

# ILR TODAY

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## President's Message

By Doug Imhoff, President



We are just finishing our ILR Winter 2025 classes. Once again, many experienced and talented presenters taught our classes, and we hope our members enjoyed the learning experience. **Our six-week spring class session starts on April 7** and we are offering more than 40 course topics, both in person and via Zoom.

Our ILR **St. Patrick's Day Luncheon** will take place on **March 12** and our **Book and Author luncheon** is on **May 14**. Don't forget to check out the trips and cultural events ILR will be offering in the next few months. In addition, a **complete calendar of upcoming events and milestones** begins on page 7 of this newsletter.

We hope to see you at many of these classes, trips and events in the coming months.

## Spring 2025 Class Registration Begins March 9



Spring class online registration will run **from 9 a.m. March 9 until 11 p.m. March 23**. We will also offer in-person registration from 10:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on March 10, 11, 14, 17, 19 and 21 at the ILR office at 325 Front St., Berea (parking is available in the back, off of Adalbert Street). **Classes begin April 7**.

Additionally, as of 10 p.m. March 23, **ILR annual memberships will be unavailable** until July 1, 2025.

*Nancy Jirousek (at left) leads a winter-session class called "It's All About the Bourbon." (Photo by Mary Kolk)*

## "History of Cleveland" Talk Hits the Road

By Peggy Doyle, ILR Marketing Committee

ILR President Doug Imhoff's **"History of Cleveland" presentation** is proving to be popular at community gatherings across Northeast Ohio. His 75-minute talk describes the city's founding by surveyor Moses Cleaveland in 1796, its growth over the years as well as recent challenges, and concludes with a **"Cleveland Bucket List" of more than 75 experiences** Doug recommends to all.



In recent months, he has entertained audiences at Medina Senior Center and libraries in Berea, Brecksville, North Royalton, Olmsted Falls and Rocky River.

**Upcoming programs** are scheduled for libraries in Richfield on **Feb. 27** at 6:30 p.m. and Westlake on **March 18** at 7 p.m.

The presentations are free but **registration is required** by calling:

- Richfield Library, 330-659-4343
- Westlake Porter Library, 440-871-2600

## Resources for Seniors During Tax Season

*By Elaine Joseph, ILR Today Committee*

**It's tax season once again**, and seniors have options for getting their tax return done AT NO CHARGE.

### AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

provides tax assistance to anyone, free of charge, with a special focus on taxpayers who are over 50 or have low-to-moderate income. Tax-Aide volunteers are IRS certified and the Site Locator Tool is updated and available from February through April.



Visit [https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp\\_taxaide/](https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide/) or call **1-888-227-7669**. Provide your ZIP Code and you'll receive locations, hours of operation and phone numbers for assistance in your area.

Additionally, the Internal Revenue Service offers free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. The IRS's **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** and **Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)** programs offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own returns, including:

- People who generally make \$67,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

In addition to VITA, the **TCE program offers free tax help**, particularly for those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. To learn more, visit <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers>.

*Please note that ILR provides the above resources to enhance awareness, and that ILR does not necessarily endorse the organization, services or advice.*

# Food, Fellowship and Fun at the Holiday Luncheon

Photos by Paula Gustin, Elaine Joseph and Dan Bomeli



## Volunteer Profile: Mary Jo Mitchell, ILR Reach Coordinator

By Dan Bomeli, ILR Today Editor

Some people ease into volunteering by donating time to worthy causes on an occasional basis. But **Mary Jo Mitchell didn't take the easy way.**



**“I kind of jumped right in,” she says** of her fast-track experience at ILR, adding that volunteering helps provide a sense of purpose. Shortly after attending her first ILR class in 2023, she began serving as a host coordinator. About a year ago, she joined the ILR Marketing Committee and promptly offered to coordinate the ILR Reach program.

**ILR Reach brings one-hour in-person presentations to community locations** as a means of promoting lifelong

learning while showcasing about 25 ILR teachers and 100 topics. The Reach program, which originally targeted senior living facilities, is now expanding to other community settings such as senior centers and libraries.

“Our focus began as a way to engage the senior community,” says Mary Jo, but **“you don’t necessarily have to be a senior to enjoy one of our Reach programs.”**

Mary Jo emphasizes the value of person-to-person contact when lining up programs with staff at potential Reach venues. Her approach includes multiple phone calls and on-site visits to introduce, offer and schedule presentations. **ILR Reach is on pace to arrange 60 total presentations for 2025.**

Before sharing her talents with ILR, **Mary Jo immersed herself in social-service volunteer roles** for Common Threads thrift stores and Peripeti, maker of non-toxic home fragrance products. Her professional background included systems engineering and sales responsibilities for IBM, so the ILR Marketing Committee was a natural fit. In addition to ILR Reach, Mary Jo is spearheading a project to evaluate and implement **digital marketing strategies** for better serving ILR members.

Mary Jo and her husband, **Mello – an ILR instructor** – reside in Strongsville. In her spare time, Mary Jo enjoys exploring Cleveland’s heralded Metroparks and reading fiction.

Her involvement with ILR provides a good perspective on the organization’s value to area residents.

“ILR is a very welcoming organization,” Mary Jo enthuses. “I believe **lifelong learning is a vital contributor to seniors’ mental health and activity**, and provides a much-needed service to the community. It’s all good.”

## 2025 Travel Schedule Includes 24 Trips

By Maria Phillips and Tom Brennan, Travel Committee Co-Chairs



The following trips will be offered for ILR members and guests in 2025 based on our recent survey results. We had a good survey response and selected 13 multi-day trips and 11 single-day trips for 2025. Specific information for each trip was emailed to you and is posted on [ilrbw.org](http://ilrbw.org).

We are working with three travel companies: **Nowak Tours**, **Great Day Tours** and **JKL Tours**. These trips are available to ILR members and their

guest(s). Travelers do not have to be a member of ILR.

If you are interested in one of the trips, **please contact the travel company for details, pricing and reservations**. Deposits will be refundable according to the travel company's policies. Your payment ensures a seat for the trip on a first-come, first-served basis. A standby list will be maintained for trips that fill quickly.

### JKL Tours: 440-942-5350 (John Lakovich)

March 11	Historic and Ethnic Cleveland
May 21	Springtime Mystery Tour
June 19	Progressive Field Tour and Lady Caroline Lunch Cruise
Sept. 9-11	Canadian Theatre Adventure at Shaw and Stratford
Sept. 17-19	Magnificent Michigan
Oct. 9	The Covered Bridges of Ashtabula County
Dec. 1-3	New York City at Christmas
Dec. 17	Dickens Victorian Village, Cambridge

### Great Day Tours: 440-526-5350 (Ryan Popovic)

June 4	Shawshank in a Day
June 25	Victorian Princess Cruise
July 18	Zanesville Sternwheeler Tour
Aug. 3-11	National Parks of the Southwest
Aug. 14	Lake Erie Island-Hopping Cruise
Sept. 3-5	The Best of Western New York, Buffalo and Niagara Falls
Sept. 25	Art, Wine and Roses in Mahoning County
Oct. 1-7	Iceland: Land of Ice and Fire
Dec. 10	Small-Town Christmas in Sandusky

**Nowak Tours: 330-483-4900 (Wendy Skettle)**

- July 8-13 Explore Wisconsin
- Aug. 12-15 Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Sept. 14-18 Agawa Canyon and More
- Oct. 3-7 The Sky is the Limit – Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta
- Oct. 7-17 Cities of the Western Mediterranean
- Nov. 6-16 Best of Hawaii
- Dec. 9-12 Christmas at the Capital



Questions can be referred to the travel company or to Maria Phillips and Tom Brennan, Travel Committee Co-Chairs, at [ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com](mailto:ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com). (Photos courtesy of Maria Phillips)

## Cultural Events Update

The cultural events listed below have been selected for 2025. **An event-specific flyer will be emailed to you** listing exact times and costs to enable you to purchase tickets. Buses will be provided for all events. Any ILR member may invite a guest.

### “Noises Off” at Great Lakes Theater – April 30

This sidesplitting romp takes you behind the scenes as a hilariously dysfunctional cast stumbles through rehearsals, opening-night jitters and several escalating disasters. Doors slam, sardines fly and love triangles tangle as this award-winning farce sneaks a hysterical backstage peek at a production that teeters on the precipice of pandemonium and tests the limits of the adage “the show must go on.”

### Tour of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History – June

The Natural History Museum has undergone a major renovation and reopened in December 2024. Come and experience the transformation!



### “Carousel” at the Ohio Light Opera Theater in Wooster Ohio – July 2025

Based on Molnar's 1909 play *Liliom*, Rodgers & Hammerstein's 1945 musical – in its integration of song, dance, and drama – picked up where *Oklahoma* left off a few years before. Its waltz

opening, a soliloquy for carnival barker Billy, and extended love due for Billy and mill worker Julie were daring in their musical elements. No less pioneering was Hammerstein's treatment of relationship abuse. Among the song highlights are "If I Loved You," "June Is Busting Out All Over" and "You'll Never Walk Alone."

**Any questions about these cultural events** can be referred to Maria Phillips at [ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com](mailto:ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com).

**Special thanks** to our Cultural Events Co-Chairs, **Pat Giblin** and **Penny Jeffrey**.

## Upcoming Special Events

March 12 **St. Patrick's Day Luncheon** – New Barleycorn will again entertain attendees for our St. Patrick's Day-themed luncheon.  
*(Registration and payment details will be emailed to you)*

**PLEASE NOTE:** At this luncheon we will be **collecting donations for the SCAN Hunger Center Pantry** that serves Berea, Brook Park, Columbia Twp., Middleburg Hts., Olmsted Twp., Olmsted Falls and Strongsville. Donations can include non-perishable food (unexpired and unopened) and paper products.

May 14 **Book and Author Luncheon** – We will be hosting four local authors.  
*(Registration and payment details will be emailed to you)*

**PLEASE NOTE:** At this luncheon we will be **collecting new and gently used children's books for Laura's Home**. This is part of the City Mission that serves women and children to break the cycle of poverty.

## ILR Calendar 2025-2026

Feb. 24 **Spring 2025 course catalog posted on [ilrbw.org](http://ilrbw.org)**

March 9 **Spring 2025 course registration begins**  
*In-person registration assistance at 325 Front St., Berea, is available from 10:15 – 11:45 a.m. on March 10, 11, 14, 17, 19 and 21*

March 11 Historic and Ethnic Cleveland – Part 2 *(See Travel Schedule on page 5)*

March 12 **St. Patrick's Day Luncheon**

March 23 **Spring 2025 course registration ends and membership closes**

April 7 **Spring 2025 classes begin**

May 14 **Book and Author Luncheon**

May 21 Springtime Mystery Tour *(See page 5)*

June 4 Shawshank in a Day *(See page 5)*

June 19 Progressive Field Tour and Lady Caroline Lunch Cruise *(See page 5)*

June 25 Victorian Princess Cruise *(See page 5)*

July 1 **2025 ILR membership registration begins**

July 8-13 Explore Wisconsin (See page 6)

July 18 Zanesville Sternwheeler Tour (See page 5)

Aug. 3-11 National Parks of the Southwest (See page 5)

Aug. 4 **Fall 2025 course catalog posted on ilrbw.org**

Aug. 12-15 Niagara-on-the-Lake (See page 6)

Aug. 14 Lake Erie Island-Hopping Cruise (See page 5)

Aug. 17 **Fall 2025 course registration begins**

Aug. 31 **Fall 2025 course registration ends**

Sept. 3-5 The Best of Western New York, Buffalo and Niagara Falls (See page 5)

Sept. 9-11 Canadian Theatre Adventure at Shaw and Stratford (See page 5)

Sept. 15 **Fall 2025 classes begin**

Sept. 14-18 Agawa Canyon and More (See page 6)

Sept. 17-19 Magnificent Michigan (see page 5)

Sept. 25 Art, Wine and Roses in the Mahoning Valley (See page 5)

Oct. 1-7 Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice (See page 5)

Oct. 3-7 The Sky is the Limit – Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta (See page 6)

Oct. 7-17 Cities of the Western Mediterranean (See page 6)

Oct. 9 The Covered Bridges of Ashtabula County (See page 5)

Nov. 6 Best of Hawaii (See page 6)

Nov 15 **Winter 2025 course catalog posted on ilrbw.org**

Nov. 30 **Winter 2025 course registration begins**

Dec. 1-3 New York City at Christmas (See page 5)

Dec. 9-12 Christmas at the Capital (See page 6)

Dec. 10 Small-Town Christmas in Sandusky County (See page 5)

Dec. 14 **Winter 2025 course registration ends**

Dec. 17 Christmas Dickens Victorian Village, Cambridge (See page 5)

Jan. 5, 2026 **Winter 2026 classes begin**

Feb. 23, 2026 **Spring 2026 course catalog posted on ilrbw.org**

March 8, 2026 **Spring 2026 course registration begins**

March 22, 2026 **Spring 2026 course registration ends and membership closes**

April 6, 2026 **Spring 2026 classes begin**

## In Memoriam



The ILR community is saddened by the Jan. 9 passing of **Jeffrey A. Fine**. A resident of Solon, Mr. Fine **served as President of ILR East**, which offers classes at Temple Emanu El in Orange. He also volunteered as a docent at the Maltz Museum in Beachwood. Our ILR Sunshine Committee has sent a condolence card to the ILR East office and Fine family.

**Neal Malicky, PhD**, President of Baldwin Wallace University from 1981 to 1999, died Nov. 22, 2024. Dr. Malicky was widely recognized for his warmth and leadership that helped BW expand undergraduate and graduate programs, increase student enrollment and transform the campus through ambitious renovation and construction projects. He was an **enthusiastic supporter of ILR at BW** as co-founders recruited professors and other educators in the early 1990s to teach courses on a wide array of topics.

ILR member **Catherine Ryan** passed away recently following a short illness. She was a resident of Rocky River and our Sunshine Committee has sent a condolence card to her estate.

If you know of an ILR member who has passed away and whom you would like to **memorialize in this newsletter**, please contact [ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com](mailto:ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com) with details.

## Quick Hits

**ILR Office and Help Desk** – The ILR Office at 325 Front Street is open every **Monday and Friday** from **10 a.m. to 12 p.m.** Feel free to stop in or call 440-826-3188 with questions. The phone line will be monitored on Mondays and Fridays. Also, the ILR Help Desk email address is [ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com](mailto:ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com) for questions.

### Connect with ILR and Share with Others --

**Website:**  
[lrbw.org](http://lrbw.org)

**Facebook:**  
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/526562059407794/?ref=share\\_group\\_link](https://www.facebook.com/groups/526562059407794/?ref=share_group_link)

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### The Ugly Sweater Shtick

*ILR curriculum leaders challenged committee members to **wear their ugliest holiday attire** to the Dec. 13 meeting. Every garment was a winner or a loser, depending on your personal sense of style.*

