

MOLLI InSights



December 14, 2020



Welcome to the MOLLI Newsletter

Important Dates

December 7, 2020
MOLLI Winter Enrollment Began

December 15 - 16, 2020
Allocation Period

December 17, 2020
Additional Registration Begins

December 25, 2020
Holiday

January 1, 2021
Holiday

January 11, 2021
Winter Courses Begin

January 22, 2021
Special Member Event - *Predicting and Understanding Pandemics*

February 1, 2021
Special Member Event - *The Fire of Frederick Douglass*

Welcome to the first edition of the MOLLI volunteer driven newsletter!

Members of the Membership Engagement committee started with the idea of a volunteer driven newsletter to connect MOLLI members to fresh, useful and fun information on a regular basis. In addition, members and potential members would be kept up-to-date with all things "MOLLI."

After thoughtful consideration regarding what the newsletter would and would not contain and the "ins" and "outs" of producing a newsletter, the Membership Engagement committee provided the information to the MOLLI Council for consideration. Due to the care and detail put forth in the proposal, the MOLLI Council approved the proposal of a MOLLI member/student newsletter.

Creation immediately started with the scheduling of interviews, the gathering of items, and the writing of stories.

Volunteers are hoping the contents of the newsletters will help lessen the impact of isolation. The newsletter stories and information will be focused on the MOLLI people. Articles featuring MOLLI members and/or instructors and presenters will be included in each issue. Members will enjoy literary pieces from the "Greater Missoula community" and helpful tidbits on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The volunteers hope you enjoy the current and future newsletters. They feel the newsletter is a work in progress and welcome your reactions and recommendations. Should your interest be stimulated, a few more volunteers to stir the pot of ideas they have brewing would be welcome.

Send comments, questions, ideas to: molli@umontana.edu.



by Karen Hendrickson
Program Manager

CONTENT

Welcome	P1
Faculty Interview	P2
Member Corner	P3

umt.edu/molli

Check us out online.

Meet Your

MOLLI Instructor



Robert Greene



by Chris Comer

In a recent interview, I learned some unexpected things about my colleague Robert Greene, a UM professor well-known to many MOLLI members. The new insights Robert provided made our meeting really enjoyable, but then talking with him is always fun.

Because Robert is a respected historian with a record of deep scholarship on Russian culture and religion, you might think it was interest in history that vaulted him into college. But it was not that simple. Robert went to college at the University of Rochester on a scholarship for chemistry. Prof. Greene ... a chemist?

Well, he did not get too close to that outcome. He described an early struggle between interests in the sciences and the humanities. Robert obviously navigated this dilemma with great success.

During his initial studies of chemistry at Rochester, Robert realized that the parts of chemistry that most intrigued him were “how things came to be:” the history of ideas in chemistry. Perhaps he might have gone on to become an historian of science, but formative experiences in high school led him to a slightly different path. When asked about high school and whether he enjoyed it, his honest answer was “not particularly.” Then again, how many of us really blossomed as early as our mid-teens?

In retrospect, Robert pointed to some unusual qualities of his hometown, Sarasota Florida, which had an impact on him. Sarasota, along Florida’s gulf coast, benefitted from the state’s unique demographic personality. Many people from more northern states retire early to Florida, and at this time schools in Sarasota attracted talented teachers, willing to share their knowledge. This included some Russian émigrés and “refuseniks,” remember them?

Robert’s high school was able to field

strong programs in literature and languages. It was there that he first studied the Russian language; Latin, Spanish, French, German, and Italian were also offered. That’s impressive, as not many high schools currently offer a real variety of world languages. The study of Russian was formative for Robert, providing a basis for him to research and write about an important world power.

Robert’s growth into a professional historian, was not lacking in obstacles: a high school science teacher once told him “if you study history you’ll end up working in a Pizza Hut.” Thankfully, Robert was not put off by such pessimism. At college he continued studying Russian language and took a course in the history of Imperial Russia. That combination helped him decide to switch his college major. He never looked back.

Robert acknowledged that he benefited from a great faculty mentor, Prof. Jeff Burds. With his help, Robert travelled to Russia during summers for research and first-hand exposure to Russian life. Clearly able to see Robert’s talent, Jeff encouraged him to go to graduate school for Russian studies. So ended his possible career in pizza delivery.

Robert’s next stop was working with Valerie Kivelson at the University of Michigan for his MA and PhD, doing research at archives in Moscow and St. Petersburg. While a graduate student, he co-edited a volume with Kivelson on religious beliefs and practices in Tsarist Russia. In 2006, he arrived at Montana becoming Assistant Professor of Russian History. He was quickly recognized as an absorbing and witty lecturer and a great UM campus citizen. Robert continues to publish articles and books on Russia with a focus on what he has referred to as the “Orthodox Mind.” His scholarly work has even some translations – yes, studying languages pays all sorts of dividends.

Asked about his perceptions of Montana students, Robert described them as down to earth and hard working. While considering a future at UM, he was also a finalist at Princeton. But, he has never looked back toward the East, as he so enjoys the students Missoula. He first taught for MOLLI after a visit from Ann Boone, in which she forcefully made the case for MOLLI. He’s now taught for us a number of times. He says its culture offers such a congenial forum for discussing specialized information at a broad level with mature minds.

Many MOLLI members know that Robert Greene has had a few non-trivial medical challenges in the past year or so. Not surprisingly, he was nonetheless unwilling to discontinue teaching, recently taking his lectures online. Robert has the grit not to be dissuaded from his professional loves just because of doctor’s appointments or medications. I can report that his optimism and sense of humor are entirely intact.

While members know Robert from his MOLLI courses on Russian history, they may not know him as an avid consumer of “world cinema.” He’s not prone to use that term (because it feels a bit pretentious to him), however, the wall of his study is filled with an amazing collection of American and international films in keeping with his true love of the art. Another love is baseball. To my minor disappointment, Robert is not a Chicago White Sox fan, though he almost was (that’s another story). Robert’s team is the Philadelphia Phillies. I can respect that. Like the Sox, Philly attracts somewhat unusual fans that favor a gritty squad of players from a tough-edged city. Neither team made it to the World Series this year. However, Robert and I will continue following baseball because, simply, we are devoted to the history and gamesmanship of “our national sport.”



Jan Bohlmann and Sheila Catterall

Member Corner

A Dynamic, Peripatetic Duo

Sheila Catterall and Jan Bohlmann are Molli members who grew up in California/Oregon and Iowa/Wisconsin, respectively. By the time they made their way to Missoula, they had been through many experiences of the sort that those of the “babyboom” generation have had – and a few that were probably quite unique.

Sheila’s dad worked for Lockheed in California during WW2, then he moved to Pendleton, Oregon with the family. Sheila recalls that she did not receive much career direction in high school (perhaps disappointingly familiar for girls of that time). However she was motivated to attend college and did so at Eastern Washington in Cheney. There she married a fellow student and ended up in Germany where he was stationed in the army. After raising their children mostly on her own, she went back to school for a Master’s degree and taught business at several community colleges.

Jan (properly pronounced with an initial “y” sound as in German) grew up first in Iowa and then Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin (really part of Milwaukee). After high school he was in the service and followed that with a degree at the University of Wisconsin, specializing in the allied health science of respiratory therapy. Jan became a faculty member at Mt. Hood Community College in Oregon and that’s where he met Sheila.

Clearly, the best was yet to come. They retired “early” at 55 and travelled the world (some of it backpacking) – including a teaching stint in China. Ultimately, they became certified in “sage-ing.” I had to look

that one up: it’s a non-profit whose motto is “Conscious Aging: Learning Together” (<https://www.sage-ing.org/>). Under the auspices of Sage-ing International they travelled the country, visiting senior centers, and often playing music for folks (Sheila plays fiddle and Jan guitar). As Jan described it “they learned a great deal from the people they met, and learned about themselves.” One particularly interesting insight: “you are not the same person in your 80s as you were in your 70s, nor the same in your 70s as in your 60s.”

They finally settled in Missoula in 2017 and immediately started taking MOLLI courses. They loved what they found: Sheila said it was a place to “go and grow” and the variety of courses has been a big plus for satisfying their ever-curious minds.

They especially loved the courses that were “like traveling” – such as Rick Graetz on the nooks, crannies, and peaks of Montana, and Mehrdad Kia on the history, customs and politics of the Middle East. Like many other members I have talked with, they found that informal follow-up groups to courses could be especially fun – that’s where they made many new friends.



by Chris Comer

MOLLI Contact Info

MOLLI OFFICE CLOSED TO WALK-IN TRAFFIC

James E. Todd Building
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812
406-243-2905

MOLLI Staff

Karen Hendrickson
Program Manager

Teri Zanto
Program Coordinator

Siera Raulston
Administrative Associate

MOLLI Council

David Andrews
Ann Boone
Kathy Bartlett
Brian Derry
Royce Engstrom
Lexie Evans
Margaret Johnson
Peggy Kuhr
Paul Lauren
William Lawrence
Tobin Shearer
Tom Storch
William Towle
Tim Nichols, Dean
Davidson Honors College

MOLLI Committees

Executive
Finance and Development
Program
Membership Engagement
Special Events & Interest