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President's Message

By Doug Imhoff, ILR President



We have just finished the 2025-2026 fiscal year for the ILR organization and **I would like to thank all of our members for their support.** It was a great year for ILR and we look forward to the 2026-2027 fiscal year. I want to remind our current members that **the date for renewing your membership starts on July 1.** We hope you sign up again!

Please let your friends know about ILR and our wonderful classes, luncheons, trips, cultural events and other benefits. If you want to see the calendar for upcoming ILR events for the remainder of 2026, **please see page 7 of this newsletter** or visit ilrbw.org and click on the calendar tab near the top right-hand corner.

Our annual meeting, including the election of officers and voting on updated ILR by-laws, **will be Thursday, May 21 at 10:30 a.m.** at the BW Strosacker Student Union (in Sandstone 3 in the basement). **All ILR members are welcome to attend.**

In summary, I foresee great success in all endeavors for the ILR organization. **I look forward to your continued support, enthusiasm and engagement** now and in the future!

BW President Lee Fisher:

An Unwavering Commitment to Lifelong Learning

Since becoming **Baldwin Wallace University's 10th president in mid-2025**, **Lee Fisher** has focused much of his attention on matters concerning degree-bound students. He is also committed to meeting the unique needs of adults participating in ILR.

"At Baldwin Wallace we value lifelong education and so ILR is very much aligned with the mission of the university," he says.

President Fisher's diverse career gives him **insight on a wide variety of real-life experiences students of all ages may face.** He served in state-elected public office, including as Ohio Attorney General and Lt. Governor. He also worked as a law school dean and professor, member of a private college board of trustees, CEO of two nonprofit organizations and board director of public, private and nonprofit organizations. **As a recognized thought leader, President Fisher contributes his expertise and insights** in print and broadcast media, and as a public speaker, frequently focusing on the value of higher education.

President Fisher is firm in his determination that BW is different than many universities. "I'm amazed by the depth of love, loyalty and engagement of our alumni to BW," he explains. "There's so much more to BW than just getting a quality education. **It's about getting an education where you feel a special attachment to the people and to the place.**"

President Fisher met and mingled with ILR members last December at the ILR Holiday Luncheon, where he also delivered an inspiring keynote address. He recognizes that not every ILR participant is a BW alumnus, but **he considers all ILR members to be honorary BW graduates.**



(Photo courtesy of Baldwin Wallace University)



(Photo by Paula Gustin)

When asked about the types of courses in which he might enroll if he had more free time, **President Fisher described three topics of interest:**

- How to spend a year traveling the world.
- If a person could live his or her life over again, what they would do differently and what they would do the same.
- What different generations can learn from each other.

President Fisher is well aware of many challenges that lie ahead for the university, but that knowledge appears to only deepen his resolve. **And his steadfast commitment includes ILR.**

“I want BW’s relationship with ILR to be mutually beneficial,” he explains when outlining his vision for the future. **“We can continue to learn from each other.”**

Member Input Welcome for ILR Course Development

By Pam McConnell, VP of Curriculum

Our spring classes concluded this month and **I would like to thank everyone who enrolled and participated.** While learning and absorbing new ideas from our wonderful teachers in the courses I took, I had the chance to get to know many of our members and hear their viewpoints. **Your thoughts and ideas help shape the direction of new class offerings** that make ILR an incredible learning community. So please keep sharing your opinions and suggestions.



(Photos by Elaine Joseph)



Our next “Meet the Teachers” Open House will be held Tuesday, Aug. 11, from 1 – 3 p.m. at a new location: Strongsville United Methodist Church, 13200 Royalton Road, Strongsville. The teachers at this event will each provide a preview of their fall class. **Feel free to bring friends** who might be interested in joining ILR. February’s open house (at left) attracted a capacity crowd.

In addition, **we will once again hold classes at Christ United Church,** located across the street from Heritage Congregational Church on West Street in Berea. Many of our members remember we had classes there prior to COVID-19. **Thank you again for your ongoing support** of our organization.

ILR Honors Three Distinguished Teachers

Three teachers have been recognized for excellence by ILR. **Ann Cleary, Mary Ruth Kolk and Gerry Nemeth are recipients of ILR’s annual Distinguished Teacher Award.**

The award is **presented to teachers who have taught ILR courses for a significant number of years, and their classes have been well received and well attended** by ILR members. Nominees, who are proposed and voted on by the ILR Governing Board, are deemed persons of great integrity, competence, character and good standing.



Ann Cleary

Ann Cleary is a national board-certified teacher in adolescent and young adult science. She taught 9th grade earth and space science for more than 30 years. Ann now specializes in astronomy topics for ILR and strives to make course content simple and easily understood.

Mary Ruth Kolk develops and teaches ILR courses on women’s history, hidden historical Ohio landmarks, health and the power of human connection. By weaving



Mary Kolk

research, personal stories and visuals into her classes, she encourages learners to see history and life in new ways. Mary served as president of ILR from 2020-2022.



Gerry
Nemeth

Gerry Nemeth spent most of his adult life working in the electronics industry, and then in higher education by teaching and tutoring mathematics and engineering. During his five years with ILR, he has taught courses on TV game show history, Cleveland-area Rock & Roll history and Cleveland sports history.

Distinguished Teacher Award recipients will be recognized on a prominent display at the ILR office on the first floor of the Bonds Administration Building at Baldwin Wallace University, 275 Eastland Road, Berea.

Historical Documents Library Dedicated to Jane F. Cavanaugh

By Paula Gustin, ILR Historian

When I began as ILR Historian in November 2024, I started to work my way through some of the organization's original binders and documents from the early '90s. **I learned about the importance of Dr. Jane F. Cavanaugh**, who was appointed Dean of Continuing Education by BW's then-President, **Neil Malicky, PhD**, in 1988.



He tasked Jane with researching and developing a senior learning program for retirees. Jane and several BW professors took on this initiative and, **in September 1992, ILR launched with two course offerings** after two trial run courses the previous winter and spring.

As I continued to work my way through the papers, I wanted to interview Jane for an *ILR Today* article. Jane and I had a lovely and spirited interview and **we published an *ILR Today* article about her achievements in February 2025**. **Sadly, Jane passed away in July 2025**, just five short months later, at age 84.

After moving into the new ILR Office in the Bonds Administration Building at BW, it occurred to me that Jane deserved a larger presence in our space for all to appreciate and know her dedication to ILR. **She was instrumental in co-founding and helping ILR thrive during its first decade**. She also developed the ILR East program.

I asked the Governing Board if we could honor Jane by dedicating our Historical Documents Library to her memory. They unanimously agreed. A photo of Jane's memorial plaque is shown here with **Janet Bodjiak (at right), ILR Office Manager, and me.** (*Photo by Karl Keller*)

Jane, you were a remarkable ILR pioneer and leader for 10 years and **will now be forever honored and remembered in our ILR Office.**

Honorary Lifetime Members Named for 2026

Congratulations to our **ILR Honorary Lifetime Members for 2026: Paula Gustin and Janet Bodjiak (both pictured above).**

Paula worked as a legal secretary for several Cleveland law firms before retiring in 2015. She joined ILR that same year and, since 2020, manages our online course catalog. She also served as *ILR Today* editor from 2021-2023. Since being named Historian in 2024, Paula has **invested countless hours in organizing ILR's print document archives**. She also serves on the Governing Board and Curriculum and Marketing Committees. In addition to taking history and art courses, **she loves working with other dedicated members whose goal is to continually improve ILR**. Best of all, Paula's efforts are truly appreciated by her colleagues.

Janet joined ILR in 2016 after retiring from a career in the human resources field. She began volunteering in the ILR Office in 2017, joined the Membership Committee in 2018, served as Corresponding Secretary for the Steering Committee from 2018-2020, and then **transitioned to Office Manager, the**

position she holds today. Janet enjoys the variety of experiences offered by ILR, whether attending a class on a topic new to her or traveling to a new city. In all instances, she says **the best part is enjoying every adventure with her ILR friends.**

Honorary Lifetime Membership, introduced in 1998, is **granted to the outgoing President** at the conclusion of each biennial term and is granted by the Governing Board to not more than **two other persons every other year.** Persons who have contributed significantly to the growth and success of ILR may be proposed for Honorary Lifetime Membership by any ILR member and shall be voted on by secret ballot. Honorary Lifetime Members are exempt from further payment of dues and shall have all the benefits of membership.

Including this year's honorees, **the following members have been conferred this designation:**

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Thomas J. Brennan | Paula Gustin* | Gayle McCormick | Janice L. Stuart |
| Jane Cavanaugh | Nancy Jirousek** | Thomas Owen | Robert Titran |
| LaVerne Cowgill | Karl Keller | Maria Phillips | Richard Vernon |
| Judith Drabik | Mary Ruth Kolk | Janet Bodjiak* | Carol Vidoli |
| Gary A. Erlinger | William Luff | David Proctor | Georgia Wilson |
| A.F. Forestieri | Judith Mader | Jean Robejsek | * <i>New</i> |
| Charles Gall | Pamela McConnell | Robert Ross | ** <i>Lifetime Emeritus</i> |

Help ILR Members Zoom into Their Favorite Classes

Hello! My name is **Scott Kreidler** and I serve as a **Zoom Administrator** for ILR. I'm reaching out to see if **any members would be interested in helping support our Zoom classes.**

Zoom is a simple online platform that allows us to offer classes remotely using a computer, tablet or smartphone. Volunteers help instructors with the basic setup before, and operation during, classes.

You don't need advanced technical skills—just basic computer knowledge (e.g., email, following instructions) and a willingness to learn. Training will be provided.

Other volunteer opportunities include the following:

Host Coordinators – Make a difference while you learn.

Cultural Events Assistance – Help bring our cultural programs to life.

Special Event Ambassador – Meet interesting people while staffing the ILR table at community events.

If you're interested or would like more information about any of the above opportunities, visit www.ilrbw.org/volunteer or contact the ILR Help Desk at 440-826-3188 or ilrhelppdeskbu@gmail.com.

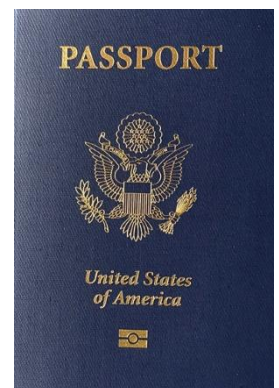
Common-Sense Tips for Stress-Free Summer Travel

By Elaine Joseph, ILR Today Staff

As we approach the 2026 travel season, **what should you consider for a safe and stress-free vacation?**

If you are traveling overseas, be sure to **research which countries carry the most severe travel warning from the U.S. State Department,** <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>, (and equivalent agencies in nations you are considering as a destination). Travelers are advised **NOT to travel to locations on these lists under any circumstances.**

Do consider travel insurance, which is often provided by some credit card companies. Before purchasing a travel policy, consider your specific needs, such as coverage for medical conditions, trip cancellation and lost luggage. Compare different policies, read the fine print and ask questions to ensure you understand what is covered and any exclusions that may apply.



The Feb. 12, 2026 issue of *Forbes* recommends that **by traveling at less-popular times, you can save more than money.** For example, when airports are quieter and planes aren't full, you'll likely have a more comfortable experience with fewer delays.

Several more tips from travel experts:

- Be sure to **protect your valuables.** Never put valuable items or money in your checked baggage.
- **Hide your money** in a money belt or flat cloth pouch that fits under your clothes. Creative options include special socks, underwear, bras, shoes, plus hair rollers and pill boxes.
- **Share your itinerary** with someone who is not traveling with you.
- **AVOID sharing on social media.** This will protect both your property and privacy.
- In crowded airports or train stations, be sure to **keep your belongings close to you at all times.** Stay aware of your surroundings.
- **Never leave your suitcase unattended or with a stranger** (and don't watch anyone else's unless you know them).
- **Protect your health.** Use hand sanitizers, wipes and masks.

Oh, yes – don't forget to **have lots of fun, adventure and relaxation!**

Sources of Information:

[9 Best Airport Hacks to Survive Travel Chaos](#)

[Holiday Travel Safety: How to Stay Healthy on the Go This Season](#)

[How To Hide Money and Valuables While Traveling | Allianz Partners](#)

2026 Travel Schedule Update

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

The following trips will be offered for ILR members and guests in 2026 based on our member survey results. Specific information for each trip will also be posted on ilrbw.org.

Trips are **filling quickly** and some already have waiting lists, so **call the travel company to register** if you are interested in a particular destination.

Single-Day Trips

- Spring Mystery Trip (JKL) – **CLOSED**
- Texas Longhorn Ranch and The Wilds Animal Safari Park (Great Day)
- Tea Room Delights to Canal Boat Adventure (Great Day)
- Kelleys Island Adventure (JKL)
- America's 250th: Falling Water and Flight 93 Memorial (Great Day)
- Summer in Cleveland: Cultural Gardens and Goodtime 3 (JKL)
- The Lion King (JKL)
- Glass, Glamour and Good Times in Tiffin (Great Day)
- Mystery Treasure Bag Tour (Great Day)
- Autumn Wine Tasting (JKL)
- Pittsburgh Holiday Lights (Great Day)



(Photo by Dan Bomeli)



(Photos by Maria Phillips)



Multi-Day Trips

- Rockies to the Red Rocks (Nowak)
- Historic Marietta and Blennerhassett Island (Great Day)
- America's 250th Route 66 Adventure...**no minimum** (Great Day)
- Finger Lakes Fun (Great Day)
- Canadian Theater Adventure (JKL) – **CLOSED**
- Traverse City and the Sleeping Bear Dunes (Great Day)
- Fall Into the Finger Lakes (Nowak)
- Niagara Winter Festival of Lights (Great Day)
- Williamsburg at Christmas (JKL)

Foreign Trips

- Montreal Christmas Market...**no minimum** (Great Day)
- Splendid Scotland with Robin Swoboda...**no minimum** (Great Day)
- Portugal...**no minimum** (Nowak)

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

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

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

Questions about travel can be referred to Maria Phillips and Tom Brennan, Travel Committee Co-Chairs, at ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com.



Cultural Events Update

By Pat Giblin and Penny Jeffrey, Cultural Committee Co-Chairs

Cleveland Pops Orchestra: "Made in America" – CLOSED

June 6 – The Cleveland Pops Orchestra celebrates the 250th birthday of the United States with a night of music that was Made in America. Ragtime, Jazz, Big Band and more! Your Cleveland Pops will play it all at this semi-quincentennial celebration.

"The Great Gatsby" at Playhouse Square – CLOSED

June 23 – The Great Gatsby is based on the classic American novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The Tony Award-winning new musical is an unforgettable journey of love, wealth and tragedy that brings the Roaring Twenties to life on the stage.

Any questions about these cultural events can be referred to Maria Phillips at ilrhelppdeskbwu@gmail.com.

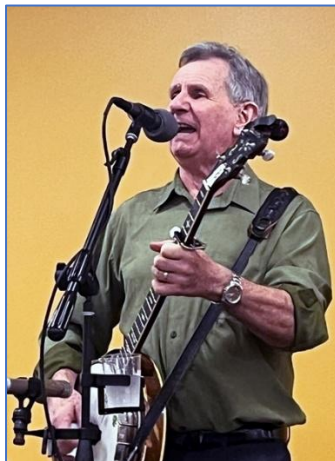
The following events have been selected as a result of our member Cultural Events Survey. An event-specific flyer will be emailed to you for reservation information before each event. Any member may invite a guest. Some dates are tentative at this time.

- **"Grease" at Porthouse Theatre in Cuyahoga Falls** – June 20
- **"My Fair Lady" at Ohio Light Opera in Wooster** – July 14
- **Blossom Music Festival with the Cleveland Orchestra: Cole Porter's "Let's Misbehave"** – Aug. 23
- **Cleveland Guardians Game** – September 2026
- **Christmas Holiday Concert at Severance Center** – Dec. 13
- **"Mama Mia" at Playhouse Square** – Jan. 5 – 24, 2027
- **Cleveland Pops Orchestra: "Stage to Screen: Broadway Movie Hits"** – Jan. 30, 2027
- **Cleveland Botanical Garden Orchid Show** – February/March 2027

- “Phantom of the Opera” at Playhouse Square – April 14 – May 9, 2027
- Cleveland Pops Orchestra: “Symphony of Stars” – June 5, 2027

Any questions about these cultural events can be referred to Maria Phillips at ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com.

Good Times at Recent ILR Events



St. Patrick's Day Luncheon

(Photos courtesy of Pam Aleandri and Gary Erlinger)



“As the Stage Turned: Cleveland’s Front Row Theatre,” featured a presentation by author Jeannie Emser Schultz to an engaged audience. (Photo by Scott Kreidler)



More than 150 attendees learned about ILR programs and activities at the Thrive After 55 event in Westlake. (Photo by Peggy Doyle)

Upcoming Special Events

An event-specific flyer will be emailed to you for reservation information before each of the following:

June 16 – Volunteer/Instructor Appreciation Picnic at Coe Lake from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

We will invite all ILR volunteers and teachers for a **special appreciation picnic luncheon for their dedication, commitment and hard work.**

Aug. 5 – Book and Author Luncheon

Three local authors will introduce their books, followed by an opportunity to purchase your own copies.

We will also collect new and gently used children’s books for the Cleveland Kids’ Book Bank. We are looking for donations of new or very gently used books for ages 0-18 (especially books featuring diversity). Options include board books, picture books, leveled readers, short chapter, hard chapter and teen/young adult.

Donations will go directly to Cleveland-area children, many of whom who do not own their own books. The mission of the Cleveland Kids’ Book Bank is to foster literacy and a love of reading by distributing free books in collaboration with community partners. **Having books in the home is the biggest predictor of future academic success, regardless of parent education or income.**

Dec. 16 – Holiday Luncheon

The Amethyst Strings from the Cleveland Pops Orchestra will provide entertainment.

ILR Calendar 2026

Please Note: ILR membership for the 2026-2027 year opens on July 1, 2026.

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 21 | ILR Annual Meeting |
| June 6 | Cleveland Pops Orchestra “Made in America” at Severance Hall |
| June 16 | Volunteer/Instructor Appreciation Picnic at Coe Lake |
| June 20 | “Grease” at the Porthouse Theatre |
| June 23 | “The Great Gatsby” at Connor Palace at Playhouse Square |
| July 1 | Membership begins for 2026-2027 |
| July 14 | “My Fair Lady” at Ohio Light Opera in Wooster |
| Aug. 3 | Fall 2026 course catalog posted on the website |
| Aug. 5 | Book and Author Luncheon |
| Aug. 11 | ILR Open House |
| Aug. 16 | Fall 2026 course registration begins |
| Aug. 17 | Host Coordinator meeting |
| Aug. 23 | Blossom Music Festival with the Cleveland Orchestra: Cole Porter |
| Aug. 30 | Fall 2026 course registration ends |
| Sept. TBD | Cleveland Guardians Game |
| Sept. 14 | Fall 2026 classes begin |
| Nov. 9 | Zoom update and training |
| Nov. 16 | Winter 2027 course catalog posted on the website |
| Nov. 29 | Winter 2027 course registration begins |
| Dec. 13 | Christmas Holiday Concert at Severance Hall |
| Dec. 13 | Winter 2027 course registration ends |
| Dec. 16 | Holiday Luncheon |
| Dec. 17 | Host Coordinator meeting |
| Jan. 4, 2027 | Winter 2027 classes begin |
| Jan. 5-24, 2027 | “Mama Mia” at Playhouse Square |

** Dates are subject to change*

In Memoriam

The ILR community is saddened by the March 17 passing of **Mary Ann Kunkel** (*at right*). A resident of Westlake, Mary Ann was a lifelong learner, avid reader and an inspiration for her curiosity about an ever-changing world. She was a diehard Cleveland sports fan and loved cheering for her teams. Her legacy of love, strength and persistent kindness is a gift to all who knew her.



Mary Ann Kunkel



Margaret M. "Peggy" Wagner (*at left*) of North Olmsted passed away March 29. She worked for many years at MetroHealth Medical Center and was a devoted volleyball and softball coach in Cleveland. Friends describe her as having "a big personality" and always being ready to help others. Acquaintances also enjoyed her entertaining posts in social media groups. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Peggy Warner

Quick Hits

ILR Office and Help Desk – The ILR Office in **the Bonds Administration Building, 275 Eastland Road, Berea**, 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 for questions.

Connect with ILR and Share with Others --

Website:

ilrbw.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61573120002865>

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