Committee on Ministry
Open Forum & Progress Check

The Committee on Ministry (COM) will hold an Open Forum on December 11, after the worship service, to gather information and do a progress check on how the congregation is doing. Please plan to attend so your voice can be heard.

The COM has progress to report on 2 of our 3 goals for the year (the 3rd goal dealing with programs and committees was not addressed this past month):

Goal 1: Focus on healing our church.
Reports on the 3 Meet & Greets with Rev. Zelazny which were held in October and early November were all very positive. Forty to forty-five people attended, which represents about 25% of the congregation. Because of the interest in this format, the Committee is considering doing more in January to give others the chance to attend such a great way to learn more about Rev. Bill, more about others in the congregation, and more about the congregation itself.

The Listening Circle held on October 27 by Rev. Bill, with about 15 people in attendance, offered people a powerful way to listen to each other and to be heard. Those in attendance were able to hear others views and found it helpful and informational about the events of this past year.

Goal 2: Educate the congregation in right relationships, identify techniques and promote them.
The COM and the Board, with the help of Chris Ariel, will begin training on how to hold difficult conversations. We hope to bring this learning to the congregation as well.

If you would like to contact the COM you can talk to any member of the committee, Barbara Coppola, Judie Porter, Sam Jernigan, Susan VanDerhoof, Sondra Gold or David Pedrick. You can also reach the Committee on Ministry by emailing us at committeeonministry@channingchurch.org.

~ Submitted by Barbara Coppola, Chair, COM

December Services

Sunday, December 4
Advent can be for UUs too
Rev. Bill Zelazny
The religious ritual of Advent isn’t something that Unitarian Universalists generally celebrate every year. In the Christian tradition, Advent is the season of waiting and expectant hope. Unitarian Universalist can live with waiting and expectant hope too. Bill will talk about how the spirit of Advent can be a useful concept for Unitarian Universalists even though we may not be awaiting the birth of Jesus or coming of Christ at the end of the age.

This Sunday we will also hold a new member recognition ceremony and launch our 2016 Guest at Your Table campaign.

Sunday, December 11
The Elephant in the Room
Guest Speaker: Rev. Thomas Schade
A sermon based on the ancient story of blind people and the elephant. It provides a springboard into the intellectual history of UUism since the mid-20th century.

Sunday, December 18
Light and Hope
Rev. Bill Zelazny, Jessica Thomas, Children, Youth, and Adult Members of the Congregation
Many religions – Christianity, Judaism, Pagan, Zoroastrianism, and African-American traditions, use the symbol of light in the midst of the dark of winter to remind their followers...
December Services continued:
that there is hope. This Sunday, Bill and Jess, along with children, youth and adult members of the congregation will join together in a multi-generational service to explore the symbol of light and its connection to hope.

Sat., December 24, 5:00pm
A Christmas Eve
Celebration
Channing Choir, Rev. Bill Zelazny & members of the congregation
A service of lessons and carols concluding with the traditional singing of Silent Night with the congregation holding candles. The Channing Choir and members of the congregation will bring music and texts of the season. Come at 4:45 to join in pre-service caroling.

No worship Service Sunday, December 25th!

Sunday, January 1
Creative Sparks:
Channing Celebrates the New Year
New Year’s Day this year falls on a Sunday, and our service will be a joyful celebration of friendship and our community’s creative energies. Is there a creative spark in you? Do you make music? Write poetry? Can you tell a story or collect your thoughts into a reading that will inspire us as we look to the year ahead? Audience or performer, on January 1 at 10:00 we’ll all be in it together. For more information about “Creative Sparks: Channing Celebrates the New Year,” please connect with Eleanor Doumato.

FROM THE MINISTER

The holiday season is upon us. There will be much to do to get ready. Unfortunately there is something that we often forget to do to get ourselves ready -- take time for ourselves. You know, do something that we want to do that will make us feel good about the season, like perhaps stopping to really look at the decorations, stopping to listen to holiday music, stopping to take a walk to look at the stars in the winter night, stopping to sit in quiet reflection. But, there is something else that we should do this time of the year – be mindful of what we are doing and experiencing, both the “self-times” and the “busy times.” Being mindful means to observe thoughts and feelings without judging them to be good or bad, without believing, for instance, that there’s a right or wrong way to think or feel in a given moment.

When we practice mindfulness, we can tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than either rehashing the past or imagining the future. Instead of letting life pass by and saying in January, “I don’t know where the time went” or “I hardly remember the holidays”, live fully into and through the holidays and appreciate the gifts of life.

May your Holidays be filled with joy and good cheer and the New Year bring you peace and happiness.

~Rev. Bill

A Holiday Message from Rev. Bill

I know that for some people the holidays are difficult times because they engender bad memories or the recent loss of a loved one is making them feel numb. If you feel the need to talk about the emotions that the holiday brings up don’t hesitate to call me.

DECEMBER CAREGIVERS
December 1-15: Ruth Jernigan
December 15-31: Jim Freess
Please call with any personal needs and/or needs among our church community

DECEMBER USHERS
December 4: Milly Jessen
December 11: Cynthia Skelton & David Cooper
December 18: Judy Byrnes

DECEMBER CHIMERS
December 4: Linda Beall
December 11: Jim Freess
December 18: Christine Ariel

Dec. 25th: Our 6th Annual "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" Concert, 11 to 12 noon – with Linda Beall & Chris Ariel. Come to Touro Park and clap or honk if you like the chiming!

DECEMBER GREETERS
December 4: Calvin Pierce
December 11: Mary Benson
December 18: Ruth Jernigan

FROM THE MINISTER

TIME FOR A BREAK
B O A R D  O F  T R U S T E E S

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It’s Time for a Check-Up

It’s been a busy fall for the Channing Board of Trustees. We began by establishing a challenging list of goals for both the Board and our new minister and we’ve been working hard! Necessarily much of what we do concerns the “nuts and bolts” of keeping the Church running smoothly. We negotiated renewed contracts with our hard-working staff members, formed a new Communications Team and, with their guidance, approved a new website, social media and communications policy for Channing. We are working on upgrading our various technology systems so that whether it’s sermons in the Sanctuary or emails from the Church office our message comes across loud and clear. Very soon we will be rolling out a new property Master Plan (stay tuned!) and we are beginning to work on a Safe Congregations Policy to ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable at Channing. Beyond all our necessary “nuts and bolts” policy decisions, what we really hoped to accomplish this year was to bring folks back to Channing, to affirm and strengthen our community with “irresistible Sunday services and extra –curricular activities that feed the desire for community”. We’ve been working in concert with the Committee on Ministry to forge a strong shared ministry with Reverend Bill and to rebuild trust and transparency within our congregation. Believe it or not, by the end of this month we will be half-way through our church year. So it’s time for a check-up.

In January the Board will review our shared ministry goals and assess our progress to date. So how are we doing? We’d like your suggestions and opinions. You can send the Board a letter or email: board@channingchurch.org, or speak with any member of the Board or Committee on Ministry. You can also attend the open forum hosted by the COM after service on Sunday December 11th. So please take a minute and tell us what you think.

~Barbara Nowicki, Co-President, Channing Board of Trustees

WORSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

The latter weeks of the year are a time of giving – recently giving thanks for the people and good fortune in our lives, and now giving thoughtfulness to family and friends, sprinkled with some gifts, as Christmas and other seasonal celebrations approach. Channing will celebrate Christmas with a service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24th at 5:00 pm. Because the 25th falls on Sunday, there will not be a service on Christmas Day.

New Year’s Day is on the following Sunday. Instead of a regular service, there will be a “Creative Sparks” ceremony to welcome the New Year at 10:00 am. Please see the separate announcement about it on page two.

On behalf of the entire congregation, the Worship Committee would like to give its thanks to the many Channing members who contribute to the delivery of our services week after week. Ushers, greeters, sound assistants, flower lady, candle lady, sexton, office administrator and others give essential support to the Worship Leader, Associates, Music Director and choir. Channing’s volunteers for Sunday services are generous in their time and spirit, and are much appreciated.

Notwithstanding so much volunteerism, though, we would like to find 2 or 3 new volunteers to share serving as Worship Associate. Taking an active part in delivering services with Rev. Bill once every 6 weeks or so is very satisfying, takes little time, and is easy to learn. It does not require committee membership – just your interest and enthusiasm. Please speak with Eleanor Doumato, David Cooper or David Pedrick if you’re curious about finding out more.

~David Pedrick, Worship Committee Chair

MISS MANNERS ON CHURCH ETIQUETTE

It is enjoyable to greet each other prior to the start of the Sunday service, but please be mindful that we have come together for a religious service. When Janet begins playing the Prelude just before 10:00 am, it is time to stop talking and become in spiritual community with the others present. Please listen to the Prelude quietly as it opens the service and our minds.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

In RE (Religious Education) our children and youth continue to explore the 7 UU principles through story and discussion based on the book, “What if Nobody Forgave?”. Look for our principles posters hanging in the green room of the Parish Hall for a refresher. Additionally, the Channing Youth co-hosted a fun filled game night on November 12th along with the Channing Board and the Committee on Ministry.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS NEEDED: Please consider volunteering as an assistant to the Sunday morning RE classes. You may sign up for single or multiple classes via our sign-up sheet on the RE table in the Parish Hall.

To spread the joy, the entire Channing community is invited to participate in these upcoming events:

- **Giving Tree**: November 27 through December 11
- **Holiday Caroling at Blenheim**: Wednesday, December 14 at 7:00pm
- **Holiday Caroling at the Community Meal at Channing Parish Hall**: Monday, December 19 at 5:00pm

Our very active Youth Group (grades 6 and up) continues to meet two Sunday evenings per month (2nd and 4th Sundays except on holidays). This month, on Sunday, December 11th, they will be shopping for youths in need. Additionally, the Youth Group is sponsoring the following events for all ages:

- **Holiday Movie Night and PJ drive**: Saturday, December 3, 5:30-8:00 PM
- **Annual Holiday Cookie Contest and Sale**: Sunday, December 11 during fellowship

Please see the weekly electronic announcements, website, and RE facebook page for details.

The Coming of Age (COA) program, a rite of passage for Youth in grades 8-12 has begun. We are looking forward to mentoring and supporting three Channing Youth who will be making this journey for the remainder of the church year. Other youth are still invited to join. Please consider being a mentor if asked.

To offer your support and/or participation in RE programs for children and youth, please contact Jessica Thomas at dre@channingchurch.org or any member of the RE Committee. We always need volunteers and we make it easy and fun.

-Kathy Takata
Religious Education Committee
CAREGIVING UPDATE

Many thanks to Tonia Croce and Susan Kieronski, who so ably served as Caregiving coordinators for November! Without our dedicated volunteers, we just wouldn’t be able to offer the support and comfort to those in need in our congregation. As always, if you’d like to help, please contact either Nickie Kates or Barbara Russell-Willett, the Caregiving chairs, and they’ll be thrilled to hear from you!

Our love and condolences go to Sherrill Warch and her family, who are coping with the sudden death of her 21-year-old grandson Alex from a suspected drug overdose. Many of us remember Alex as he grew up attending church and RE at Channing, and are deeply saddened by his tragic death. Besides Sherrill, Alex is survived by his mother Kathy and his brother Adam. At the time of this writing, a funeral date is not confirmed, but a service at Memorial Funeral Home and a reception afterwards at Channing are planned. Please keep Sherrill and her family in your hearts with cards, notes, or offers of food and other assistance at this sad time.

We are keeping Cal Pierce in our thoughts as well as his sister continues cancer treatments and his daughter is struggling with poor health.

Julie Herrick suffered a bad fall recently but is progressing with the help of a cane and supports for her fractured wrist and leg. She would like to thank all her Channing friends for their assistance and emotional support.

Ginny Spaulding continues to recover from months of chemotherapy and radiation. She has been able to return to work, which is great news! She too is grateful for all the support of Channing members she has received to date.

Emily Pederson is back in the U.S. after spending time in Mexico researching and filming her documentary on the fates of 43 southern Mexican college students who went missing during a school trip in 2014. To watch this stirring 18-minute film, go to www.fieldofvision.org.

Our Caregiving coordinators for December are Ruth Jernigan from December 1-15 and Jim Freess from December 15-31. Please call them with any caregiving needs within our congregation. All of us involved with Caregiving wish you a joyful Christmas and holiday season enjoying the company of family and friends.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Sue VanDerhoof is starting a “Prayer Shawl Ministry”, a group of knitters who meet and knit shawls for those who are sick or are going through a difficult time. They can also be given for happy occasions too, such as a marriage or new baby. Once the shawls are finished the minister can bless them or they can be passed around the congregation so they can absorb all the caring thoughts.

If you are interested in joining this new group, please contact Susan VanDerhoof. Our first organizational meeting will be held on Saturday, December 10, at 10:00am, in the Channing House Library.

COMMUNITY MEAL

Monday, December 19, 3:30-6:15pm, in the Parish Hall
Many thanks to all who helped with the November Community Meal. It was a wonderful meal, as usual, prepared by Joan Dermody. If you would like to volunteer in the future, please contact Meal Manager, Joy Benson, to see what's needed: communitymeal@channingchurch.org

SHARE THE PLATE

This month half of our cash offerings and checks with the memo “Share the Plate” will be shared with Greenlock Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc., a favorite charity of our beloved member, the late Loie Kessler. It’s a non-profit organization that partners with its horses to offer both Hippotherapy and Therapeutic Riding that teaches specific riding skills to physically, developmentally, mentally, and emotionally-challenged persons from throughout RI and Southeastern MA.

~Linda Beall, for Channing Caregiving
GREEN CORNER

Disaster!
Trump repeated that word ad nauseam about all things Clinton during the campaign and debates. His election is the genuine disaster for the climate. I wish I had a sliver of hope for its future under a Trump administration, but I still can't muster any, and I'm still devastated. The timing couldn't be worse. But I'm trying to find positive things we can do, because WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP AND GIVE IN!

Some initial thoughts:
1. Stay active, especially on the local and state level. It's now our best hope for the environment.
2. Stay with the divestment process, and keep upping your energy efficiency and alternatives source usage. We can't break fossil fuel companies financially, but we can give them as little money and backing as possible.
3. Give strategically. Support organizations that pledge to work with broad coalitions, with real plans to thwart Trump's goals. Two of my choices are Friends of the Earth (FOE.org) and 350.org. Right after the election, I was deluged with emails from groups saying, "we can fix this if you send us money right now!" Uh-uh! I'm also generously supporting Planned Parenthood, whose funding will surely be slashed. (And I'm joining the thousands giving in Mike Pence's name, so he gets informed of his "generosity.")
4. Keep telling the Trump administration whenever you disapprove of an environmental policy. It might be a spit in the wind, but at least we'll be on record.

5. Support organizations serving other threatened groups. Some of my choices are ACLU, GLAD, and International Rescue Committee. And wear lots of safety pins!

Thank you, Val Larkin, for forwarding this Angela Davis quote: "I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."

~Beth Milham, Chair, Green Congregation Committee

ECO-BITS & TIPS

Election Special: Trump, conspiracies & anthropogenic global warming

I remain in shock from last week's election. Rather than having the first woman president who voiced support for international cooperation to reduce the impact of global warming, a vast swath of middle America and the southern US voted for Donald Trump (DT). As a reminder, DT has clearly stated that he "believes" global warming:

- And "the concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive." (Tweet, July 6, 2012)
- Hypothesizing that President "Obama's talking about all of this with the global warming and ... a lot of it's a hoax. It's a hoax. I mean, it's a money-making industry, okay? It's a hoax, a lot of it." (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina presidential campaign rally, December 30, 2015).
- And in the September 24, 2015, edition of CNN's New Day: "I don't believe in climate change." (There are MANY more examples from "the world according to Trump" but we'll leave it here for now.)

He also generally questions science as a basis for implementing policies and making funding decisions to benefit and improve health. Here are just a couple of examples of his more flippant remarks:

- On numerous occasions, DT has linked vaccines with Autism, stating during a Republican debate in 2015, "We've had so many instances. . . . A child went to have the vaccine, got very, very sick, and now is autistic."
- And, a couple more examples of anti-science rhetoric: DT called the National Institutes of Health "terrible." He has also said that he would eliminate the E.P.A. because, in part, of their plans to regulate carbon dioxide (also backed by the Supreme Court), the major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions by percentage, and long known since the Nixon, Carter and Reagan years, when scientific research was both supported and valued.
- I'm all for giving someone a chance to govern, even if he's on the opposite end of the political spectrum from me, but DT deserves a VERY SHORT leash because of his dangerous opinions. DT is not only anti-science, but also anti-environment and anti-human. Protesting and civil disobedience of these alarming views are not only our right, but our obligation.

~Craig Gaspard, Green Congregation Committee
AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHANNING GROWTH CONVOCATION

There is a lot of conversation here at Channing about growing our church, which excites me. One of the reasons I became a UU minister was to work to grow Unitarian Universalism. Where there are things the minister can do to help growth happen, I firmly believe growing a congregation is everyone’s work, not just the minister or Membership Committee. Everyone has a part. I want to get all of us working as a growth team.

To start this I am hosting a Growth Convocation, and all congregation members and friends are invited to come. It will be on Saturday, January 21, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

We will start in the Parish Hall with coffee and breakfast snacks. At 9:30 we will gather in the Sanctuary for a presentation and general discussion about the elements of church growth. Then, using an open space technology format, we will break into small discussion groups where participants can dig deeper into specific growth and outreach topics. The goal is to come up with ideas, and commitments to work on the ideas, on ways we can grow Channing. For example, we may want to talk and develop ideas about our overarching approach and plan for ministry, or family ministry, or outreach to Gen-Xers and Millennial, or partnering with other organizations in Newport, or campus ministry, or any other topic that participants want to discuss together.

Put Saturday, January 21, 9:00am to 12:30pm on your calendar.

~Rev. Bill

JOIN IN AN INTERFAITH MEMORIAL VIGIL FOR THOSE LOST TO GUN VIOLENCE

The Religious Coalition for a Violence Free Rhode Island, of which I was an organizing member, is sponsoring an Interfaith Memorial Vigil on Thursday, December 15, at 7:00 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church of Providence, 1 Benevolent St, to remember the individuals who were victims of gun violence and to affirm our commitment to non-violence and mutual respect. The Memorial Vigil is co-sponsored by Faiths United Against Gun Violence with the support of the RI N.A.A.C.P., the Board or Rabbis, the RI Council of Churches and other religious and civic organizations. A quilt made from clothing of gun violence victims will be dedicated as part of the service. We UUs are invited to wear our “Standing on the Side of Love” shirts. Join me at this memorial vigil.

~Rev. Bill

100 QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Sunday, December 4, 11:30am, Ladies’ Parlor in the Parish Hall

After the Worship Service on Sunday, December 4, there is an informal chance to address those questions you have always wondered about! How do you join the congregation? What is Channing’s connection to our church? Do UU’s believe in an afterlife? Grab a cup of coffee and join Rev. Bill and our Membership Committee in the Ladies’ Parlor, located in the Parish Hall behind the church!

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Church Office will be closed Tuesday, December 13, and will be closed for the holidays December 24-Jan 2

JANUARY CATALYST DEADLINE

Due to the holiday hours the January Catalyst Deadline is Wednesday, December 14. Many thanks for your early submissions!

The Holiday Sanctuary Decorating will be done Saturday December 10th at 6:30 pm. If you wish to help Barbara Richter with this project you are welcome. Please bring gloves, many thanks!
**The 9th Annual “Singing for Shelter” Acoustic Christmas Concert**

*For the benefit of the McKinney Shelter and St Lucy’s Hearth*

Thursday, December 8, 7:00pm
(doors at 6:30pm), in the Sanctuary

Tickets are $18 in advance/$20 at the door/
Children accompanied by an adult are free.

**Tickets available:**
- by calling 401-835-7209,
- Emailing mgorman20@cox.net or
- At Lucy’s Hearth, 19 valley road, Middletown, RI

We will be raffling off a brand new Washburn acoustic guitar (valued at $1000) that evening!!

This year’s performers include: Zanricky Duo, Ray Davis and Mike Purcell, Jack Casey, Chief Noda, Rand Bradbury, Ed Ledwith, Dan and Donna O’Neill, Toni and Chuck Ciany, David Dragone, Jonathan and Chris Meyers, Jimmy Winters, Rick Jones, The Slackwater String Band, Al Fresco Flutes, Leslie Grimes and Matt Bruneau and Mike Jackson.

*Making her first Singing for Shelter appearance is RI Musicians Hall of Fame inductee Brenda Bennett. As a member of superstar Prince’s Vanity 6 and Apollonia 6, Bennett earned both a gold record and a platinum record.*

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**THE GIVING TREE**

The holiday giving tree is an annual tradition sponsored by Channing RE. We have a tree set up with suggested gifts listed on slips of paper. Select one or more gifts and return your purchases to the Parish Hall Dec 4, 11, or 18 with the tag attached. These gifts support teens in care and families we selected who are struggling this holiday season. Thanks for your support.

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**TOILETRIES COLLECTION**

For our holiday December 19th Community Meal, RE will give our guests a gift bag to take with them. There are boxes set up to accept your donations of toiletries, [shampoo, deodorant, shave lotion, toothpaste etc.] warm socks, hats, gloves, or small treats by Sunday, December 18th. Helpers needed Dec 18 after church to fill the bags.

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**REGIFTING SALE**

Clean out your closets and check your drawers for that polka dot tie from Aunt Flo or gorgeous purple vase from cousin Ronnie. Channing will once again offer its Regifting sale for your holiday shopping fun. Donations can be dropped to large classroom in Parish Hall on Dec 4, and the store will be open Dec 11 and 18. Shop, shop, shop. [Items can also be dropped on Sally’s porch.] Funds raised will support a school for Native American children.

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**FAIR TRADE SHOP**

On Sundays, December 11 and 18, fair trade items will also be available for sale for your holiday gift giving. Hand crafted items support families around the world working to feed, clothe and build schools for their families. Food products grown in a sustainable manner and which provide the farmers with a livable wage will be offered, including coffee, jam and chocolates.

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**HOLIDAY CAROLING**

All are invited to the Holiday Caroling Event on Wednesday, December 14th 7:00 pm, in the Community Room at Blenheim Newport (303 Valley Rd., Middletown). The Community Room is on the 2nd floor. Cookies and hot drinks will be served after for a short social gathering with the residents.
The Alt-Right
With June S. Speakman,
Professor of Political Science, Roger Williams University
Wed. Dec 14, 7:00 PM, Channing Parish Hall
Dessert and Decaf $5 Suggested Donation

According to a definition from the Southern Poverty Law Center, The Alternative Right, commonly known as the Alt-Right, is a set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and “their” civilization. Characterized by heavy use of social media and online memes, Alt-Righters eschew “establishment” conservatism, tend to be young, and embrace white ethno-nationalism as a fundamental value.

Our speaker, June Sager Speakman, will shed some light on this rising movement and the ideas it stands for. Dr. Speakman has taught at Roger Williams University since 1995. Her areas of expertise include American Politics, Public Policy, and Public Administration. She holds a B.A. in Economics from UMass/Amherst, an M.A. in Economics from the New School for Social Research, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from City University of New York. She has served for 10 years on the Barrington Town Council, and was president of the council.

We will save a good amount of time for Q & A

A DECEMBER MESSAGE FROM THE LEARNING CENTER:
Greetings of the season, and warm best wishes to all.
Your friends at TLC are so appreciative of your continuing support of our programs! We have been gratified, too, to see the increasing number of people from the greater community who have been finding their way to our events.
We are looking forward to offering some exciting and informative programs in 2017. As always, please suggest programs, instructors, lecturers – your ideas are always welcome.