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Updates from the committees, and new details from the Renaissance clubs.



Sandy Adams is the Renaissance Institute Program Coordinator. She assists RI members, the Council, and the RI Director in countless ways.



RI "house band" Tomato Junction was joined by Kathy Stone at the Sept 7 Welcome Back celebration.

Hello, RI friends,

Classes have begun, and the RI membership has commenced classes on campus and on Zoom. By all accounts, attendance has been excellent. The clubs and committees are active and seeking new members, and the RI Council is meeting regularly. The week before classes began there was an orientation for new members which was a great success, as was the welcome back party. Many of us are taking classes in person and on Zoom, the best of both worlds. We welcome our new friends and our old classmates with pleasure & gratitude.



FALL SEMESTER HAS BEGUN

Observations on Day One from the Roving Reporter



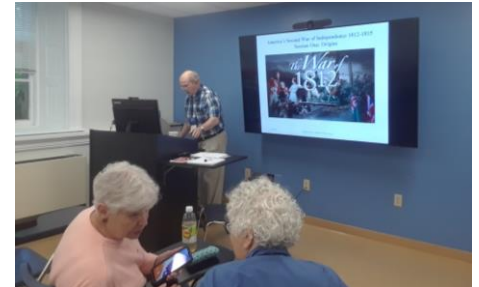
The Roving Reporter, as usual, signed up for a combination of Zoom and on-campus classes. After a very stimulating TED talks class, presented via Zoom by Nancy St. Pierre, RR proceeded to campus and had time for a quick tour of the Feeley International Center in Meletia Hall, where so many of the RI on-campus classes are held.

First thing the RR noticed was that the hallways were well populated with a pleasing mix of RI members –as usual, members were clustered around the refreshment table, enjoying coffee, tea, and a variety of treats; but also, there was much hubbub in the Renaissance offices, where members were inquiring about class locations, badges, parking, room assignments, etc.; Sandy Adams, Course Coordinator, and Beth Volk from the RI Council were getting all such matters sorted out.



The RR heard murmured voices coming from all directions and so proceeded down a couple of hallways to see if the classrooms were filling up, and indeed they were! First course the RR popped in on was **“International Issues and Events,”** where a lively mix of RI members was getting settled as Tim Casey prepared to present the first class.

Nearby, another class was also filling up, as John Danz was getting ready to present a PowerPoint on **“Our Second War of Independence: The War of 1812.”** The large screen in front of the class displayed the first slide of the presentation, and the Roving Reporter longed to stay, but there were a few more spots the RR needed to investigate, including the new Renaissance library – books from the old library in Fourier are being moved to FIC 018 and when the move is complete the library will be a cozy welcoming accessible place for browsing—and shopping too!



The Roving Reporter’s final destination was the Renaissance Room (the big room) where the **Renaissance Singers** were preparing for their first fall rehearsal. Director Nancy Heinold was pleased to welcome a large influx of new members. The first day of school surpassed all expectations.



“Join me now, as I take a tour through a century of women’s everyday shoes.”



“When I was a child in the 40’s, the women in my family, who worked long hours on their feet, favored sturdy, durable footwear.”



IT’S SHOE TIME By Joyce Dennison

A new school year has begun, and for some of us, it’s time for new shoes. Join me now, as I take a tour through a century of women’s everyday shoes.

During and after World War One, women’s shoes were often slip-on boots with elastic sides and pull tabs for easy wear. This was in deference to the large number of women who had entered the work force during the war and had no time for the elaborate fashions of the Edwardian era, when complicated laces, buttons and embroidered panels were the norm. Also popular for working women were Oxford shoes in plain sensible colors, with laces and low-to-moderate heels.



When I was a child in the 40’s, the women in my family, who worked long hours on their feet, favored such sturdy, durable footwear. Of course, fancier shoes, such as t-straps and Mary- Janes, with a single strap, were often worn to dressy events, but for everyday use, the oxfords were the rule. Tennis shoes, which at that time were called sneakers and were made of canvas, also attracted a following.



In the 50’s, my friends and I preferred saddle shoes, which were either black-and-white or brown-and-white. It was important for the heel and toe sections to gleam like newly fallen snow, and the dark “saddle” section had to be polished to a high sheen. Sad to say, school work and chores often took a back seat to the all-important adornment of our feet.

It’s probably just as well that the saddle shoe eventually yielded to the loafer. At first, these low-slung slip-on shoes were promoted as “penny loafers.” You were supposed to insert a bright copper penny into a slot in the top of the shoe, regardless of the shoe color, which might have been brown, black, oxblood, or even white. There were occasionally variations in coinage, as innovative teens would sometimes insert nickels, dimes, or wrap the coins in sparkling aluminum gum wrappers. Pennies, however, remained the standard.



Later on, as the 50’s yielded to the 60’s, new fashions came along, especially the brushed-suede shoe, such as the hush puppy, or “white bucks,” a velvety suede variation. (There were also the famous blue-suede shoes, but these were off-limits as far as I was concerned, since the only person who owned them, or cared about them, was Elvis.)



Common shades of suede shoes were brown or beige. They required no polishing, of course, but they needed just as much maintenance as saddle shoes and oxfords: now you had to own a “shoe buffer,” and use it regularly, dusting scuff marks and dirt to keep that suede pristine.



One additional consequence of the emergence of hush puppies and crepe soles was an ominous one. Teachers and librarians started wearing them in order to sneak up on students more slyly. We would have preferred that they stick to the lace-up oxfords with the clunky square heels, which at least gave us fair warning.

By the time the 60’s and 70’s arrived, sneakers had become “tennis shoes,” and they quickly surpassed all other shoes in popularity. Very little maintenance is required for these shoes, they’re comfortable, and they come in an infinity of styles. In the early 70’s, there were many do’s and don’ts’ in tennis shoe fashion; there are surely similar trends today, although I cannot discuss them, since it’s been at least 50 years since I paid proper attention to shoe fads. I do recall that in 1970’s Baltimore, you had to wear Jack Purcells or Converse brands. To wear any other variety of “tennis,” you would be regarded as corny at best, or worse, an irredeemable nerd, and your shoes would be branded as “fishheads.”

If you weary of the ubiquitous tennis shoe, there is now also the choice of “crocs.” These shoes, developed originally for boating, have become a worldwide twenty-first century phenomenon, as they are comfy, colorful, durable, and seemingly indestructible. This last benefit might be a fault, as they are neither recyclable nor biodegradable. It might be best to go back to the old canvas sneakers, circa 1930, if you really want your footwear to be environmentally friendly.



Leather footwear can biodegrade, depending on how it’s manufactured; and I must admit, the shoe that has always maintained high status in my eight decades of life is the simple “ballet flat,” also known as a ballerina slipper, a plain handsome slip-on shoe that works nicely for nearly all everyday occasions, excluding sports.

Now that I’m a seasoned lady myself, I also feel nostalgia for the clunky oxford tie-ups that provided such a solid foundation for my grandmother and my teachers. These women are my heroes and I stand on their shoulders. In my stocking feet.



“In 1970’s Baltimore, you had to wear Jack Purcells or Converse brands. To wear any other variety you would be regarded as... an irredeemable nerd, and your shoes would be branded as “fishheads.””



COMMITTEE UPDATES & ADVICE TO MEMBERS

Two Requests for Renaissance Members:

1) We have many new members this year, as well as members who are returning to campus after a long hiatus during the Covid crises. With that in mind we ask all members attending classes in person to wear their name badges so we can easily get to acquainted, (or reacquainted) with one another.

2) As the fall season has started, cold and flu season has also begun. As a reminder please, be cognizant of the personal responsibility we have to each other not to come to class if we are ill or believe we could be getting ill/sick. Also as a reminder, masks are not required at this time, but members wishing to wear masks should feel comfortable doing so.



Membership Committee: The RI Membership Committee has been busy over the summer break working with the Council to increase membership for the Fall semester. Orientation for 33 New and Returning Members was held on Monday, August 28th on Zoom. They were very enthusiastic about attending Renaissance this Fall. New member information packets were sent prior to Orientation and paper copies may be picked up at the RI Offices upon request.

We want to continue with providing each new member a mentor to help transition into Renaissance so if you are interested in helping, we would appreciate your support, please send us an email. New members will be provided name tags with special notations so if you see them on campus, please give them a warm RI "welcome." - *Joe Lapicki and Vickie Lapicki*

jlapicki@aol.com

Curriculum Committee: As the fall semester begins, the Curriculum Committee is jumping right in planning for spring 2024. We are seeking proposals for courses, so if you have a subject to share from your previous career, or one that has piqued your interest, think about creating a course. Put together some lecture topics, possible discussion subjects, or gather some other members to create a mixed subject potpourri course or one with a theme. If a subject interests you, but you are not ready to teach, send the topic to us and let us help you flesh out your ideas. If you would like a teaching mentor, let us know. We welcome course and instructor suggestions from all and are eager to help you create a course. - *Terry Weisser & Kathleen Bennett* terryweisser@gmail.com



Librarian's Corner: The RI Library is open for business in its new location! (For our new members, the "library" is actually a bookstore with all books for sale). It is in FIC Room 018, just down the hall from the RI office. Come in whenever school is in session, browse and buy.



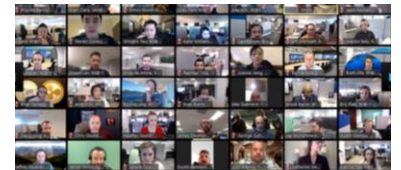
We have fiction, mysteries, all kinds of non-fiction, poetry and even some reference books. **All books are still only 50 cents** - just put the money in the green coffee can. Happy browsing! - Judy Floam jmfloam@gmail.com



Social Committee: We began the fall semester with our annual picnic, this year held in Fourier Hall. Many thanks to Tomato Junction's music for the event and desserts by Renaissance members.

We continue to ask for the donation of large crock pots in preparation for our "Bread and Soup" luncheon this fall. We are happy to have located new members for the committee and if you have been thinking of joining us you will be most welcome. I am seeking a co-chair, too. Just contact me at my email address below. Our first meeting will be at 10 o'clock on Monday, September 25th, 2023 via Zoom.

We want to include our large Zoom membership in our group activities. If you are comfortable working with Zoom and enjoy the social life afforded by it, you will be most welcome to round out our outreach to all members. You can be living anywhere in the country and I will be delighted to make your acquaintance and work with you on new social projects. Looking forward to seeing all of you at the next RI event!!! - Beverly Fransen - fransenbeverly1@gmail.com



Communications Committee: Our mission is to provide information to membership on a regular basis in an, accurate, engaging way. We create Weekly Announcements and a Monthly RI Newsletter, and we assist in keeping the bulletin board up to date. We are looking for new members who might be interested in writing an occasional article or interviewing an interesting member or instructor. For more information feel free to contact us. - Amanda Joyce amanda.joyce7131@gmail.com



Outreach Task Force: Council members Denis Smith and Laurie Rosenberg set up shop at Lifebridge Health Club in Pikesville in both July and August. They handed out schedules and reflections and had a great turnout and captive audience. Over 30 people signed up to receive more information. - Laurie Rosenberg loreleirex@gmail.com



WHAT ARE THE CLUBS DOING?

MUSICAL EVENTS AT THE RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE, FALL 2023:

The following events will take Place in FIC 003 (the Big Room), on Wednesdays at 12:00 Noon.

September 27: SONG CIRCLE. R. I. Members and guests join in singing and dancing along with some well-known pop and folk songs from the 60's and the 70's.

October 11: BLUEGRASS CONCERT by "High Strung Revisited." Special guest Denis Smith will join in on the Hammered Dulcimer.

October 25: UKE JAM AND SINGALONG. All Uke players at any skill level are welcome and we need singers also to join in.

November 8: BLUEGRASS CONCERT by the "Renaissance Pickers." Two R. I. Members are in this band.

November 29: CONCERT by "Tomato Junction." This is the Renaissance Institute House Band featuring several R. I. Members



Additional item:

December 8 (tentative date): The Renaissance Singers are preparing some great songs for our **HOLIDAY CONCERT.** Pencil it in on your calendar! – *John Meredith*

johnmeredith1439@gmail.com



Getting to Know You Club: Our first meeting was held Sept 11. We want to thank Becky Kennedy for hosting the club for the past two years. Our next meeting will be Monday Sept 25th at 2:00pm. Our new meeting place is the home of Barbara Rooney, conveniently located very near Notre Dame at 323 Homeland, Southway Apt 1-B. We invite any new members who wish to join us and inform you that there are 7 steps and a railing for those concerned about accessibility. If you want a good conversation, join us.

Betty Loafmann 4eastinn@gmail.com

Mystery Club: Welcome, RI Members who enjoy reading mysteries. Please join us for thoughtful discussions. Our next selections are:



- Friday, **September 29, 2023, 11:30 AM, *Not A Happy Family*** by Shari Lapena
- Friday, **October 27, 2023, 11:30 AM, *Rules of Prey*** by John Sanford
- Friday **December 1, 2023, 11:30 AM, *The Searcher*** by Tana French We are meeting on this date instead of the end of November or the end of December.
- Friday, **January 26, 2024, 11:30 AM *Big Sky*** by Kate Atkinson

We will meet at the Cross Keys Clubhouse in September, October, and December. All of the above books have at least one copy available at the Baltimore County Library.

As always, we welcome all RI members to join our discussions. Please contact me if you have any questions. Nikki Cole [410-382-6489](tel:410-382-6489) colendleb@aol.com

A Few More Pictures from Fall Semester Week One

A Sampling of Thursday Courses: History of Department Stores & Thursday Film class

