

SOAR April 2021 Newsletter

Laurell Brault is retiring from the Board of Directors. She served on Registration, Membership and Presenter Communications committees before joining the Executive Committee as Secretary to the BOD. In that capacity, she led the BOD into the 21st century by introducing collaborative communication technology (Google Docs) and surveys as tools for gathering and disseminating SOAR information. These have been especially helpful during the time that the BOD has been unable to meet in person. Chair Lyn Swafford expresses gratitude for Laurell's steady, professional advice during difficult times; she shares a quote from Lyndsay Faye's *The Paragon Hotel* in describing Laurell: "She's top drawer in a very tall bureau!" Thank you for your time and contributions to SOAR and its Board of Directors. Fair winds and following seas!

Ruth Horst is also retiring from her responsibilities as Chair of Presenter Communications. For many years, she has been a stalwart in the SOAR office as she prepared and processed letters to the many SOAR presenters to orient and support their classes. Thank you, Ruth, for your dedication through many years.

SOAR is celebrating the completion of its 20th year in a subdued fashion. The BOD continues to meet virtually to try to anticipate the future and to implement plans. We have now completed our second entirely virtual semester. The Fall 2021 Semester (9/13-11/12) will also be virtual, but we are hoping to "reopen" gradually after that. We do not expect that the colleges will allow visiting groups (including SOAR) to use campus facilities until after they have succeeded in reopening for registered students, so we are investigating some other sites.

We are hoping to offer a mixed schedule of live and virtual courses in Spring 2022. Reopening involves more than scheduling courses. We must consider how and when to reopen the SOAR office. We have had reduced expenditures during the COVID period of virtual activity, but as we reopen, we will need to ask members to renew their financial support for SOAR's activities. We will also need to attract new members. The BOD will keep you informed of plans through the Newsletter.

The Spring Banquet is the usual venue for conducting elections. We are again unable to enjoy that celebratory social occasion (and business meeting). We will hold the election in May by electronic balloting (thank you again, Laurell).

Here is the slate: *Officer nominees:* Chair - Lyn Swafford; Vice-Chair - Janet van Weringh; Secretary - Bill Mein; Treasurer - Phil Shatraw *Directors:* Jim Barry, Juanita Babcock, Mark Coleman, Mark Davis, Anne Hopkins, David Mathie, Carol McRobbie, Carol Rossi-Fries, Ed Russell, Jerry Sharp, and Byron Whitney.

The scheduling committee is working as you read this to distribute classes through the ten weeks of the Fall 2021 Semester. Here is the penultimate list of titles:

- Slavery, Race, and Culture
- Writers Read
- Thinking and Talking about the Arts
- Airborne Disease Transmission: What Do We Know and Not Know?

- New Hope for Solving Problems of Human Behavior
- Pandemic Economics: What Just Happened?
- The Hard Truths of Anti-Black Racism in America
- Legacy and Emerging Contaminant Concentrations in Great Lakes Fish: Pushing the Science
- Slavery and Freedom in the Americas
- Activism through Poetry: Critical Spanish Poems
- Mathematical Art and Artistic Mathematics
- The World of American Muslims
- Primate Cultures
- Selected Topics from Food Chemistry
- The Determinants of Health
- Ayurveda - The Ancient Knowledge of Health
- Medieval Medicine
- Recent Medical Research in Biophysics
- Insect Behavior
- Tour of SUNY Potsdam's Mary English Commons Historical Exhibit
- The Global Ecovillage Movement: Living Laboratories of Sustainability
- Exploring Environmental Change through Mathematical Modeling
- Viruses and Viral Pandemics through the Age