

LLIR in Lockdown

When the dark cloud of COVID descended on Canada and the rest of the world in March, LLIR, like all other Third Age Learning groups had to make major decisions about how to continue to keep our programs going. The classroom as we knew it was no longer an option, but classes had to continue. Fortunately, the LLIR Board had time to plan how to continue our lecture series set to start up again in September. Our newly elected president, Diane Johns wasted no time in setting up a Steering committee to plan how to move ahead. One of our earliest decisions was not to use Zoom which, in our opinion, had many drawbacks. We were very fortunate to discover that one of our most recent Course Directors, Stacy Costa, had a background in innovation and technology. We employed Stacy and she, together with the expertise of Diane and a talented group of A-V volunteers, were able to find a viable alternative to Zoom. The platform LLIR chose was Vimeo. The reasons we felt that it would be preferable were manifold. We could have our Course Directors upload their lectures in advance, giving a team of monitors the opportunity to identify any shortcomings with the lectures and having the CDs then polish their lectures before they were aired. Such shortcomings might include volume, or hesitations in delivery, distracting objects that might be visible behind the lecturer, slides that might contravene copyright laws or any gaffes a Director might make. This meant that by the time the lecture was ready to be aired, it had been carefully polished and scrutinized.

A great advantage to having the lecture streamed is that our members can view the lectures at any time and not have to be at the computer at a given time. We decided to post four lectures at a time, giving our members the option of viewing all four instead of being limited to one. This was a hugely popular feature and in the final survey, members indicated that this was a great bonus for them.

Of course, having to pre-record a lecture and then upload it to another site proved to be too much of a challenge for some of our Course Directors, and a number of them withdrew, leaving us to scramble to find replacements. However, this did not pose too much of a problem and we now have a stable of speakers in reserve for when we return to the classroom.

We have been really pleased with the quality of lectures that we have been able to offer our members. It has required a great deal of effort on the part of our

Board members, but we feel vindicated by our decision. Having the feedback in the form of comments like, “It was fabulous. All of it...the courses, the content, the delivery, the ability to watch whenever, having access to all four courses. Thank you. Couldn’t have been better. Loved it all” made all the hard work worth it.