

The LUNCH@LLAIC Spring 2025

March 4

The Science of Happiness: What Makes Us Happy? – facilitated by Richard Mansfield

Being happy is one of the goals for humans. When friends and family experience important occasions, we typically wish them a happy and healthy life. A yearly “Happiness Report” notes which of two hundred countries house the world’s happiest people. Finland took top honors—for the tenth year in a row—followed by Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Israel, the Netherlands, and Norway. The USA places at 23. The least happy country in the world for 2024 was Afghanistan. The US ranked 11th. This video will describe cutting-edge research from the field of positive psychology on the factors that do (and do not) predict happiness, and provide practical ways to increase your own psychological well-being.

March 11

The Accidental Presidents - facilitated by David Rabinowitz

For reason of death or other happenings, vice-presidents have ascended to the presidency of the United States nine times since the birth of the nation. This program gives a thumbnail sketch of the successions and the subsequent lives of these new presidents. You will learn about each president’s accomplishments and some of their challenges.

March 18

The History of Chocolate – facilitated by Alice Freedman

Have you ever wondered where chocolate comes from and when it was introduced to society? This video will take you back thousands of years to learn about the history of chocolate from its roots as an ancient Mesoamerican beverage to an intercontinental dessert. You’ll learn how a yellow, football-shaped tropical fruit transforms into high-end dark chocolate, and what “Mexican Hot Chocolate” has in common with what Montezuma drank. Plus, get the answers to what’s better, milk or dark; why does Hershey’s have its own theme park; who created the first chocolate bar; and why do we love chocolate so much? There’s also a treat in store for all who participate in the discussion!

March 25

The Cinematic Genius of Steven Spielberg – facilitated by Shelly Levine

When you think of the creative movies “Jaws,” “Raiders of the Lost Ark,” “E.T.” and “Saving Private Ryan,” the name Steven Spielberg probably comes to mind. No filmmaker in the history of cinema has been so successful across such a vast range of story genres for as many decades as Steven Spielberg. He is known for creating a multi-faceted body of work that pushes the boundaries of cinematic ambitions. From science fiction, fantasy, action-adventure and comedy to hard-edge dramas and searing war films, Spielberg has done it all, forging a distinguished career that showcases a filmmaker on top of his extraordinary talent for six decades. In this video we will see scenes from several of his popular and noteworthy films.

April 1

Optimism and Resilience – facilitated by Jerry Jacobs

Are you challenged by the uncertainties of our time? Do you like a good discussion? Are you intrigued by how some thinkers have faced difficult situations with resilience? We will read and discuss short excerpts of the writings of three individuals: Victor Frankl, a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor; Robert Putnam, political scientist, author of “Bowling Alone” and advocate for the power of groups; and Robert Brooks, psychologist and author of important books on the power of individual resilience. Together, the three authors will provide methods for how we as individuals and a community can foster our own and others’ resilience in these difficult times.

April 15

Norman Rockwell: Painting America's Stories – facilitated by Joanne Fisher

“America’s favorite artist,” Norman Rockwell, chronicled middle-class life in the twentieth century. His commercial paintings—produced for calendars, cards, and magazines, including The Saturday Evening Post—portray the heartwarming and humorous aspects of American life. His work focused on shared experiences and relatable themes like childhood, family life, holidays, work, sports and patriotism, and helped to shape the way Americans understood the American experience. This program will introduce the artist, his life and many of his popular paintings that tell the stories of American life.

April 22

The Psychology of Money – facilitated by Rhoda Greenspan

The concept of money and wealth has several emotional and psychological components. Is it better to have a society of a few wealthy people and the rest having much less money, or is a society better off with all members having equal wealth? In exploring this question, the video also focuses on the role of comparing and contrasting items as a method of assessing the value of items and their worth. Our frame of reference about the value of things factors into determining our personal sense of worth.

April 29

Scams – facilitated by Ken Doucette, Director of Community Affairs, Sheriff's Department

Mr. Ken Doucette, Director of Community Affairs of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office will be joining us on April 29th, 2025 @ 1 PM to discuss scam prevention and awareness. The Sheriff's Office will talk about ongoing scams, ways to recognize them and how you can help family, friends and neighbors protect themselves.

May 6

Martin Luther King: A legacy Revisited – facilitated by Jane Bermont

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is the most important civil rights leader in American history, whose commitment to Black citizenship helped to inaugurate a new birth of freedom, both domestically and internationally. In the years before his 1968 assassination, King became a national symbol for racial justice, a Nobel Prize-winning global political mobilizer, and a statesman who dined with presidents and royalty. And at the same time, he organized alongside of the racially and economically oppressed. He has become extolled as a contemporary founding father who made racial justice central to the American postwar political project. We commemorate his legacy annually as one of the few remaining symbols of bipartisanship, racial unity, and political progress.

May 13

LILAC Players perform