

President's Message

August 2011

As September approaches, I find myself eager to resume classes. The day after Labor Day still feels to me like the “real” first day of a new year and I am very much looking forward to our fall programming.

I became a convert to SLR from the first study group I took, even though I was intimidated by the fact I had to give a presentation. I soon learned that the group was encouraging and the moderators supportive, and have since calmed myself to the point that I find I now look forward to researching, writing and presenting my topic. I can actually feel my brain working. I also love the recognition of a job well-done, which spurs me on to undertake the next challenge. It was amazing (and amusing) to find that I'd never been as challenged learning something new as I was this spring with the Beginner's Recorder Group. Thanks to the great support of our peer-instructor and classmates, I felt comfortable with my stumbling and had lots of fun along the way.

“Keeping our brains stimulated and our spirits young” is what SLR is all about. It's brain fitness for those 55 and better. I've been an adult educator for most of my work life and all the research about adult learning will tell you that SLR has it right! It's the ideal way for adults to learn – interactive, enjoyable, comfortable, safe.

As well, if you follow the research on what we need to do to keep mentally healthy, SLR proves to be just what the doctor ordered. When you join SLR you embark not only on a journey of mutual discovery, but also an enjoyable way to stimulate those brain cells.

Another added bonus of SLR is the interesting people we meet and the friends we make along the way. Socializing with others who are vibrant and interesting is as vital to health and well-being as anything else.

Fall Programming: Study Groups and Activity Groups

Just as our individual brains are growing so are our learning opportunities increasing. I hope you will be as excited as I am about our expanded programming and new directions.

We sent out two brochures with this message:

- Our Fall **Study Groups** brochure (which you may already have and which outlines our “traditional” offerings), and
- our new Fall **Activity Groups and Social Events** brochure.

The Activity Groups were launched with great success last spring and have now become part of our official program offerings. (P.S. If this is your second copy of the Study Group brochure, please pass it along to a friend.)

These two brochures provide you with the entire programming we have planned for you this fall.

As you will see from a close look at the brochures, we have tried to differentiate the two groups in a few ways. One is to re-name our traditional peer-learning offerings “Study Groups” and our new, peer-instructor offerings “Activity Groups” in the hopes of clearly distinguishing these two variations of adult learning methodologies. Activity Groups are peer-led by fellow SLR members and do not require a presentation by participants. They emphasize learning by doing (e.g., the Recorder group) or learning through discussion (e.g., the Round Table). Our Study Groups emphasize peer learning and require each member to give a 20-minute presentation followed by an open discussion. A final way that we have tried to distinguish the two is to color code them: blue for **Study Groups**; green for **Activity groups**.

For this term only, you will have to juggle between the two brochures when making your decision as to which one, two or three groups you most want to attend. In the future, there will be only one brochure.

The website (www.slrlondon.ca) also lists both the Study Group and the Activity Group offerings. That format may be easier for some. Check it out if you have internet access.

Registration: I want to remind you to register as soon as possible for the Study and/or Activity Group(s) of your choice as they are filling up quickly. Remember, registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. You can register at any time by mailing your registration form and cheque to SLR, dropping it off at the SLR office, or attending the Open House.

Annual Membership Fee: Our low membership fee of \$10 covers the period of September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012. It is due now. If you already paid it when you registered in the Spring, then ignore that section on the registration form, otherwise send it in with your course selection(s).

Open House: Mark your calendar to attend our Fall Open House on Wednesday, September 14th at 10 a.m. at the Mount. This is another chance to talk with the moderators, register for the Study or Activity Group(s) you most want and sign up for the Meet & Greet luncheon on September 22nd. Come meet old friends and welcome new ones. Refreshments, as always, will be served.

Co-Registration: Co-registration begins at the Open House and **is only applicable for the Study Groups**. Co-registration is your opportunity to sign up for a 2nd Study Group at no charge **IF** that Study Group has room. You will be notified just prior to the first week of classes if you have been successful.

Fall Social Events: Check the Activity Group brochure or the website (www.slrlondon.ca) for details about the Meet & Greet luncheon and a listing of all the social events planned for the fall term.

Website: Information about SLR, including descriptions of the entire fall programming, registration procedures, our social events, volunteer needs, news updates, our vision, guiding principles and history can all be found on our website: www.slrlondon.ca. Diane Pilkington keeps the website up-to-date and coordinates page contributions from our various committees and a number of SLR members. Jeff Keenor's photos grace our banner and are changed periodically to reflect the season. Check in often!

FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

We are launching a brand new learning opportunity this Fall for our members: **LIVING A HEALTHY LIFE WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS**. This course is in association with Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) and Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA), and is targeted to those who have a chronic condition, as well as to those who are caretakers. (See Fall Activity Group brochure for more details) Note: SLR has only 7 seats available, so register asap if you are interested.

Peer Leadership Training: Another exciting opportunity exists within this initiative. CCAC trains peer leaders to facilitate these workshops, again at no cost. Interested candidates would take the 6-session workshop and be committed to the 4-day training. They will then lead at least two future sessions for SLR and/or other organizations using a scripted manual. Two training sessions have been scheduled: October 5, 6, 11, 12th in Mitchell and March 1,

Our Future Depends on All of Us!

Currently your Executive Council and all committees are working together to frame and secure our future. By the end of 2012 we need to report to Westminster College Foundation as to where we will be located and what our needs will be in order to request future funding. We also know that we need to be in a position to secure funding from other sources to sustain and grow ourselves.

We truly depend on all members to help us move forward. It's a celebrated fact that since our inception SLR has been completely member-run. Your goodwill and generosity enables us to continue to provide a unique educational program that meets the needs of seniors. There are many ways our members contribute: through their volunteer work, donations, participating on committees, giving feedback and

sharing ideas. We could not be successful without you – and we cannot continue to grow and foster this success without you.

So what can you do, whether on a committee or serving in some other capacity or just participating in courses?

- You can keep your eyes and ears open for possible new locations and/or sources of funding and pass the information on to members of the appropriate committees or your executive.
- You can help us grow our membership by introducing your friends to the benefits of SLR.
- You can volunteer as a moderator or for one of the committees.
- You can suggest new courses and activity groups.
- You can help us get information and brochures about our courses to public venues and events.

And you can . . .

Make a Donation: 2013 is the year when our entire funding will no longer be solely dependent on Westminster College Foundation and membership fees. By June 2013, we hope to have a new, more cost-effective facility. Thus, fundraising and donations have become a critical component of our annual budget. We are a charitable organization and can issue tax receipts. Some examples of what your donations support are: room/office rental; classroom and office equipment/supplies; advertising/brochures; daily operating expenses (phone, internet connection, service charges, stamps, etc) – and our future!

Members who have left us . . .

Sadly, we have lost three members this summer: Julia Watts, Harry Sirna and Bernice Gareau. They will be missed.

In closing, I wish you a healthy and happy rest of your summer and look forward to seeing all of you again at the Open House, Meet & Greet, or when classes resume.

Bring your friends so they too can share in the learning and the fun!

Susan Booth
President