MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As I write this, I’m thinking back to this time last year – what a difference! Back then we had started in-person classes on the Union College campus, planning trips – all the “normal” stuff. And then came March and our world changed. Our spring classes were cancelled or postponed, our trips were cancelled, our luncheon was cancelled. At first we hoped the pandemic would be a short-term event but as it became obvious that would not be the case, the Steering Committee and Curriculum Committee quickly learned to use Zoom and to brainstorm how we would move forward.

It became obvious that if we were to continue UCALL we would have to move to a virtual format for classes and meetings. We decided to host a one session, free class to help members try Zoom and get used to a virtual format. The first class with Dr. Ricki Lewis was very successful, so we added three more. At the same time, Valerie was looking into an online registration system.

With thanks for the technical support from Union and a lot of work for Val, a new system was implemented that has generally worked well.

Fall classes have begun and we definitely have some interesting courses on the schedule. Planning is ongoing by an ad hoc Winter Program Planning Team for the winter term with some exciting options you can read about in another section of this newsletter. Under the leadership of Jim Burns, a new committee called UCALL 2021 has been formed to focus on how UCALL will look in the future.

I hope you and your families have stayed healthy throughout this crisis. I am happy to have joined many of you in our online classes this fall and look forward to an exciting future for UCALL!

Peggy King
Chair of the UCALL Steering Committee
The following members have recently joined the UCALL Steering Committee:

**Michael Collins** is originally from Baltimore, Maryland, where he attended the Johns Hopkins University. He earned a Ph.D. in nuclear physics from the University of Maryland and worked as an engineer and manager at the Knolls Atomic Power Lab for 33 years. Mike joined UCALL in 2017 and he and his wife Stella have thoroughly enjoyed the UCALL experience. In addition to recently joining the UCALL Steering Committee, Mike is Co-Chair for the Winter Program Planning Team and Vice-Chair for the Curriculum Committee.

**Jeffrey Rothman** has lived, worked, and studied in the Capital District for more than forty years. Armed with a Master’s degree in Counseling and Business Administration from SUNY Albany, he worked for New York State, primarily in public health. He also served as a consultant for the Thomas Jefferson Medical School in Pennsylvania in the areas of addiction prevention and treatment and HIV prevention and care. Retirement has brought time for such diverse activities as international travel, reading, kayaking, and building a house in the country.

Retiring from the UCALL Steering Committee in June 2020 are **Linda Doyle** and **Harry Willis**. Linda and Harry served two terms each on the committee and both remain active on the Curriculum Committee. We thank them for their six years of service and look forward to their continued involvement with UCALL.

There will be two vacancies on the Steering Committee in June 2021. If you would like to nominate someone, or yourself, please contact the UCALL office.
ANNOUNCING THE 2020 NIEMEYER AWARD

Each year at the UCALL Closing Luncheon in May, the recipient or recipients of the Niemeyer Award has been announced. This year has obviously been different. The COVID 19 pandemic changed many things, including the closing luncheon: it was canceled, along with our spring courses. But one thing has not changed. The Carl Niemeyer Award is being presented! It is with great pleasure that we announce the 2020 Award goes to not one, but two recipients: Joan Ham and Don Gavin, a married couple, who are both longtime, hardworking UCALL volunteers.

Dr. Carl Niemeyer was a distinguished professor and chair of the English Department at Union College. He was named the Thomas Lamont Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature and taught courses in the American novel, American civilization, Shakespeare, and modern European fiction. While serving as a Union College exchange professor under a Fulbright travel grant, he established the first course in American literature at St. Andrews University in Scotland. Dr. Niemeyer was instrumental in helping to organize the UCALL program at Union College. The Niemeyer Award, established in 2014, is named in his honor and awarded to persons who “through long service have contributed to the enhancement and quality of UCALL.”

Joan Ham has degrees from Wellesley College, Boston University, and UAlbany. She began her professional life as a teacher (in Izmir, Turkey!) and then went on to a long, illustrious career in social work. She joined UCALL in 1999 and has taught and coordinated many courses on diverse subjects, including South America, Africa, India, Foreign Films, Robber Barons, and the Roaring Twenties. She has served on the Steering Committee and Curriculum Committee, and calls her participation in UCALL her “biggest project of the last twenty years.”

Don Gavin earned degrees in physics from Holy Cross College and the University of Rhode Island and worked for General Electric for 36 years, 35 at Knolls Atomic Power Lab. A physicist in his working career, he always had a deep love of American history, and after his retirement he joined various local history groups. He fell in love with UCALL after attending one class and two years later taught his first course on the American Revolution. He went on to present 35-40 more. Don has served on the Steering Committee, including briefly as its Chair, and the Curriculum Committee.

What makes the story of our two recipients even more delightful is the fact that they first met through their involvement in UCALL. When Don is asked what was the best part of UCALL, he says, “The answer is easy. I met Joan Ham.” And Joan’s answer to the same question is “Of course through UCALL I met Don and have lived happily ever after.”

Joan and Don’s names will be posted on a plaque in Reamer Auditorium, for all to see.
Cliff Brown, one of UCALL’s favorite speakers, has presented a course on presidential and congressional elections regularly since 1992. He describes the political landscape and current trends for the elections and adds an additional lecture a few days after the election to analyze the results. In addition to explaining polling results and implications, he critiques the tactics and strategies of the contending parties. All are placed in the broader historical and constitutional context of the parties, the Presidency, and the Electoral College. In this election year of complex, fiercely contested races, his course has been especially pertinent.

Brown received B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard, and after teaching stints at UAlbany and Siena, joined the Union faculty in 1978; he is now the Robert Porter Patterson Professor of Government. His special interests are the U.S. presidency, campaign finance, presidential elections, foreign policy, and defense policy. Cliff generally lectures without detailed notes and easily shifts perspective or even topics in classroom discussion. In addition to teaching, he has also engaged in political consulting and polling for many years.

Several of the books he has authored, co-authored, or edited illustrate the breadth of his interests:

- *A Campaign of Ideas: The 1980 Anderson/Lucey Platform* (Contributions in American Studies)
- *Solomon Northup: The Complete Story of the Author of Twelve Years a Slave*
- *Serious Money: Fundraising and Contributing in Presidential Nomination Campaigns*

Union’s undergraduates are inspired by and appreciate Cliff as much as UCALL members do. In the website “Rate Your Professor,” he has received an unusually high rating, 4.5 out of 5.0! We are especially fortunate to be able to count Professor Brown among our most loyal presenters. We sincerely thank him and all of the many fine lecturers who donate their time, talent, and wisdom to UCALL.

"We thoroughly enjoyed Professor Brown’s insightful and thoughtful presentation on the upcoming election."
Join us on Zoom in January (and into February) for nine UCALL programs to enrich and brighten those winter afternoons! Programs will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 2:30 pm. Topics, presenters and dates are listed below. Online registration for Winter UCALL will be announced by email and on our website in mid-November.

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<td>A Cultural Diversity in India</td>
<td>Dr. Bidhan Chandra</td>
<td>Tuesday, Jan. 5</td>
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<td>The Music of Erik Satie</td>
<td>Dr. Frank Strauss</td>
<td>Thursday, Jan. 7</td>
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<td>Atomic Doctors</td>
<td>Dr. James L. Nolan, Jr</td>
<td>Tuesday, Jan. 12</td>
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<td>Seeing What You’re Missing: Thinking Clearly in a World of Illusion,</td>
<td>Dr. Christopher Chabris</td>
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<td>Misinformation, and Deception</td>
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<td>Revitalization of Schenectady County</td>
<td>David Hogencamp</td>
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<td>States in American Constitutionalism: Interpretation, Authority, and</td>
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<td>Politics</td>
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<td>The Kindness of Strangers – Storytelling</td>
<td>Kate Dudding and Alden (Joe)</td>
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<td>New Visions for a Quality Region: How the Capital Region Will Keep</td>
<td>Jennifer Ceponis</td>
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<td>Moving Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic</td>
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<td>Art History – Northern Italy 1300 – 1500</td>
<td>Dr. Louisa Matthew</td>
<td>Tuesday, Feb. 2</td>
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Devoted fan of Baroque music and Josef Schmee's classes, Lucy Comly.

Photo by Jim Comly
This class will take a look at what stages many people go through before starting a fitness program, the benefits that exercise can provide, and programming options in or out of a gym setting. The class will also give you guidelines on the focus of your program, setting goals, and planning your fitness regimen.

Speaker: **Terry Santoro** began her career in the fitness industry starting in 2003 with an associate’s degree in the health sciences. She then obtained her certifications from the American Council on Exercise in both Personal Training and Group Exercise. She also holds certifications in Spinning, Zumba, Zumba Step, Strong By Zumba, Kettlebells, Indo-Row, Viper Athletic, TRX Suspension Training, and Silver Sneakers. Terry wanted to continue her education and returned to school where she graduated from Sage College of Albany as Valedictorian for the class of 2012 and has her Bachelor’s Degree in Physical Education. After receiving her degree, she became the Fitness Director at the Schenectady Jewish Community Center in 2013 where she has had the pleasure of teaching classes, training clients, and overseeing and directing a talented group of instructors, trainers, and Sports and Wellness Associates. Terry continues to educate herself with online courses and live lectures to stay both current in the changing trends of fitness and to provide the most current research to her clients when developing programming.

Coordinated by Kathy Palmieri

This Zoom webinar is open to UCALL members and friends free of charge. Registration is required to receive link access to the event. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

[Click here to register.](#)
Dear Members and Friends:

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and well during this difficult time in our world. This fall semester feels like no other in the history of our program due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to the dedication and hard work by our committees, presenters and Union College staff, we have adapted to remote learning. While it is not the same as gathering in person, it has allowed us to continue our mission of providing quality learning and enrichment learning opportunities.

Many of you wrote to tell me how much you appreciate the opportunity to continue participating in UCALL courses, and especially hearing from your favorite presenters! I hope that you are enjoying your classes. Your feedback is extremely important to us, so please respond to the online survey that will be emailed at the end of the semester.

The Winter Program Team has a wonderful series of lectures planned for January 2021. Highlights are included in this newsletter. More details will be announced by email and on our website in mid-November.

Our annual appeal letter was mailed last week. I hope you will take the time to read it and consider a gift to the Friends of UCALL.

Thank you for supporting us through membership, participation and donations. Your support is vital as we continue to work through these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Valerie D’Amario
Director of UCALL

Support UCALL by making a gift to the Friends of UCALL today.