

# Albion Area Lifelong Learners

*A Lifelong Learning Experience in Cooperation with Albion College*

WINTER TERM, 2021

Dear friends:

As this unusual and challenging year draws to a close, I imagine we are all looking forward to a better year ahead. But AALL—like the rest of the world—will not be able to return to “normal” for some time yet. We will continue to follow restrictions necessitated by the Covid-19 outbreak. Three of our winter term offerings will be held online via Google Meeting and a fourth class will be held in the Bohm Theatre, where there is plenty of room for physical distancing.

Our first on-line assembly and classes in the fall were well attended. In spite of some minor glitches, things went smoothly. The “book club” class on the “Pandemic in Perspective” was a great success, and there is another book club offering this term (book club classes meet for only two days). We’re sorry that not all members have the capability or the confidence level to take part in the on-line offerings. I hope everyone with a computer or tablet or smartphone will take the opportunity to experiment with us and become more comfortable with an aspect of modern technology that is becoming increasingly important to all of us.

Since it is unclear as to when we might hold another in-person assembly, our January assembly will serve as the Annual AALL Membership Meeting for 2019-20. We are required by our by-laws to hold an annual meeting where among other things, we elect new members to the Board of Directors. This meeting was cancelled last April. We had hoped for an in-person Annual Meeting in September, but that was changed to a virtual meeting. We cannot wait any longer—so we will hold last year’s annual meeting on Thursday, January 21, 2021, immediately following Allison Harnish’s presentation on Lewis Cass.

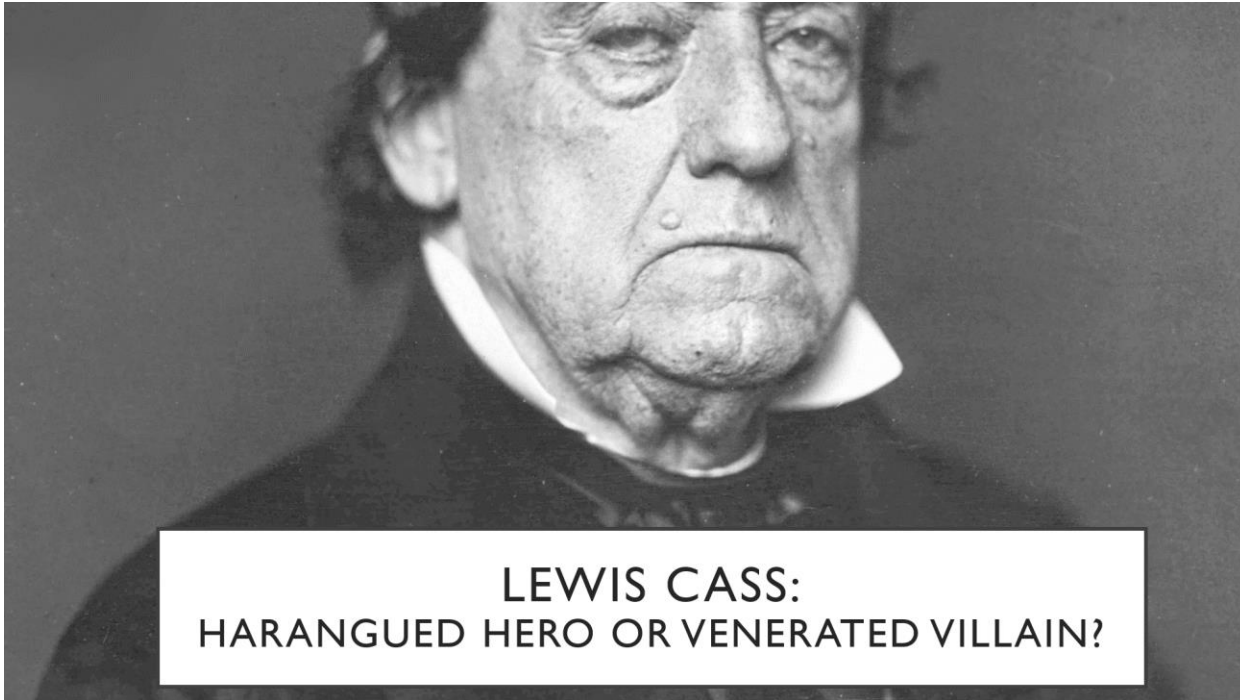
Fortunately, the sitting board members whose terms have ended (Tanya Arnett, Vivian Davis, Dick Mortenson, and Mary Slater) are all eligible to stand for another term. Although their terms officially ended in June, they have continued to serve and give valuable advice as we have navigated through the challenges of going to online experiences. If members would like to add other nominations, they can indicate names on the bottom of the mail-in registration form.

Earlier this fall Missy Wyss and Susan Conner, the co-chairs of the Curriculum Committee, stepped down after many years of providing us with top notch classes and instructors. Martha O’Kennon and Doug White have been appointed new co-chairs. Sadly, Susan passed away later in the fall after a battle with cancer.

Royal Ward  
President, AALL

## Upcoming Events

*Winter Assembly – Thursday, January 21, streaming at 10:00 am*  
(send in registration to receive log-in information for assembly presentation)



Following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, the largest mass demonstration in US history unfolded in thousands of cities across the country. Hundreds of monuments and memorials associated with racism, slavery, and genocide were destroyed or removed. Some cities made plans to retire statues dedicated to Columbus and the Confederacy, while Congress folded into the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act language to establish a committee for renaming military bases that honor white supremacists. How is this movement being felt in Michigan?

On June 30 Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced downtown Lansing's Lewis Cass Building would be renamed for Republican State Rep. Melvin Larsen and Democratic State Rep. Daisy Elliott, who cosponsored in 1976 Michigan's landmark Civil Rights Act. This change marks the first time in Michigan history that a state building is named after an African-American woman. Two days later, Michigan's Democratic Congressional Delegation (consisting of U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, as well as U.S. Representatives Dan Kildee, Debbie Dingell, Brenda Lawrence, Andy Levin, Elissa Slotkin, Haley Stevens and Rashida Tlaib) called for the removal of Lewis Cass's likeness from the National Statuary Hall. Meanwhile, Lewis Cass Technical High School and Lewis Cass Intermediate School District are having internal conversations about their namesake. This AALL presentation aims to explain what all this fuss is about: Who was Lewis Cass? Why are so many places in Michigan named for him? And why, in 2020, are some people reevaluating his legacy?

Allison "Alli" Harnish is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Albion College, where she teaches courses on (post- and settler) colonialism and environmental justice. Her research, which has been externally funded by the Fulbright program and the National Science Foundation explores the social consequences of development-induced displacement, wildlife conservation, and environmental change in Zambia.

## Upcoming Courses

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE THUNDERBOLT KID: A MEMOIR by Bill Bryson.** Abby Mortensen, M.S. Instructor in Molecular Biology and Microbiology, *emerita* (Jackson College). Mondays for two weeks. 10 am – 12 noon. February 1, 8. This class will be treated as a book club offering (lecture and guided discussion). Held in Google Meeting; instructions will be provided to participants.

Bill Bryson grew up in the middle of the 1950s and 1960s, in the middle of the U.S. (Des Moines, Iowa), a childhood in a time now gone by, in a place whose charming and unique features are now erased. But his memories of it are hilarious, wistful, poignant and insightful, an analysis of a place and time seen with warmth and fondness, as the unsparing perspective of today. Bryson's writing and wit are incomparable. One reviewer commented that Bryson could write about dryer lint and make you laugh out loud. It is a book that people of all ages can enjoy, but especially those of us who grew up in those times as well, and saw our childhood homes blurred in the conformity of today. We will remember the glee, the devilish plots, the mad capers and the cruelties of kids, or friends and playmates, and the unique people and places that were treasures of a place now gone. It is joyful, funny and sometimes sad, but a romp worth reading!

Bryson, a Midwesterner by birth, lived in England for twenty years and then relocated in the United States where he now lives in New Hampshire with his wife and children. Other works include *A Walk in the Woods*, *Notes from a Small Island*, *In a Sun-Burned Country*, and *The Mother Tongue*.

Text: Bill Bryson. *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid: A Memoir*. New York: Broadway Books, 2006. (A number of different editions are available.)

**BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY.** Martha O'Kennon, Ph.D., Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science *emerita*, Albion College. Tuesdays. 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 pm. February 2, 9, 16, 23. Held in Google Meeting; instructions will be provided to participants. *Limited to 24 participants—if you are interested in this class, be sure to read the "Policy for Limited Enrollment Classes."*

When you go out into a garden, what do you see? If there are flowers, you may see the easy ones: Bees and Butterflies. But if you look closer, and especially if you turn over a leaf, you may start to see the world beneath the big colorful ones. You'll see Beetles, perhaps, and Flies. Another level of familiarity may lead you to see the huge family of Bugs, Ants, and Aphids. As you learn more about the Bugs, for instance, you may begin to recognize groups of them, like Assassin Bugs, Leafhoppers, Treehoppers, Planthoppers. As your eyes get sharper, you will suddenly become aware of creatures like Barklice, which are so small that it takes a good camera to start to distinguish them. All of these fit into the world of Insects. To your surprise, you may find that these creatures, so small you can barely see them at all, have lives of love, death, and family structures like ours. We'll also look at the plants that the other creatures interact with.

We will, surprisingly, be able even in February to discuss the big ideas behind the study of "Bugs" under which rubric many people lump any little thing that creeps, flies, walks or hops. Did you know that there are six-legged critters that aren't insects? Well, there are. We need to study how they procreate, how they hide from or even mimic other creatures, what they eat, and who they're eaten by. This is part of how Biodiversity works: it maintains the balance of nature. And that's the aim of this class - to study the balance of nature and how it works in small communities. I've been photographing this richness of life for quite a few years, and have maintained a weekly blog that studies how the world around us changes from season to season.

Although this class is meeting in the winter, I hope to schedule another class in the summer, where we can see some of this rich life going on. If not this summer, then whenever Covid permits.

We will mostly be using my websites and other material available on the Internet for illustrations.

**ADRIENNE RICH, POET OF OUR TIME.** Judith Lockyer, Ph.D., Professor of English *emerita*, Albion College. Wednesdays. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Feb 3, 10, 17, 24. Held in Google Meeting; instructions will be provided to participants. *Limited to 18 participants—if you are interested in this class, be sure to read the “Policy for Limited Enrollment Classes.”*

U.S. poet Adrienne Rich died in 2012, leaving those who read her poetry a rich legacy of passionate and powerful explorations of the false assumptions and lies about our history and present that perpetuate inequality and smother hope. We will analyze her feminism and her early anger about women’s identities as tied only to their bodies. At the same time, her poems create images of the world “revised.” She never fails to connect humans to her larger subject—the powerful lies our past, present, and futures. Her interrogation of power leads her to find an expansive creative space. Rich’s poetry gives her a powerful means to interrogate language, humanity, the lives of men, women and children, as well as the failures of old powers and unexamined lives.

Her poetry is perhaps more relevant than ever as we live in such confused, confusing times. Adrienne Rich is certainly a poet of our time because she thinks about our environment and the damage industries have left behind. She writes about love and war, lies and hard truths, our need for words that will not lie, even calling for a new language in *Dreams of a Common Language*. She writes poetry as “if [our] lives depend upon it.” \*\* Her poetry gives us much to think and talk about. As she moves through poetic forms, she shows us how ancient poetic forms such as the ghazal (originally Persian) and more recent lyric poetry is the most powerful way to think more critically about our lives and our land. (\*\*from Essay VI in her book *What is Found There*)

Book: *Adrienne Rich, 1950-2012: Selected Poems* (New York: W.W. Norton). Available at Stirling Books and Brew and the Albion College bookstore.

**MOVIES EVERYONE SHOULD, BUT MAY NOT, HAVE SEEN.** Richard Lewin, United Church of Christ pastor, *retired*. Thursdays. 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. February 4, 11, 18, 25. Bohm Theatre. *Limited to 80 participants—if you are interested in this class, be sure to read the “Policy for Limited Enrollment Classes.”*

There are many movies of historical significance, artistic genius, with wonderful storylines, and ground-breaking technology that should be seen, even decades after their release. This class shall view four such movies -- wonderful movies, that should be seen... ESPECIALLY if you have not been fortunate enough to have already seen them. There will be time provided for conversation regarding the viewing event.

Movie 1: METROPOLIS (1927) (Hopefully, the Restored 2010 version)

*Is a 1927 expressionist drama film: a pioneering science-fiction movie, among the first feature-length movies of that genre. Made in Germany during the Weimar period, filming took place over 17 months (1925-1926) at a cost of more than 5 million Reichsmarks. A “classic”.*

Movie 2: IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT (1934)

*A pre-Code American screwball comedy film directed by Frank Capra and Harry Cohn. Starring Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable the film was the first film (of three: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, and The Silence of the Lambs) to win all five major academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Adapted Screenplay.*

Movie 3: DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST (1991)

*The first feature film directed by an African-American woman distributed in the U.S. Set in 1902 it tells the story of three generations of Gullah (also known as Geechee) women in the Peasant family on Saint Helena Island as they prepare to migrate to the North on the mainland. The film gained critical praise for its lush visuals, Gullah dialogue and non-linear storytelling.*

Movie 4: RENOIR (2012)

*This is a 2012 French drama film based on the last years of Pierre-Auguste Renoir at Cagnes-sur-Mer during World War I, and tells the forgotten story of Andree Heuschling (Catherine Hessling) the last model of the impressionist painter, and first actress in the films of his son, the film director, Jean Renoir. The film won the AARP Movies for Grownups “Best Foreign Film” Award.*

### Reminders for Winter, 2021:

1. Annual membership dues for 2020-2021 are reduced to \$10. Members may take one class each term without additional fee; each additional class is \$10 (book club classes are \$5).
2. The Winter Assembly (on Thursday, January 21, at 10 am) will be on-line. Because we will need to send log-in information to participants, you will be asked to register for the assembly at the same time that you register for classes.
3. Registration for both the assembly and the classes will be by mail only. Mail-in registration forms (along with a check or money order made out to AALL) must be received by Thursday, January 14. Mail service can be sluggish—please mail early!
4. Log-in instructions for the assembly and classes will be emailed to you soon after registration.

### Registration Information

1. If you wish to register for the assembly, “Lewis Cass—Harangued Hero or Venerated Villain,” place an X in the box in front of “Assembly.”
2. For each course for which you want to register, place a number in the box in front of the course name: 1 for the course you most want to take, 2 for the second course you wish to take, etc. (NOTE: If you only wish to take one course, mark it with the number 1—see instruction 3 below.)
3. If you wish to indicate an alternate choice (in case one of your choices is oversubscribed and you are not admitted to that course), mark an X in the box before your alternate choice.
4. Mail the completed form along with a check or money order payable to AALL to: **AALL Registrar, P. O. Box 188, Albion, MI 49224**

### Policy for Limited Enrollment Classes

- When a course with limits is over-enrolled, the names of all those who had it listed as #1 shall be entered in a lottery. Those randomly drawn shall be placed in the class. Those not selected will comprise the waiting list and also be given first access if that course is offered again. The Registrar will keep a record of those on the waiting list until the course is offered again.
- Those selected for the course in its first offering will not be eligible to retake it until all those on the waiting list have had the opportunity to take the course.
- Those who have signed up for a class with limits and listed it as #1 are encouraged to sign up for at least one additional class. Members are also encouraged not to sign up for a course with limited enrollment if they know they won't be there for all four sessions.

**AALL Winter Term 2021 - REGISTRATION DEADLINE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 14**

REGISTRATION 1

	2020-2021 annual dues (July 1 – June 30) (\$10)	
	Assembly: Lewis Cass—hero or villain? (free)	
	Class: Life and times of the Thunderbolt Kid (\$5)	
	Class: Backyard biodiversity (\$10)	
	Class: Adrienne Rich: poet of our time (\$10)	
	Class: Movies everyone should—but may not—have seen (\$10)	

**TOTAL:**

Name	
Phone	
Email	

REGISTRATION 2

	2020-2021 annual dues (July 1 – June 30) (\$10)	
	Assembly: Lewis Cass—hero or villain? (free)	
	Class: Life and times of the Thunderbolt Kid (\$5)	
	Class: Backyard biodiversity (\$10)	
	Class: Adrienne Rich: poet of our time (\$10)	
	Class: Movies everyone should—but may not—have seen (\$10)	

**TOTAL:**

Name	
Phone	
Email	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/partner name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Yes, I am 55 or older (spouse/partner could be younger)

**MAIL form and check or money order to: AALL Registrar, P. O. Box 188, Albion, MI 49224**