

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Connecticut is an academic cooperative that provides older adults with opportunities for intellectual development, cultural stimulation, and social interaction

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

“You won't find them in the Bible, but many cherished Easter traditions have been around for centuries. The most prominent secular symbol of Christian holiday, the Easter Bunny, reportedly was introduced to America by the German immigrants who brought over their stories of an egg-laying hare. The decoration of eggs is believed to date back to at least the 13th century, while the rite of the Easter parade has even older roots. Other traditions, such as the consumption of Easter candy, are among the modern additions to the celebration of this early springtime holiday.

The Bible makes no mention of a long-eared, short-tailed creature who delivers decorated eggs to well behaved children on Easter Sunday; nevertheless, the Easter Bunny has become a prominent symbol of Christianity's most important holiday. The exact origins of this mythical mammal are unclear, but rabbits, known to be prolific creators, are an ancient symbol of fertility and new life. According to some sources, the Easter Bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Oster Hase". Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs. Eventually the customs spread across the US and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left out carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry from all his hopping.

Easter is a religious holiday, but some of its customs, such as Easter eggs, are likely linked to pagan traditions. The egg, an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection. Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition that dates back to at least the 13th century according to some sources. One explanation for this custom is that eggs were formally forbidden food during the Lenten season, so people would boil them and save them, and then paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

Easter is the second best selling candy holiday in America, after Halloween. Among the most popular sweet treats associated with this day are chocolate eggs, which date back to early 19th century Europe. Eggs have long been associated with Easter as a symbol of new life. Another egg shaped candy, the jellybean, became associated with Easter in the 1930s (although the jellybeans' origins reportedly date all the way back to a biblical-era concoction called a Turkish delight).” **History.com**



Dear Body,

Let's see. Do you want to know about my body from 1973 or 2015. Well 1973 I could say, "Look out, here she comes!" But 2015, Oh Boy... If I were to describe my body, I would have to say, fun house mirror. Almost like, "that can't be me?" My boobs have sagged so much I can't even see my feet. My belly is like a half of ham, as I was once teased about. These hips are definitely a wide load and my husband can rest his beer can on my ass. My legs are the size of my husband's waistline, and I might say they were one of my strong points. All over my knees are these little tiny holes they call cellulite. I don't have kankles yet, thank God, but my feet are somewhat pretty. My hair used to be down my back but I have now cut it to a short bob or as my son describes it as a helmet. I do have decent hands though! I've really only been my worse critic since I was about 35 years old. It started one Christmas when the kids were opening their presents. I was drag-

ging the empty boxes across the living room floor and we had a video camera going. I guess I didn't pay too much mind to it, after-all it was really only there just to record a memory for our kids. Well, my brother-in-law was unable to come so when he did, we put the VHS in to show him. Me being not too quick to notice this, my brother-in-law says, "what's that beeping?" Well, while I was dragging the boxes backwards, my comedian of a husband was saying "beep-beep-beep" as I slid the boxes across the floor. I knew he was just teasing me, seeing that I was then about 130 lbs. Good thing I have a sense of humor! Today we look back at this and we still laugh.

Hey, did he jinx me?

Mary E Janus

From Cindy Eastman's Class In So Many Words, An example of the content the newsletter solicits.

The Newsletter is always looking for content from our readers. This may be in the form of original work or items you have found interesting and may wish to pass on to others. We always welcome any suggestions you may have to improve the newsletter or criticisms of it. The Newsletter exists to inform and entertain our readers.

Contact **Bob Grady** at yvoorg@aol.com or any presenter or staff member

OLLI Newsletters Go Internet

OLLI newsletters are available on our web page at <http://olli.uconn.edu/weekly-newsletters/>

Then click on the left-hand index that says "Newsletters". They are available in PDF format, If you don't have the free reader, you can get it at www.adobe.com and click on the box that says "READER".

Save the Date!

If it's potato pancakes, stuffed cabbage, pierogi, kielbasa and other Polish culinary delights that whet your appetite, then set aside Tuesday, April 28, from 12 noon to 2:00 to join the OLLI Clubs and Activities Committee folks as they bring you the second annual ethnic food venture to the Belvedere Café and Restaurant, 82 Broad Street, New Britain, CT.

Cost of the dining experience is \$20 per person and includes the Polish buffet, a visit to a Polish bakery and a short walking tour of the Broad Street Polish area. OLLI presenter, Lisa Wisniewski, will be our guide along with members of the Clubs and Activities Committee.

Reservations can be made to Nancy Via, nvia@sbcglobal.net, telephone (203) 758-6359 or to Delma Way, delvilway@aol.com, telephone (860) 274-8621 by April 22 at the latest.

OLLI POETRY COFFEE HOUSE

2nd Thurs at John Bale Bookshop – 10:00am

Contact Denise Whelan (denisewhelan@yahoo.com)

For more information

OLLI BOOK CLUB

Contact: **Nancy Via** at nvia@sbcglobal.net

All meetings of the book club will be held in room 102D, UConn, Waterbury at 1:00 PM 3rd Monday

April 20
May 18
June 15

Being Mortal
Underground Girls of Kabul
Tomlinson Hill

Atul Gawande
Jenny Nordberg
Chris Tomlinson



OLLI CAFE

April 10 THE POWER WITHIN WITH CINDY MAZZAFERRO

This interactive session is about improving your body and mind through exploring the effects of positivity vs. negativity, self-esteem, synchronicity, intentional living, and affirmation statements to create a life one wants to live. Participants will learn about their own energy levels, how to impact and improve it and communicate with the higher self while contemplating spiritual gifts and soul lessons. Learning to release and use the power within will help to change the mindset to relinquish fears and negative thoughts.

April 17 ANITA SIARKOWSKI- ACCORDION MUSIC



Welland Canal

The Welland Canal first opened in 1829, connecting Lake Ontario to Lake Erie bypassing the Niagara escarpment. The canal allowed movement of cargo between mid-western ports in the US and Canada. Over the years the canal has been revised and completes the Saint Lawrence Seaway from the Atlantic to ports including Toronto, Ontario, Cleveland and Toledo Ohio, Erie PA, Buffalo NY, Detroit Michigan, and Chicago Illinois.

Some of the canal vessels, which are all lowered and raised by a lock system to reach Lake Erie, well above sea level, transfer their cargo to and from Atlantic Ocean going vessels at Quebec City and Montreal. This canal is in the Niagara area and will be visited and experienced on our trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake, on September 27-30, 2015.

This will be a 4 day, 3 night delight with lodging at the spacious Country Inn and Suites. Besides tours of the falls and dinner at the Skylon Tower. This trip offers ample trip free time for exploration or relaxation. One night has an optional casino excursion. In addition there is a wine tasting vineyard tour and the most unbelievable butterfly conservatory display of tropical vegetation with a multitude of species of butterflies.

This trip seems to be far off in the fall, but it will fill early with registrants, their friends and families. Don't miss the beauty, the history, the spectacle and the opportunity for relaxation and additional exploration. Call Friendship Tours at **860-243-1630** for further information, special requests and to register early for this very fairly priced multiple activities trip requiring a valid passport. We expect Bob Read to be our tour director.

APRIL 2015

There is hope after all.
Robins search for worms in the meadow.
The edges of ponds show open water.
Snow patches retreat to trees.
The frozen ground oozes mud.
The sun rises further North each day.
Daylight lingers longer.
March winds, which wildly overstayed their time this year,
Soften into April breezes.
Look real close
And you may see the red buds on the maples.
Crocus and Daffodils sprout in protected places.
All the signs are there.
Spring has sprung.

So tell me then-
Why the hell is it snowing this Easter Day?

Bob Grady

Upcoming OLLI Travel

5/13/15-Culinary Arts Museum/RISD Art Museum, RI - \$79pp (sold out)*

6/3/2015- Best of Boston (JFK Library & Cruise) MA - \$86pp (sold out)*

6/7 - 6/9/2015 – Ogunquit/Strawbery Banke (overnight)- \$397pp dbl (sold out)*

9/16/2015 – NY Botanical Gardens (Frida Kahlo's Garden) - \$75pp

9/27 - 30/2015 – Niagara Falls (overnight) - \$510pp dbl

10/21/2015 – 9/11 Memorial Museum - \$74pp

*You may still put yourself on a wait-list for sold out trips

All prices are member prices. Non-members are charged a slight surcharge. Call Friendship Tours for information and reservations. (1-800-243-1630). Mention OLLI Travel



THESE ARE ACTUAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY "THOMAS COOK VACATIONS" FROM DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS:

1. "On my holiday to Goa in India , I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don't like spicy food."
2. "They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax."
3. "We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish."
4. "We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price."
5. "The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room."
6. "We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white but it was more yellow."
7. "It's lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Val-larta to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during 'siesta' time -- this should be banned."
8. "No-one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared."
9. "Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers."
10. "I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local convenience store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."
11. "The roads were uneven and bumpy, so we could not read the local guide book during the bus ride to the resort. Because of this, we were unaware of many things that would have made our holiday more fun."
12. "It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England . It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair."
13. "I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friends' three-bedroom and ours was significantly smaller."
14. "I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes."

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UCONN, Waterbury

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The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs are centered around classes developed and taught by members who volunteer their time and talents to share their knowledge, life passions, and interest with other members. The OLLI program also sponsors special events featuring noted authors, scholars, and experts in respected professional fields.

OLLI Leadership Council

Council Members

OLLI officers are part of the Leadership Council, which is the principal representative body of the OLLI membership.

Council Officers

President - Richard Fogg
1st Vice President - Mary Lou Reignier
2nd Vice President - Delma Way
Secretary - Toni Escott
Assistant Secretary - Joyce Conlan



We're on the web! www.oli.uconn.edu

MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Mary Conseur is an avowed Francophile who even likes to think of Spanish artist Pablo Picasso as French because “he spent so much of his time in France.”

She herself found the summer between high school and Oberlin College spent in the French town of Mulhouse in the Alsace region, near the Swiss and German borders to be “life changing.”

Already interested in learning about the cultures of other lands, Mary went to France under the auspices of the Vermont-based Experiment in International Living. She lived in an apartment house with a family and found life very different from her family home in Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The family had no hot water; no shower or bathtub and shared a toilet with another family, who lived in a different apartment. If you needed hot water, it was heated in a pan on the stove. That summer “opened my eyes to a whole different world.”

At the time, Mary recalls being aware of many people with “a lot of animosity to Germans; if people saw someone who looked German, they would cross the street to avoid them.” The Alsace-Lorraine area has suffered terribly from conflict in various wars, including the two World Wars. The father of the family she lived with had been killed in the French-Algerian war.

Upon returning to America from her participation in the Experiment in International Living program, Mary entered Oberlin College, Ohio, chosen because she wanted to attend a small, co-educational college, which ruled out big public colleges such as University of Connecticut. After graduation with a degree in French, Mary earned a Master’s degree, also in French, from Purdue University. During her time at Purdue she did a semester at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland.

During her sojourns in Europe, Mary loved traveling about. While she enjoys learning about all aspects of culture, she has a special fondness for French artists, citing impressionists Claude Monet and Pierre Auguste Renoir as being among her favorites. France is known, she says, as the “mother of the arts.” She

likes the idea that France welcomes “free thinkers.” Clearly, she believes the great Pablo Picasso was a Parisian at heart.

This teacher of the French language believes people should learn about the cultures of other nations and the history that shaped them while studying foreign languages. Mary believes that Americans in general tend to be isolationists even today while Europeans “travel much more than we do.”

Only one to two percent of Americans have been to Europe, Mary says, although those numbers are rising. She continues to believe travel is important to understanding the behavior of people from backgrounds different from their own.

Most Europeans “speak three languages,” their own, English and one other. They start to study different languages in school at an early age. More Americans know sign language than any foreign language, according to Mary.

Mary has taught French in many venues. Among them were Sacred Heart University, where she taught a number of years; Central Connecticut State University, and Norwalk Community Technical College.

She now teaches at the University of Bridgeport, a post she loves because of the large number of international students. Students are from countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia and Ghana.

The international students bring information about their native cultures into the classroom that expands and enriches the discussions on history and culture that Mary always includes in her French language classes.

Mary enjoys taking OLLI classes in a variety of fields. She finds OLLI students, including those she teaches in Conversational French for Travelers, people who have led very interesting lives.

And she has one long-distance, very special student: her 10-year-old granddaughter who lives in Boston asked Mary to teach her French. They have worked out a half-hour session twice a week utilizing I-Pod. “Classes started at Christmas and we’ll see how it goes.” -**Mary Ann Martin**

