ILR TODAY

Vol. XI, No. 4 **November 2026**

In This Issue:

Giving Back to ILR on Giving Tuesday *Pg. 3*
Volunteer Opportunities for You *Pg. 4*
Thoughts on the Meaning of Thanksgiving *Pg. 6*
Upcoming Special Events *Pg. 8*

President's Message

By Doug Imhoff, ILR President



We have just finished our ILR fall 2026 classes and **I am always interested to hear feedback from our members**. Please let me know where we are "hitting the mark" and where we can make improvements. You can email me at doug22753@aol.com. For our upcoming 2027 winter class session, we are offering approximately 40 courses with about one-fourth via Zoom. **The winter catalog will be posted on our website (ilrbw.org) on Nov. 16 and registration runs from Nov. 29 through Dec. 13.** Classes will start Jan. 11 and run for six weeks as usual.

Our Christmas luncheon is on Dec. 16 and we encourage you to RSVP promptly, as space is limited. Be sure to check the **calendar of upcoming events and dates** for the remainder of this year and throughout 2027 **on pages 7 and 8** of this newsletter.

Since Thanksgiving is fast approaching, **I would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for their hard work** and for making the ILR organization run smoothly! In addition, I would like to **wish all of our ILR members a Merry Christmas, a Happy Holiday, and a very prosperous and healthy New Year!**

We hope to see all of you at our upcoming ILR classes, trips, special events and luncheons in 2027!

ILR Scholarship Recipients Express Their Sincere Thanks

Thank you… truly grateful… deep gratitude. These and similar sentiments appeared in correspondence directed to ILR from our 2026 scholarship recipients.



Seven non-traditional undergraduate students **each received a $3,000 scholarship** for the current academic year and one graduate education student received the **$3,000 Louise Kiefer scholarship**.

Over the past three decades, **more than $516,000 in scholarships and grants have been provided by the ILR Scholarship Program** to students at Baldwin Wallace University.

The following excerpts appeared in awardees' letters:

"I promise that as your beneficiary, I will shape generation after generation to be increasingly deserving of the very same award which you have bestowed upon me. **I hope to become a launchpad**, in my own right, to pay you back for the gift you have given me."

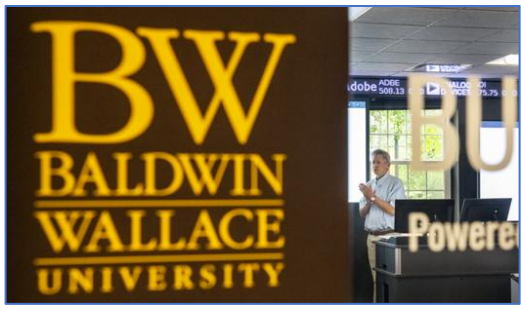
Jeffrey Bohnert, Lakewood, Ohio

"I am dedicated to making the most of this opportunity, and I will continue to put in the hard work necessary to advance my education. My hope is to eventually **give back to my community and support others** just as you have supported me."

Tiajuana Christian, Parma, Ohio

"Thank you for investing in students like me and recognizing the determination it takes to return to school and pursue a degree while managing other responsibilities. Your support is both meaningful and encouraging, and I am sincerely grateful for this opportunity."

Shawanay M. Kirksey, Garfield Heights, Ohio



"The Institute for Learning in Retirement Scholarship Program reflects what the ILR is all about—encouraging people to keep learning, growing, and making a positive impact in their communities… BW has continued to support my growth as an educator…and **this scholarship will help me continue that journey and bring what I learn back to my classroom** and school community."

Erin Laren, Parma Heights, Ohio

"Since beginning as a part-time, non-traditional student in January 2009, I have taken breaks to support others, and I am excited to reach this important milestone. Your generosity has eased my financial burden, and **I am truly grateful for your commitment to supporting education."**

Jennifer Lavelle, Strongsville, Ohio

"Being twenty-seven years old and attending a traditional nursing program has been a unique experience… I overcame obstacles that I genuinely was not sure I would be able to surmount. **I have a deep gratitude for the path I've taken, and I am very excited to see where it leads.** Thank you so much for lifting some weight from my shoulders."

Olivia Morgenroth, Pleasanton, Calif.

"I returned to school after years of focusing on raising my children and supporting my family. Even though I had been successful without a degree, I always felt I was limiting myself by not finishing it. I also **wanted to set an example for my children and show them how much an education matters."**

Jason M. Skory, Painesville, Ohio



(Photos courtesy of Baldwin Wallace University)

***Complete letters of appreciation from the above students** can be found in our Historian Binders, located in the ILR Office, in the Bonds Administration Building, 275 Eastland Road, Berea. The office 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.*

Winter Courses Will Include 40+ Subjects and Three New Teachers

By Pam McConnell, VP of Curriculum

This year we have enjoyed **a beautiful autumn with all the bright colors and moderate temperatures**. We surely needed an extraordinary October as we prepared for the colder months just around the corner.

Our winter course schedule is filled with courses to keep your mind engaged as well as entertained. **We have three new instructors joining ILR:**



- **Mary Kazmir**, better known as the **Cleveland Goose Girl**. After experiencing the highlights in her class, you will come away with a new respect for these often-misunderstood birds.
- **Miles Budimir** will motivate you to plan fascinating **Ohio road trips** once the warmer weather returns.
- **Rev. Lindsey Funtik**, the associate pastor of Strongsville United Methodist Church, will conduct a course on **Demystifying Christian Mystics**. She brings a new understanding of those spiritual and religious leaders of the past.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the ILR array of courses. This past fall session, **we attained a new record for class attendance.** Several courses had more than 70 registered participants. As many of us have found, **learning keeps our minds active as well as providing an opportunity to make new friends.** We look forward to seeing you in the winter session. So, get ready to hitch up the dog sleds!

Giving Tuesday 2026: A Day to Give Back to ILR

By Gary Erlinger, ILR Finance Committee

On Tuesday, Dec. 1, ILR at Baldwin Wallace University will join organizations across the country in celebrating **Giving Tuesday, a national day dedicated to generosity and charitable giving**.

As a 100% volunteer-driven organization, ILR has built a vibrant community where lifelong learning, friendship and intellectual curiosity flourish. Through the generosity of our members and supporters, ILR continues to provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational, cultural and social experiences.

Your gift to ILR can make a difference in several important ways:

- **ILR Scholarship Fund:** Each year, ILR provides $24,000 in scholarships to Baldwin Wallace non-traditional students, helping individuals pursue their educational goals while balancing work, family or other responsibilities.
- **ILR Activities Fund:** Contributions help sustain the educational programs, cultural experiences and social activities that enrich the lives of our members.
- **Memorial and Honor Gifts:** Donations may also be made in honor of, or in memory of, a loved one or cherished friend.

On Dec. 1, we invite every ILR member to consider making a gift of any size.

Every contribution represents an investment in the future of lifelong learning and the continued success of ILR. Together, we can ensure the opportunities we enjoy today remain available to future generations of learners.

Celebrate Giving Tuesday by supporting ILR!

GIVE TO ILR — MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donation link is embedded in the call-to-action box above.

Help Area Residents by Donating Items at Dec. 16 Holiday Luncheon

By Kathy Adams, ILR Comptroller

Our **ILR members have been incredibly generous** with their donations the past several years. We have collected food for people in our communities and books for children to feed their souls.

This year we have a unique opportunity. There is a Campus Cupboard run by and for the students here at BW.

The students have shared a **list of high-demand items** which include:

- Shampoo
- Body wash
- Laundry detergent
- Gasoline gift cards
- Conditioner
- Toothpaste
- Dish Soap
- Boxes of cereal



If you can find it in your heart to **bring one or more items from the above list with you to the Dec. 16 Holiday Luncheon (see Special Events on page 8 for luncheon details)**, your gifts will be very much appreciated.

Volunteer Opportunities Benefit ILR While Expanding Your Skills

Internal Auditor

The ILR Finance Committee is **looking for a retired accountant** to join our team. This individual will work with our CFO and Comptroller in developing, monitoring and reporting our **annual budget, policies and procedures and compliance**. For more information, please contact edith.newman@bw.edu.

Zoom Administrative Support

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.**

If you're interested or would like more information, **please contact** the ILR Help Desk at **440-826-3188** or email at ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com.

Administrative Assistant – ILR Reach Speakers Bureau

Help support ILR Reach Speakers Bureau as a volunteer Administrative Assistant. **Your contribution will help ILR bring engaging educational experiences to our community**, enriching lives through lifelong learning. **Our speakers program will continue to grow in scope and impact** thanks to your gift of time.



Responsibilities include:

- Processing invoices
- Updating the Reach presentation online catalog
- Maintaining accurate contact lists of instructors and participating facilities, plus scheduling records and program information for future reference
- Serving as a backup for presentation scheduling, confirmations, reminders and follow-up communications with instructors and facilities

Qualifications:

- Strong organizational, communication and interpersonal skills, attention to detail and ability to work independently
- Proficiency with Microsoft Excel, Gmail, and Google Docs
- Sales experience a plus

Time Commitment: Flexible schedule, approximately 2–3 hours per week, depending on program needs. Excellent opportunity for growth. Interested? Contact ilrreach@gmail.com for more information.

Did You See It? New SIGs Are Being Planned

By Paula Gustin, ILR Marketing Team

Members received an **Oct. 2 email announcing ILR's new venture into Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** with a brief survey.

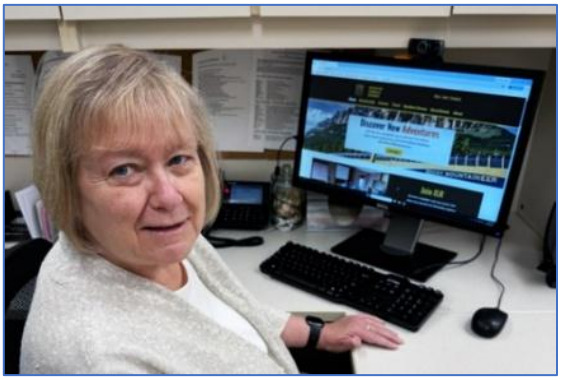
A SIG is described as **"a small informal community of individuals who gather to explore shared interests."** Each SIG is entirely member-led (facilitated) and driven. **The survey revealed great interest in SIG topics** and several respondents said they are interested in facilitating a SIG.

Now that the survey is completed, **an email with next steps will be sent to the membership in the near future.**

Volunteer Profile: Lori Dietz Combines High Tech with High Touch

By Dan Bomeli, ILR Today Editor

Lori Dietz is a behind-the-scenes ILR volunteer, spending much of her time updating and enhancing our ilrbw.org website. And, while **her 42-year professional life focused heavily on high-tech talents** that align with her ILR role today, Lori says **one of her greatest contributions is sharing a high-touch approach** to make members' lives easier.



(Photo by Elaine Joseph)

"I'm one of those people who tries to **help other people do whatever they need to do**," Lori says. You can find her working in the ILR Office most Monday and Friday mornings, plus extra days during course-registration periods.

"A lot of members don't have a computer or are uncomfortable with using a credit card to register for courses, so they prefer to come into the office," she explains. **"I help them sign up for their courses in a manner that is more comforting to them."**

ILR launched a redesigned website one year ago to make it easier to explore course offerings, find event information and stay connected with our community of lifelong learners. The updated site was developed through an intergenerational partnership with Baldwin Wallace's Digital Marketing Center. Working closely with the ILR Marketing Committee, BW students with digital marketing expertise created a site that is modern, user-friendly and reflects the energy and enthusiasm of ILR members.

Lori joined ILR after retiring from Polaris Career Center in Middleburg Heights, where she spent about half of her tenure working as an applications developer. This background allowed her to immediately apply her energy toward ILR website development.

Site visitors can find important information and accomplish tasks in a timely fashion, according to Lori. For example, **organizations can now submit online requests** for the ILR Reach Speakers Bureau and an **automated event calendar** no longer displays outdated occasions. In addition to improved navigation, **the site's look and feel align more closely with BW communications.**

"I need to do something to keep myself sharp and intellectually stimulated," Lori says about her contributions. **"I hope to make a difference that benefits our members."**

Marketing Team Shares the ILR Story at Fall Events

By Peggy Doyle, ILR Marketing Committee

A combined total of more than 250 people stopped by our ILR information tables at the Sept. 13 **Berea Arts Fair** and **BW Bold & Gold Homecoming** on Oct. 10. Attendees expressed interest in learning more about ILR and our activities. If you would like to help staff the ILR table at future events, contact Peggy Doyle at ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com.

(Photo by Peggy Doyle)



Thanksgiving: Where did it come from and what does it mean?

By Elaine Joseph, ILR Today Staff

What is Thanksgiving all about? No, it's not about a bird, it's not about pumpkins and I don't think it's about cooking all day, either. **It's about being grateful for life's blessings and sharing our love** with family and friends.

So, where did it come from? Around 1536, during the reign of Henry VIII, the English Reformation created days of prayer and special ceremonies to express gratitude. **Many countries around the world observe a form of Thanksgiving to this day.** For many, it's a celebration of the end of the harvest season, often combined with religious components.

In the United States, in 1789, Congress and President George Washington created a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. It was to be observed for the benefit of all citizens and acknowledged with grateful hearts.

Well, folks, it's 2026 and we now have parades, football, travel (one of the busiest travel days of the year), volunteering and Black Friday shopping. **I asked my daughter what she thinks about Thanksgiving, and she said she gets to enjoy our Italian stuffing once a year**—complete with sausage, pine nuts, parmesan cheese and all the special ingredients she loves.

Oh, my, how we've changed…or maybe not really. **For the most part, we are still kind and loving people.** Throughout my life, I have seen individuals step up to the plate and help in intense situations without so much as blinking an eye.

What does Thanksgiving mean to you? Visit our Facebook site, look up **ILR at Baldwin Wallace** and share your thoughts about Thanksgiving. Your fellow ILR members and I look forward to hearing from you as we approach this extraordinary holiday.

President **John F. Kennedy** once reflected on Thanksgiving by saying: **"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live them."** And I say "Amen to that!"

Fall Classes Included Opportunities for Artistic Expression



Cleveland Rocks and So Do You!

Guest musician Brandon Hoff demonstrates his electric violin. (Photo by John Gray)



Eco Printing on Fabric

Course instructor Julie Friedman with project samples. (Photo by Pam McConnell)



Watercolors 101

Anne Cole (seated at right) discusses watercolor techniques with her students. (Photo by Paula Gustin)

2027 Travel Schedule Update

By Maria Phillips and Joan O'Malley, Travel Committee Co-Chairs



Tom Brennan

Tom Brennan, Travel Committee Co-Chair, has retired after serving in this capacity since 2018. We thank him for all the years he assisted in planning and providing trips! **Joan O'Malley will replace Tom as Co-Chair** of the Travel Committee.

We have **added a fourth travel partner to our Travel Program: Collette Tours**. They provide trips around the USA and all seven continents to over 200 Lifelong Learning Organizations. There is no minimum number of travelers needed for their tours. **Registration for these trips will be through Allyson Capon at Great Day Tours.**

A travel survey was emailed to members the beginning of November and closed on Nov. 12. The survey included a listing of proposed travel destinations for 2027-2028, encompassing one-day trips, multi-day trips and international travel from all four travel partners**. Based on survey results, all available trips will be posted on our website and emailed to members on Dec. 8.**



ILR travelers visit Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan. (Photos courtesy of Maria Phillips)

Our annual travel show will be held at Strongsville United Methodist Church on Dec. 8 from 10 a.m. to noon. All four travel partners will present a short overview of their offered trips. After the show, you can contact the travel partner to register. Trips are available to ILR members and their guests. Travelers do not have to be a member of ILR. Specific information for each trip will be posted on our website.

Any **questions about travel** can be referred to Maria Phillips at ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com.

Cultural Events Update

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

We had a wonderful late summer/early fall! We enjoyed Blossom Music Festival with the Cleveland Orchestra, saw Cole Porter's "Let's Misbehave" and attended a Cleveland Guardians Game where everyone got Guardians hoodies!

We have a bus taking a group to watch the **"Clue" musical** at Playhouse Square in late November and two full buses to see the **Christmas Holiday Concert** at Severance Hall on Dec. 13.

Please join us for the following events, selected on the basis of our cultural events survey results. An event-specific flyer will be emailed to you for reservation information prior to each event. Any member may invite a guest, and buses will be provided for all events. Some dates are tentative at this time.

- **Cleveland Pops Orchestra "Stage to Screen: Broadway Movie Hits"** – Jan. 30, 2027
- **Cleveland Botanical Garden Orchid Show** – February/March 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.

Upcoming Special Events

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

Dec. 16 – Holiday Luncheon

Join your ILR Colleagues at the Holiday Luncheon on Wednesday, Dec. 16. **The event starts at 11:30 a.m. at Baldwin Wallace University's Strosacker Student Union**, located at E. Grand and Tressel streets in Berea. The dining halls open at 11 a.m. After a delicious lunch provided by BW Catering and Food Services, the **Amethyst Strings** from the Cleveland Pops Orchestra will perform holiday selections. Reservation forms have been emailed to members.

We have a **unique opportunity this year to help our neighbors in need.** The Campus Cupboard, which is run by and for BW students, has shared a list of requested items you may wish to bring and donate at the luncheon. **See page 3 of this newsletter for the complete list.** Your gifts are greatly appreciated!

Feb. 23, 2027 – Carl Fernstrum Concert

"Music of Neil Diamond"

March 10, 2027 – Spring Luncheon

New Barley Corn will again entertain attendees. Registration and payment details will be emailed to you.

May 19, 2027 – Book and Author Luncheon

We will be hosting three local authors. Registration and payment details will be emailed to you.

Watch your email for other upcoming speaker and concert events!

ILR Calendar 2026-2027

Nov. 16	Winter 2027 course catalog posted on ilrbw.org
Nov. 29	Winter 2027 course registration begins at 9 a.m. (In-person registration from 10 a.m.-noon at ILR Office on Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2, 7 & 9)
Dec. 8	Travel Show at Strongsville United Methodist Church, 10 a.m.-noon
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. 11, 2027	Winter 2027 classes begin
Jan. 30, 2027	Cleveland Pops Orchestra "Stage to Screen: Broadway Movie Hits"
February/March	Cleveland Botanical Garden Orchid Show
Feb. 22, 2027	Spring 2027 course catalog posted on ilrbw.org
Feb. 23, 2027	Carl Fernstrum Concert
March 7, 2027	Spring 2027 course registration begins at 9 a.m.
March 10, 2027	Spring Luncheon
March 21, 2027	Spring 2027 course registration ends
March 31, 2027	Membership deadline for 2026-2027 ILR academic year
April 5, 2027	Spring 2027 classes begin

May 19, 2027	Book and Author Luncheon
June 5, 2027	Cleveland POPS Orchestra “Symphony of Stars”

** Dates are subject to change*

In Memoriam



ILR member Carole C. Mason passed away peacefully on Sept. 25. Prior to retirement, she taught fourth grade in Berea City Schools for 38 years. Carole graduated from The Ohio State University and shared her love of Ohio history with her students. She also cherished **many friendships with fellow teachers, including retired colleagues in later years.**



Carole Mason

Carole was a lifelong Cleveland Guardians fan. In addition to following the team, she enjoyed traveling and spending time with friends and family.

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 ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com for questions.

Connect with ILR and Share with Others --

Website:	**Facebook:**
Ilrbw.org	https://www.facebook.com/ilrbaldwinwallace/

ILR Today is published and distributed four times each year by the Institute for Learning in Retirement at Baldwin Wallace University. The newsletter team includes Paula Gustin, Elaine Joseph and Dan Bomeli. Send your feedback, questions or ideas to ilrhelpdeskbwu@gmail.com. If you send photos, be sure all identifiable people have given their permission to publish.