

# In League...

February – March 2017

A quarterly newsletter



## Glass Lab Tour—Talk—Demo

**Tuesday, February 7 • 12:00 – 1:00 pm**  
**Glass Lab, 4-003**

You may be familiar with the eagerly anticipated annual “Great Glass Pumpkin Patch @ MIT” event. If not, glass-blowing students and instructors in the MIT Glass Lab work together in teams throughout the year to create hand-blown glass pumpkins, gourds and squashes in all sizes, shapes and colors. Their 2,000+ creations are later displayed and offered for sale on Kresge Oval in October. Proceeds benefit the Lab.

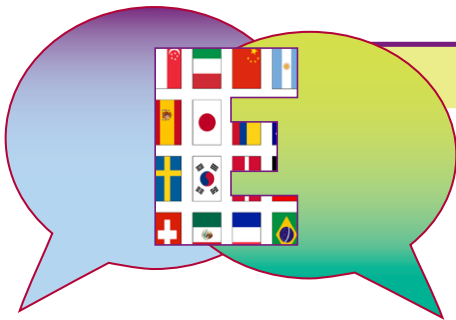
Glass-blowing instruction, the very best demonstration of MIT’s motto *Mens et Manus* (the application of theories and skills through hands-on projects) is offered to members of the MIT community in MIT’s Glass Lab. The courses are so popular that admission is now lottery based.

Glass Lab Director Peter Houk, will host our talk and demonstration in the lab space. A painter and a printmaker, he added glass blowing to his education in 1988, later in his career. Invited to teach at the Glass Lab in 1993, he took on the leadership of the Lab in 1997, expanding the program to include intermediate and advanced students and taking on special projects. (One of those projects was the fabrication of cast light shades for fixtures in Simmons Hall common areas.)

His remarks to us will cover the layout of the lab, what glass is, and a demo based upon “whatever I’m excited about at the moment.” His assistant Olivia Cheo will provide additional commentary.

The tour is limited to 15 because of lab space. To reserve your place contact the League office at 617.253.3656 or [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).





## Conversational English Class Registration

**Tuesday, February 14 • 9 am to 11 am  
Stratton Student Center, Room 491**

For international women arriving at MIT whose first language is not English, our conversational English classes provide a friendly venue for practicing “survival” English, learning new vocabulary, and engaging in conversations with classmates about a variety of subjects. They are a perfect home-away-from-home for visitors from other cultures and countries.

Students meet women from around the globe and come together to learn and improve their English skills with the guidance of dedicated Women’s League teachers. The focus is on functional “how to” English conversation and student interests vs. grammar. Grammar instruction, however, is provided and reviewed at the Basic and Intermediate levels.

In addition, these classes offer students opportunities to make new friends, share their cultures and interests, and gain confidence while living their new life in the United States. As stories and experiences are shared, speaking and listening competence improves.

Spring classes are held from February to May on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:15 am to 11:00 am. Four levels of classes (Basic to Advanced) are offered and after a brief interview with one of our

teachers, each student is placed in an appropriate level class. Babysitting is provided for children, age 6 months to 4 years at a cost is \$180 a semester per child. Materials are provided and included in the student fee of \$100 per semester. All questions will be answered by calling Jan Kirtley, coordinator of the English Classes, at 617.277.2628.



An **English Partners Program** is provided to students for additional practice in conversational English with volunteers who are fluent English speakers. Since most Partners are MIT employees, these informal meetings usually take place on campus on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Participation is optional and subject to the availability of volunteer Partners.

## Ask The Chef 2017

**Friday, February 24 • 12:00 pm  
Emma Rogers Room (10-340)**

Tim Healey, chef for the Emma Rogers and Maclaurin Rooms, will again be the guest speaker at our mid-winter “Ask the Chef” program. As he has in the past, Tim is happy to answer any questions you wish to pose and generously shares his knowledge of food and food preparation — recipes too!

Since his arrival at MIT in 2001, he has been treating diners to an array of culinary treats prepared in his campus kitchen/lab. Its there that he researches and experiments with recipes, demonstrates cooking techniques and trains his staff, and prepares the resulting epicurean creations.

Last year, Tim added a new element to his talk, a “How to Roast Vegetables” demonstration, that taught us where to

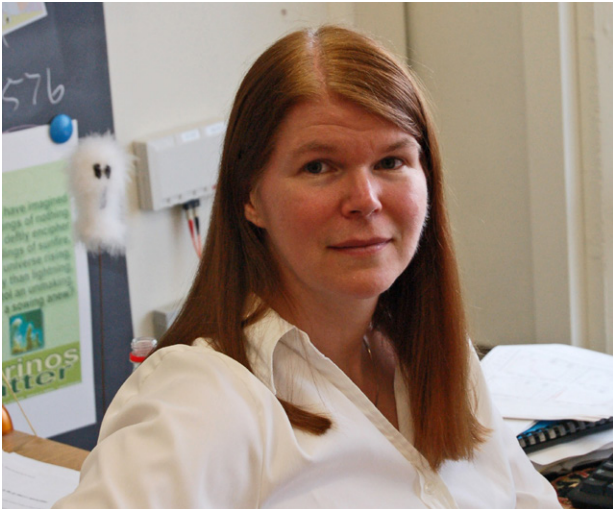
buy, how to cut for roasting, which oils, vinegars and seasonings to use, what roasting temperature, and how long to cook. This year he’ll teach us about the mystery and magic of brining:

- why brine — and the science behind it
- what to brine — and the recipes to use
- when to brine — and the time

Join us and bring your questions to Ask the Chef! Tim is happy to help expand your cooking knowledge and hone your cooking skills.

To reserve your seat, contact the League office at 617.253.3656 or [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu). Feel free to bring your lunch and a beverage. Dessert will be provided.





## Breakfast Series with Janet Conrad

**Wednesday, March 8 • 8:00 am**  
**Emma Rogers Room (10-340)**

Twice-yearly women in the MIT community are invited to informal “breakfast talks.” Known as the Breakfast Series, they are occasions when women faculty and administrators explore the role of women in the academy, sharing the pathways their professional lives have taken — the people and events that have influenced their direction.

Our Spring speaker, **Janet Conrad**, is a Professor of Physics, with affiliations in the Laboratory for Nuclear Science and the Plasma Science and Fusion Center. Her areas of interests are experimental nuclear and particle physics and high energy physics. She is an international leader in the study of neutrinos, a set of elementary particles that are the lightest known matter particles. Her group focuses on man-made sources of neutrinos vs. natural sources.

Professor Conrad is also a standout among MIT physics professors, one who makes teaching a top priority. She thinks

physics is “fun and wants everyone to think it’s fun too.” A sought-after lecturer she’s well known for making physics interesting and accessible to scientists as well as general audiences and has been a guest and advisor to NPR’s Earth and Sky program and PBS’ Nova.

She completed her undergraduate work at Swarthmore College receiving a B.A. in physics and pursued graduate studies in high-energy physics earning her M.Sc. at Oxford University and her Ph.D. at Harvard University. She has been the recipient of numerous awards in recognition her work, including the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship.

Please join us and meet Dr. Conrad. Breakfast seating is limited. Tickets are available on a “first-come, first-served basis” at a cost of \$12.00 and can be purchased in the League office, 10-342.

Breakfast is served promptly at 8:00 am.

## Notable / Books for discussion

**2 / 22 / 17**

Book Discussion:  
*The Summer Before the War: A Novel*  
by Helen Simonson

**3 / 22 / 17**

Book Discussion:  
*Midnight’s Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India’s Partition*  
by Nisid Hajari

## League Interest Groups and Classes

### LEARN MORE

#### Book Discussion

Barbara Donnelly  
781.646.4617  
Nancy Hollomon  
nancyredsox@gmail.com

#### Chorale

Sharon Lin: hllin@mit.edu  
Sally De Fazio: de\_fazio@alum.mit.edu  
web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale

#### Looking Together

Ann Allen  
857.259.6007  
acallen@mit.edu

### EXPAND YOUR WORLD

#### Japanese Tea Ceremony

Kyoko Wada  
chado@mit.edu  
web.mit.edu/chado/www/index.html

#### Middle Eastern Dance

Loni Butera  
617.491.5657, loni@mit.edu

### WORK WITH YOUR HANDS

#### Informal Needlework

Beth Harling  
781.749.4055, oharling@mit.edu;  
Claudia LaBollita-James  
cljames@mit.edu

#### MIT Gardeners’ Group

League Office  
617.253.3656  
wleague@mit.edu  
web.mit.edu/womensleague/gardeners

#### Women’s League Community Craft Fairs

Brenda Blais  
bmblais@mit.edu

### MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND CONTACTS

#### CitySide Dining

League Office  
wleague@mit.edu

#### MIT Japanese Wives Group

Kimie Shirasaki  
mitjwg@yahoo.com

Groups meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly. Contact the above women to learn more about their groups.





## Opera Night at the BPL: Wedding Planning

**Thursday, March 30 • 6:00–7:00 pm**  
**Boston Public Library • Rabb Hall**  
**700 Boylston Street, Boston**

The Boston Lyric Opera Company (BLO) and the Boston Public Library (BPL) have come together to host a series of one-hour presentations featuring interviews, lectures, and mini-performances to highlight their upcoming productions. Speakers share their expertise and knowledge about the opera before you spend an evening at the theater.

The focus of their March 30 program is **“Wedding Planning: Reimagining The Marriage of Figaro”** (to be performed

by the BLO April 28 – May 7). The opera is one in which “the passions and perils of love and marriage collide in one uproarious day as Figaro struggles to get his bride, Susanna, to the altar unscathed. Identities are concealed, manners upended, plots foiled ... all to the glorious music of Mozart’s masterpiece.”

How can “a fresh and compelling production of Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* be created — while staying true to the beloved music and story that has been reimagined and reinterpreted of over 300 years?” That is the challenge for the stage director.

The evening talk will consider the many ways this classic opera has been presented over time — from traditional period sets and costumes to modern dress and technology, and by various directors and opera companies. It invites you observe the artistic process that brings the production from “page to stage,” an approach enhanced by set, costume designs and live performances of musical selections.

The event is FREE. A League group will be traveling from MIT at 5:00 pm to the Library. If you would like to join the group and meet at the Kendall T station, please contact the office at 617.253.3656 or [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).

## Jou-Jou Sun — Our FX Star

Jou-Jou Sun, a valued volunteer, will have her last day at the MIT Furniture Student Exchange on Thursday, December 15th. After the holidays she’ll move west to Seattle to begin a unique year-long intensive web programming course for women through the nonprofit Ada Developers Academy (Ada).

Jou-Jou came to us in April 2015 after walking by the Furniture Exchange and seeing the outside sign which piqued her curiosity. After looking online at the FX’s web page, she decided she wanted to try her hand at painting furniture — and took to it like a duck to water! As soon as people saw her work, customers commissioned her to do custom work. Jou-Jou has added immense value to the furniture at the FX and every piece she has painted has sold.



Even of more value, has been her wonderful and kind presence as the FX. As Sis so eloquently said “I guess we have to console ourselves with the knowledge that we’ve been so very fortunate to have had Jou-Jou with us for as long as we have. Like you, Julie, I’m sad for us, but



thrilled for her — that her talent has been recognized. We know she’ll be a shining star there [in Seattle]. She certainly has been one for us!!”

Jou-Jou has been a remarkable and gifted volunteer and has contributed to the success of the FX. Fingers crossed her travels will bring her back to us!!

Julie Parker  
*Manager, Furniture Exchange*



## PKG Center Dedication

For 28 years, the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center ( PKG Center) has worked with MIT students to help them engage in service projects with communities around the world, inspiring a deeper understanding of the MIT mission and a strong commitment to service. In turn, students have gone beyond labs and classrooms to learn about implementing projects in complex, real-world situations.

On November 4, 2016 the MIT community celebrated Mrs. Gray's contributions to MIT and to service by dedicating new space for the office in the Stratton Student Center. The new office provides a central gathering point for students to learn about different opportunities and meet with program staff to learn about service, brainstorm on projects, and reflect on their experiences.

The dedication event's guests illustrated the impact that Mrs. Gray and public service have made on the MIT community. Joining Mrs. Gray at the event were the PKG Center's new Senior Director, Kate Trimble, along with MIT administrators, faculty members, alumni, students, and several generations of the Gray family. Dean of Student Life Suzy Nelson kicked off the celebration, honoring Mrs. Gray and thanking her for all she has done on behalf of the Center and for MIT students.

Mrs. Gray helped found the Center in the fall of 1988 with Dean of Student Affairs Shirley McBay. At Dean McBay's invitation, Mrs. Gray co-chaired a steering committee with Professor Robert Mann '50 and worked to get champions and "angels" on board. MIT students quickly became engaged in volunteering and signed up to work with local agencies.

From these early beginnings, the work of the Center and the scope of opportunities has evolved. Last year, more than 650 MIT students participated in the PKG Center's programs, working with communities locally, in 14 U.S. states (plus Puerto Rico and DC), and in 30 countries around the world.

In addition to helping start the PKG Center, Mrs. Gray has served as a member



Photo: Dominic Reuter

of its Leadership Council, advising the staff, supporting the programs, and advocating for the Center on campus. Mrs. Gray also inspires the MIT student community and recognizes their contributions to service through the Priscilla King Gray Award for Public Service. Past award recipients have worked on a diverse array of projects, including improving science and math curricula in Nicaragua and developing assistive technologies for people living with disabilities here in the greater Boston area.

When asked recently about her legacy on campus, Mrs. Gray responded, "If MIT students can find time to make public service a part of their lives in an ongoing way, then that's my legacy, I think. And I'm so proud of them."

Natalie Britton  
*Director for Strategic Initiatives*  
Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center

## Women's League PKG Center Fellows

Over the summer, the Women's League funded two student Public Service Fellows through our long-standing support of the PKG Centers' Fellowship program.

The League annually funds Fellowships named after two former First Ladies of the Institute. The Rebecca (Becky) M. Vest Fellowship (established in 2005), supports women students who are working on issues that significantly affect women, including access to health, housing, and education, as well as issues such as violence prevention. The Elizabeth (Betty) W. Johnson Fellowship (established 2007), supports students working on environmental issues. Both Fellowships are open to students from all departments, from freshmen to PhD candidates

Last summer's Becky Vest Fellow was Urban Studies Masters student,



From left: Lily Bui, Alison Hynd, Valeria Vidal

**Valeria Vidal.** Valeria traveled to Lima, Peru, to understand and evaluate how informal low-income households have built and designed their houses over a period of 35 years. She specifically looked at the case of Villa El Salvador, a community in the outskirts of the city center. Valeria is continuing this work as her Master's thesis and aims to make recommendations for the City of Lima on the development of low-income housing policy that is supportive and inclusive of informal communities, which add much needed housing capacity for the city.

With support from the Betty Johnson Fellowship, **Lillian Bui** spent the summer in Barcelona, Spain, working with Making Sense EU. Lily's work informed an environmental monitoring project called SmartCitizen, which is hosted at the Fab Lab Barcelona. Making Sense EU seeks to enable cities around the world (starting with three pilot communities in Barcelona, Spain; Prishtina, Kosovo; and Amsterdam, Netherlands) to monitor the environment by equipping residents with environmental monitoring kits. She helped design educational materials for an "onboarding toolkit" that helps orient participants with little to no scientific background to the project. She also helped conduct user research to help identify barriers to entry for citizen science projects.

Alison Hynd, *Director for Programs and Fellowships Administrator*, Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center





From left: League chair Ellen Stordy, Paula Ruiz-Castillo, Vice Chair Srirupa Mitra, Bettina Arkhurst

## The Laya Wiesner Awards 2016

Since 1981, MIT presidents have presented awards at the Institute Awards Convocations. Among those awards are two the League created to honor Laya Wiesner, wife of MIT's 13th president Jerome Wiesner. On May 10, 2016 President Rafael Reif presented these two prestigious awards to Bettina Arkhurst and Paula Ruiz-Castillo for their contributions to improving the quality of life at MIT and beyond.

Sophomore **Bettina Arkhurst** was named the 2016 **Laya W. Wiesner Award** winner for her contributions to Institute life that have notably enhanced the MIT community. While excelling in academics Bettina is committed to MIT community well-being. Touched by the rash of suicides last year and born from her own feelings of isolation and grief, she took action. A "natural connector,"

able to explain complex social issues in a loving and engaging way, she felt compelled to ensure her peers did not feel alone too. A gracious and tenacious woman, she co-founded and co-directed MIT's first campus-wide "Random Acts of Kindness Week" ("RAK Week," March 28–April 1, 2016) to connect and to raise awareness about mental health and wellness resources on campus. As part of MIT's Mind, Hand, Heart (MHH) Initiative, Bettina reached out to students, staff, faculty, and alumni, spearheaded the planning of a week of events for connection and camaraderie for her fellow MIT students, and obtained funding for it. It is hoped that an assessment of the week-long effort will prove it worthy for institutionalization.

**Paula Ruiz-Castillo** was awarded the 2016 **Laya Wiesner Community Award**,

an award that recognizes a member or friend of the MIT community for service that reflects Mrs. Wiesner's concerns for enhancing life at the Institute and the world at large. "A joyous and community-minded woman who has used her time at MIT to help those in her immediate community and now further afield." As a TA, trainer, researcher, mentor, Paula was described as a catalyst for positive change within the Chemistry Department. Her behavior, leadership and inspiring work demonstrated her commitment to the well-being of graduate citizens at MIT, especially to graduate women for whom she was a supportive and caring colleague. Her devotion to community extended beyond MIT to area schools where she gave science demonstrations and served as a STEM mentor and to a Zambian organization where her work, aided by a Public Service Center Fellowship, helped to educate and improve the lives of small farmers.

We are proud of our award recipients and congratulate them for their dedication and accomplishments.

In anticipation of the May 1, 2017 Awards Convocation, we invite League members to nominate candidates for these awards. Both carry financial prizes. Please send letters of nomination, describing the candidate's qualifications, to the League office, Room 10-342, or via email to [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu) by **March 13**. For further information, please call 617.253.3656.

## Connections

**February 9 • March 9**

**Connections**, our informal open house, meets on the second Thursday of each month during the academic year in the Emma Rogers Room (10-340) from 4 to 6 pm unless otherwise noted.

Please join us for a cup of coffee or tea and sample the sweet creations at hand. They are the perfect conversation starter!

Feel free to bring a newcomer or colleague with you. Come when you can and stay for as long as you wish!

## General Information

The MIT Women's League newsletter is published four times during the academic year. The deadline for the April – May 2017 issue is March 1. All items should be sent to the Women's League office.

Please call the League office for a hard copy of the newsletter and for answers to questions you may have. The office can also arrange for your membership.

**Email update** If your email address has changed, please advise the League office at [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).

**Staff Associate** Sis de Bordenave  
**League Chair** Ellen Stordy  
**Honorary Chair** Christine Reif  
**Design** Tim Blackburn Design



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