Italian Vespa Riders Club. I'll call him Alessandro. This very xy chromosome Good Samaritan spoke only Italian, perfectly complementing my English-only parlance. My feeble attempt to illuminate my situation didn't help, so I asked him how to open the seat to find the gas tank fill spout, something I had forgotten in my anxiety. Alessandro pressed a button; the seat opened, I looked at the gas tank—and couldn't get the seat to lock back down.

As if by magic, Harriet suddenly appeared; somehow she found me. I introduced her and the three of us crowded around my scooter as the man pulled out his tool kit. The latch that hooked the seat to the frame was stuck

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## **ROAD WARRIORS** *(continued)*

but no tool could dislodge it. Alessandro wanted me to follow him to a place in town where this procedure would occur. I relayed this to Harriet and told her to wait until I got a decent address.

Tailing him was easy, since he had the only other white Vespa on the street, but as we moved closer to the central district the road narrowed and a swarm of vehicles suddenly clustered from all sides, jarring the air with their cacophony. After an eternity of quick stops and surging starts, we reached a motorcycle parts store in the town center. We parked in front and the manager came out and sprayed the latch, and I snapped the seat to the Vespa body with a satisfying click.

The next problem was reconnecting with Harriet, but Alessandro wanted to lead me back to the rental place.

Somehow it never registered that she and I were associated and my attempts to explain using dimly remembered Spanish words didn't help. I thanked him and he waved goodbye, shaking his head and flashing a brief smile as he headed off into the traffic. I was sad to see Alessandro go; he had offered me his help and I had little to offer him in return. I called Harriet and to my relief, she appeared minutes later. We ate a long-delayed lunch, after which we went back to San Gimignano and I returned the Vespa.

We were both tired, but that night we celebrated with wine and wild boar and duck on pasta at a popular restaurant in San Gimignano. We had embarked on an immersive journey and completed it, despite some disquieting detours. Yet we emerged with mind and body intact. We decided to call it an adventure.

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# ROAD SCHOLAR<sup>®</sup>

## **HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR ROAD SCHOLAR SURVEY?**

This fall, the Road Scholar LLI Resource Network is conducting its second biannual survey of LLI rank-and-file members. The 2014 survey of more than 6,000 members at 43 LLIs resulted in a national profile of active LLI members. The RS Network has now asked LLI leadership to forward the 2016 survey to Explorers members so it can create an individual membership portrait for each participating LLI. RS also wants to use

all of the responses to create a composite portrait of older Americans who actively participate in the LLI movement.

You should have received the survey in November. You are asked to respond no later than December 10th. If you've already done so, many thanks! Preliminary results will be sent to Explorers in February, and the final report will be completed in April.



## PROFILE...

# MARY ROSSBOROUGH

By Jane Casler

### *What brought you to Explorers?*

I need community. I have never lived close to family in my adult years. Being an Explorers member for 10 years and my commitment to social change continue to keep me energized.

### *Why did you become an Explorers course leader?*

My interests have inclined me to be active in several organizations such as “United for a Fair Economy.” I’ve also been actively involved in my denomination’s social justice efforts. In 2002 when I became a member of Explorers, I realized I could develop courses around important issues that impact so many people.

### *What courses did you teach?*

I taught a variety of courses over fourteen years, from 2002 to 2015. From year to year, I updated each presentation. Among the courses I led were:

- Globalization and Its Effects
- Developing Sustainable Communities
- Alternatives to Capitalism:  
Where Do We Go From Here?

I used videos in each session and also provided handouts to reinforce learning and understanding of the issues. Amusingly, my first offering included the movie, “New Rulers of the World.” After the showing a man came up to me and asked, “Who made that film?” And “Who let him make it?” The film was made by the well-known British investigative reporter, John Pilger.

### *Has your Explorers work been rewarding?*

Yes. I think I’ve opened minds to issues people might not have thought about and furnished information of use in understanding today’s world.



*Mary Rossborough*

### *Where did your strong commitment to social justice come from?*

I was a teacher, and I’ve worked in social services. But also I know firsthand what it feels like to be an “outsider.” I was born in Portland, Oregon. When I was six years old my father, a certified public accountant, decided to join the newly formed FBI. Hoover thought nothing of transferring agents around the country without any consideration for the families. I attended three different schools in first grade: in Portland, St. Louis, then Freeport, Long Island. When I was in third grade, we moved again, first to Denver and then back to Portland where I attended two different schools between second and fourth grades. Just as I was finishing eighth grade, World War II had begun and my father decided we should move to a farm and raise our own food. Suddenly, I was a farm girl. I rode the bus from our family farm to Oregon City High School. Once again I was “the new kid on the block.” Later, I rode the bus every day to Reed College. What did I learn from this part of my life? I learned what it felt like to be an outsider. But I also found that it allowed me to be an observer of what was going on with people in different places, under different living conditions, and in different parts of the country. That brings empathy and respect for diversity.

# FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT FOR LINDA WELTNER'S SHADOW GOVERNMENT COURSE

By Jane Casler

If you've ever taken a course led by Linda Weltner, and zillions of us have, you know it's not for the faint of heart. In fact, Linda will be the first to warn you...

"If you believe you vote for elected officials, you shouldn't be in this class. If you believe in government of, by and for the people, you shouldn't be in this class. What you're going to hear will not be inspiring, reassuring or uplifting."

As she welcomed us to her jam-packed class, that was Linda Weltner's introduction to Shadow Government this fall. What followed was a rollicking journey "across the River Styx into the underbelly of our esteemed democracy."

## Topics for Discussion

- Our "Elected" Government
- Is it a democracy? What is it hiding?
- The Donor Elite/Think Tanks and Foundations
- How much does their money buy?
- Multi-national Corporations
- Do they run the world?
- Media / Public Relations Firms
- Can they convince you of everything?
- The Military
- How effective is sheer power?
- Our Intelligence State
- Do they serve or rule?

### WHAT IF I TOLD YOU

THAT THE VERSION OF HISTORY YOU WERE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL WAS HEAVILY REVISED TO FAVOR YOUR OWN NATIONS AGENDA WHILE HIDING ITS CRIMES. AND IN DOING SO FOSTERED AN UNREALISTIC SENSE OF FALSE PATRIOTISM USED TO MANUFACTURE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO A CORPORATE ENTITY MASQUERADING AS YOUR GOVERNMENT?

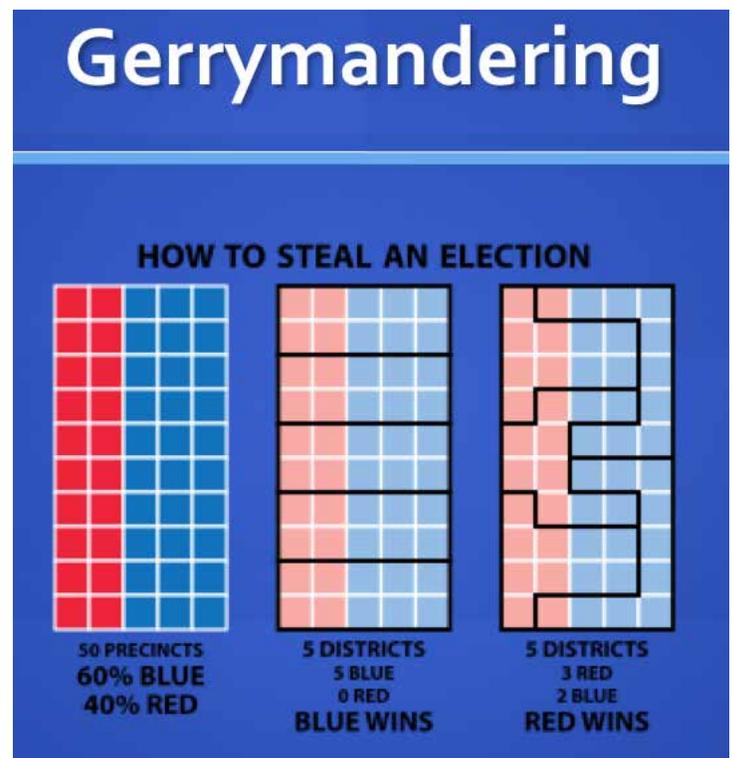
## Our Shadow Government

Who really rules?  
With LINDA WELTNER



First we looked at how the President is chosen and President Obama's debt to the ultra-wealthy "Gold Coast" that financed his campaign. Barack Obama was a man of the people. He espoused higher taxes for the rich and criticized trade deals like NAFTA. Yet his administration was replete with the Wall Street types who had "caused the problems in the first place."

We looked at Citizens United, the demise of Glass-Steagall, the Super Delegate conundrum, primary and caucus complexities, gerrymandering, the military-industrial complex, the Koch brothers, and the 2016 Presidential debates. Throughout the course we focused on the people, the think tanks, the corporations, the PACs, and the dark money that underpin America's "shadow government."



## Report of the Electoral Integrity Project

The 2015 Year in Election gathers assessments from over 2,000 experts to evaluate the perceived integrity of 180 national parliamentary and presidential contests held in 139 countries worldwide.

Domestic and international experts rate the U.S. elections as the **worst** among all Western democracies, coming in last of 23 countries.

Congressional elections are ranked 65<sup>th</sup>.

## US Voting Integrity is lower than:

Norway, Germany, Netherlands,  
Iceland, Czech Republic, South  
Korea, Austria, Slovenia, Israel,  
Cyprus, Lithuania, Australia, Rwanda,  
Japan, Chile, Italy, Grenada, Malta,  
Argentina, Georgia, Mongolia and  
Micronesia.

Linda demonstrated how the path to total dictatorship in the U.S. can be reached strictly through legal means. This is accomplished by a shadow government composed of the wealthy, multinational companies, the military-industrial complex, think tanks, and lobbyists. The tools of their trade are big money, political intimidation, and deep-secret maneuvers. They use these tactics to create laws and policies that favor the one percent. While the shadow government clearly buys politicians, its inner workings are often unseen and unheard by Congress, the President, and the American people.

Despite the weighty topic, Linda managed to inject humor and even a bit of theatre into each class. Donning a wig and costume, she transformed herself into Jane Mayer. Mayer wrote the book, "Dark Money." As Jane, Linda proceeded to discuss (aka expose) the Koch brothers and proudly declared that her (Jane's) book "made them a household name." (Not in a positive sense!) We also watched videos, such as The Matrix and The Koch Brothers Exposed, to better understand the insidious workings of shadow government.

Not surprisingly, the classes were rife with debate over the good, the bad, and the ugly aspects of American government. Are we a democracy or a plutocracy? Are we the leader of the free world or an imperialist superpower intent on global domination?

Whatever your political leaning, when you take a course with Linda Weltner, be sure to fasten your seatbelt.

# TEACHING AN EXPLORERS COURSE

By Linda Weltner

Are you considering teaching a course at Explorers, but hesitant? It's not as difficult as you'd think. Here are some guidelines.

1. You can determine how long your course is. You can choose to deliver one class at intersession in February, or four, or six or more during the semester. It's totally up to you.
2. The choice of topic is completely open. Every semester is different from the previous one because each teacher can follow his or her interests, wherever they lead. Whatever topic you choose, there's sure to be someone interested.
3. You can limit class size. More comfortable in a small group? You can indicate how large a class you want.
4. Homework or readings for class are optional. Except for preparation, there is no expectation that you will assign and correct essays or tests, and grading is unheard of.
5. Each class runs for two hours, with a 15-minute break at the end of the first hour. It isn't necessary to be on stage all that time. Classrooms have screens for DVDs and computers for PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos. You can also allow as much or as little time for discussion as you like.
6. You don't have to be technologically competent. Explorers will assign you media support, someone who will attend your class and take charge of the computer-related elements of your presentation.
7. You don't need to be an expert or a former teacher, nor do you need to teach only what you know. There are months between the semesters, plenty of time to master any subject, given that the internet and libraries place almost all the knowledge in the world at your fingertips.
8. If doing this alone is too daunting, you can choose to teach with another person, alternating classes or sharing leadership. Do you know someone it would be fun to spend time with? See if they might want to "team-teach" with you.
9. Preparation is crucial, however. Think through how you plan to introduce your subject, what questions you will ask to stimulate discussion; prepare handouts in advance; screen the video(s) you want to show. Have an idea of just what you want students to take away from each class. Classes that lose students as the course progresses often have teachers who think off-the-cuff monologues will magically hold people's attention, or they go off on irrelevant tangents, or they do not back up their opinions with factual information.
10. Explorers students are the best. They come to your class because they are curious about the subject, open to new information, enthusiastic about learning, and willing to give teachers a chance. They want the teacher to succeed and will meet you halfway there.



Good luck.

# THINKING ABOUT END-OF-YEAR TAX PLANNING?

Please consider making a charitable donation to the Explorers LLI. Explorers LLI is a designated 501(c)3 organization. If you are planning to make a donation to Explorers LLI to commemorate a milestone, as a memorial to a departed relative or friend or just because it is such a great place, your donation will be tax deductible.

Also, your current or former employer may have a "Matching Gift" program that could double or even triple your donation.

Please check your employer's website to see if they have a charitable giving or matching gift program. There may be some basic requirements, such as a minimum donation amount but most programs are very straightforward.

If Explorers is not already registered with your employer's charitable giving program, you may have to request to have us added. Here are some details most companies are likely to expect:

EXPLORERS LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE OF SSC, INC.

10 FEDERAL ST STE 10

SALEM, MA 01970-3875

Telephone Number: 978-744-0804

E-mail Address: [explorers@verizon.net](mailto:explorers@verizon.net)

Website Address: <http://www.explorerslli.org>

U.S. Tax ID/EIN: 753112187

Thanks in advance for considering making a tax-deductible donation to Explorers this holiday season!

## REMEMBER:

### Remembrance Fund Contributions

When you donate, relevant individuals (spouses, etc.) are promptly informed of your thoughtfulness. Donations may also be made at the Explorers office.

Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check payable to Explorers LLI to:

Explorers LLI  
10 Federal Street  
Salem, MA 01970

## Explorers LLI

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