



OLLI

News

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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

CAN YOU MAKE IT TO 100?

“Aging is inevitable, but aging well is not.” is a quote from Time Magazine, Feb 22-29, 2016, in a section entitled *The New Age of Aging*, written by several contributors. The article deals with the changing attitudes toward aging in the 21st century. Social, physical and political habits need to be looked at and changed as we look into the future.

“Something astounding is happening. For most of human history, life expectancy was barely long enough to ensure survival of the species. During the 20th century, a blink of the eye in evolutionary terms, Americans began flourishing into their 80s, 90s and beyond. Asked in a recent survey about the prospect of century-long lives, the majority of Americans said they would like to live to 100 years if they could so in good health. Of course, in the same survey, nearly as many said they want to retire at 65, and most of them said they eat too much and tend not to exercise. Hope is wonderful, but hope alone will not get us to 100 in good shape.”

Humans are not naturally accustomed to looking far into the future. However, if we are to realize the vast opportunities that record numbers of longer lives presents for the nation, we need to start planning with foresight. We should start with where we are now so that we can have a better sense of what we need to accomplish for a healthier-and more financially secure-tomorrow.

A Stanford University project focused on three key modifiable areas-healthy living, financial security and social engagement.

Most Americans realize that exercise is key to longevity. Most don't realize that it doesn't require going to the gym or running a marathon is necessary. However, most of us do not work on farms or have jobs requiring hard labor any more. “ Now, sitting at a desk is a risk factor for obesity, which in turn is a risk factor for diabetes, which is strongly associated with dementia. Clearly, optimizing longevity-and the quality of that longer life-demands a clear line of sight that spans decades.” So don't just sit there watching TV and munching munchies. Get up and do something, even if it is only to stretch or move to another chair.

The social world is changing. Families have fewer children and they may be scattered to far places. Because people don't grow up and grow old with the same people, communities have changed. The nation is failing when it comes to financing long lives. “ Our problems today stem in part from human foibles, like the failure to delay gratification, and, in part, from uphill struggles to secure education and sufficient income...the vast majority cannot finance 30 year retirements with just 40 years of work.”

The world is changing much faster than it did even fifty years ago because of technology and science and many of the old rules don't seem to apply. But OLLI members will adjust because they are socializing and keeping their brains robust by taking courses and learning new things. And that makes OLLI worthwhile.

OLLI artBeat

Try a Trip to the Wadsworth!

By Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

If you are looking for a fun way to spend a day enjoying the arts without traveling too far or spending too much, consider a day trip to the **Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art** in Hartford. The Wadsworth is the oldest continually operating public arts museum in the United States, and it is one of Connecticut's principal cultural and civic institutions. It has just completed an extensive five-year \$33 million renovation encompassing its entire collection. All of the European collection, over 1000 pieces, is now on display, and it is indeed impressive. Now that so many more of its treasures are on display, the museum can truly be called a "mini-Met", but with its own New England flavor.

A friend and I visited on a recent Saturday morning. We walked through the museum for a couple of hours, especially enjoying the nineteenth century European art, a favorite of both of ours. What a treat to see originals by van Gogh, Cezanne, Monet, Toulouse-Lautrec and Pissarro among many others. We also took in two special exhibits, a somewhat dark show entitled "The End of Innocence – Childhood Torments in the Contemporary Art Collection." It was jarring and thought-provoking, and, despite its name, definitely not for younger children. A particularly haunting picture, "Untitled (One Day This Kid)," done in 1990 was an autobiographical work based on the experiences of the artist, a young gay man whose childhood and young adult years were played out in the fifties and sixties before the Gay Rights movement. But it also evoked present day emotions, such as internet-age bullying and an epidemic of teen suicide. The other special exhibit I enjoyed was called "40 Acres: The Promise of a Black Pastoral," a compilation of books, photography, lithographs and a stunning collection of post cards,

which reflected the persistent desire among many post-Civil War Black Americans for an agrarian utopia, including the aforementioned 40 acres, which had been promised by many politicians.

A highlights tour is given at one p.m. every day, and we were fortunate to have an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and quirky tour guide! Carol began with a talk about the history of the museum, which opened in 1842, and then quickly segued to the art, beginning with a bust from the era of Greek colonization and trade. She asked a provocative question about the provenance of such treasures. This piece had been removed many years ago from an area in the Middle East which has been recently destroyed by ISIS. If it had still been there it probably would also have been destroyed. What does this say about the controversy over the past few decades about museums feeling compelled, legally or morally, to return works of art to their countries of origin? She led us through the centuries, ending with an Andy Warhol depiction of Jacqueline Kennedy, "Early Colored Jackie" ca. 1964. But in between we spent some time enjoying a Connecticut painting by the great portraitist Ralph Earl, "Oliver and Abigail Ellsworth," a depiction of this wealthy couple from Windsor. Oliver had helped to draft the Connecticut Constitution as well as the Declaration of Independence. The paint on Abigail's face had faded through the two plus centuries since it was painted, so her complexion was decidedly different from her husband's, and not as the painting had originally looked. The docent's question was, "Should a museum restore the paint, or should the integrity of the original art remain intact?" She smilingly told us she could not answer either of the artistic philosophical questions she had posed, but that we should go forth to our dinners and "Discuss." Which we did!

The Wadsworth Atheneum is located at 600 Main Street and is open Wed- Fri, 11-5 and Sat-Sun 10-5. Admission is \$12 for seniors (62+) and members enjoy free admission. There is a lovely Museum Café on the premises.

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".

OLLI BOOK CLUB

Contact: Nancy Via at nvia@sbcglobal.net

March 21 book discussion is: "Brooklyn" by Colm Toibin

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



OLLI CAFE



March 4: Personal Emergency Preparedness, with Barbara Rippis

Disasters can happen any time and any place. Individuals who are prepared tend to cope better and get back to normal routines sooner than those who are unprepared. The program will focus on the specifics of getting a kit, making a plan and being informed.

March 11
Uncovering Venture Smith
Luciana Lavin

Most people want to be delivered from temptation but would like to stay in touch.

Robert Orben

Upcoming OLLI Travel

5/12/16- The Springfield Museums (4)/Dr. Seuss Sculpture Garden MA - \$62pp

6/20-22/2016 – Lancaster PA (Sight & Sound Theatre (overnight) -\$427pp dbl

6/29/2016 - Thomas Edison National Historic Park/Montclair Museum - \$85pp

9/07/2016 - Music on the Mountain (Mohonk Mountain) NY - \$114pp

9/17-19/2016 – Washington DC/ChantillyVA/Mount Vernon – \$457pp dbl

11/4-11/2016 – America’s Music Cities-Nashville, Memphis, New Orleans - \$2899pp twin

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

OLLI Travel NOTICE – Effective immediately, all OLLI Trips will no longer depart from St. Anthony Parking Lot. They will depart from and return to the Chase Parkway DOT Commuter Lot, Waterbury. Maps of this new Departure area are available on the OLLI Information Table in the main hall.

RESERVE EARLY!

It is very important for our OLLI members that your reservations are made early with Friendship Tours. Our wonderful overnight trip coming up on June 20-22, 2016 to Lancaster, PA will include a play at the renowned Sight and Sound Theater, a tour of an Amish home and farm, shopping at the Kitchen Kettle Village featuring 40 shops and restaurants (many offering goods made by local talent), all culminating with a “behind the scenes” tour at the well-known QVC, with more time to shop. As far off as the date of that trip may seem, a minimum number of 35 - 40 participants is needed by March 28. If that number is not reached by then, Friendship Tours has no choice but to cancel the trip. So please register early.

Similarly, our day trip on May 12, 2016 to the Springfield Museums in MA, a group of 4 museums plus restaurant with Dr. Seuss character sculptures in its courtyard, must have that minimum number by the end of April. Also, people wanting to go to Thomas Edison National Park and the Monclair Museum in NJ on June 29, 2016 should have their reservations in by early in June. The fantastic day trip to Mohonk Mountain in NY on Sept 7, 2016, must have its minimum number by the end of July, and the Washington DC trip (Sept. 17-19) needs its minimum number by July 1st. We are sharing these dates because we realize that many of our members are not aware of the timetables that travel companies use which, in reality, are set by the places that we visit. So, as our title says, reserve early when you see a trip you are interested in. If too many call too late, you may be disappointed. Either your trip may be cancelled or it may be totally filled and you will have to be put on a waiting list. We would like to make sure you are happy travelers. Details on all these trips are in flyers at the Information Table in the main hall.

Ann Rompre, Co-chair, OLLI Travel Committee

SAVE THE DATE - MARCH 17TH

The OLLI Clubs & Activities Committee members have been busily planning events for the coming months. Please set aside Thursday, March 17th, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., in room 102, to enjoy the second annual GAMES DAY!

Games, including chess, checkers, monopoly, cards, and American History board game fun, will be offered for your playing enjoyment. You are also encouraged to bring your bridge team members, or mah jong group or card playing friends.

Green bagels, with cream cheese, plus other goodies, in addition to soft drinks, coffee and tea will be provided courtesy of the Clubs & Activities committee.

Please feel free to call the OLLI office at 203-236-9924, to let us save a place for you and your friends.

OLLI EXPERIENCES

**The Newsletter, in an attempt to get more readers involved, is presenting a new feature-
“...OPENED MY MIND” about your OLLI experience. We hope to hear from you.**

Please share your OLLI experience that “Opened My Mind” in 75 words or less.

It can be from a book, lecture, trip, museums, plays, music, ethnic food, gardening, technology, current event, art, science and any others that gave you that “AH HA!” moment. As many as possible will be printed in our OLLI newsletter. Send your vignettes to .

marjay1741@gmail.com

My personal experience with computers in a class at OLLI was oops! I hit the wrong button or it won't do what I want it to do. Of course it wasn't a mind reader! There were so many maneuvers to learn. It is amazing that after class, doing my homework, I actually learned something. I realized I was actually programming my brain with a new wiring system.

Marjie Fitzgerald

HOW ABOUT A CHANGE-of- PACE TRIP??

One of OLLI Travel Committee's hottest trips for 2016 takes place November 04th--11th, 2016. We will be departing from Bradley International Airport for our AMERICA'S MUSIC CITIES TOUR and landing in Nashville for the start of a fabulous week that promises musical and historical adventure. Here are the specifics:

WHAT: America's Music Cities

WHERE: Nashville, Memphis, New Orleans

WHEN: Nov. 04--11, 2016 (Fri - Fri)

PRICE: \$2,899 including airfare (Deposit of \$600.00 by Apr 02;

*available seats will be released after Apr. 02 -- Final
payment due Aug. 02, 2016)

For more detailed information, please refer to flyers that are available on the Membership table on the main concourse here at UCONN and/or call Barbara at Friendship Tours (860-243-1630). Don't miss out on one of 2016's hottest destinations. You are urged to call and reserve as soon as possible as there will be no more seats available to us after April 02nd. Come join us for our “change-of-pace” trip, as we travel-- Southern Style!!

MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Raghdaa Barmo is a woman majoring in computer science at the University of Connecticut, Storrs. She is very aware of being a Muslim in American society when she meets new people. She is proud of her heritage but also wants to “fit in” with her peers in this country.

Raghdaa, who was born in Damascus, Syria, came at age four in 1997 to the United States when her parents chose, like many immigrants before them, to seek a better life than the one experienced in their native land.

The Barmo family settled in Meriden. Raghdaa’s mother sometimes traveled back to Syria for family visits.

Raghdaa herself has memories of living in an apartment building within a courtyard that surrounded a fountain in Damascus.

She often shares her knowledge of Arabic culture and corrects information about the Muslim faith practiced by people of many nationalities throughout the world.

There is a difference, she cautions, between culture and religion. Not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arabs, she observes.

The Barmos made friends in Meriden and enjoyed life. The oldest of five siblings, Raghdaa studied Arabic subjects at Islamic Sunday School in Berlin. From kindergarten forward, she attended Meriden schools and graduated ninth in her class in O. H. Platt High School that enrolls about 1,200 students in grades 9 through 12.

“I was very academic,” she recalls of her high school experience. Motivated by a high school teacher, Raghdaa briefly considered pursuing a degree in chemistry before focusing on computer science. She is president of a professional fraternity, Sigma Theta Alpha, a pre-health care fraternity, a member of the Arab Student Association and the Muslim Student Association. She joined Sigma Theta Alpha when considering a career in medicine.

Everyone in the Barmo family speaks Arabic. Her mother and father, Raghdaa says, are adamant that the language should be spoken at home to ensure the children won’t forget it.

Her family was comfortable with being Muslim in the community and maintaining their traditions, Raghdaa says, prior to the events of 9/11. On that date in 2001, Islamic terrorists crashed two planes into the World Trade Center in New York and another into the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth bound for Washington DC crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

These events caused a shift in attitude in the general public. “My family was very scared.” But Raghdaa said her mother’s friends made before 9/11 called to ask her how she was doing and showed strong support.

However, not everyone the family met after that showed the same understanding. A recent shock was the shooting incident at a Meriden mosque, the Baitul Amam Mosque. An ex-marine has pled guilty to firing into the then-empty mosque in November 2015 and will be sentenced in May 2016.

Raghdaa doesn’t wear the hijab, a veil traditionally worn by Muslim women to hide their hair. She says she might wear it if living in another country but is wary of doing so here. She believes she must always demonstrate the best qualities in a Muslim because “I feel there are always eyes on me” even when non-Muslims she meets learn she is Muslim.

Raghdaa believes being a practicing Muslim helps make her a better person. Its guidelines include assuming the best of people and treating others with kindness.

At OLLI she presents a course on Arabic culture and poetry during the 500-622 a.d. pre-Islamic period. Those in the class, *Beyond Aladdin: Culture and Poetry of the Arab Lands*, are learning about renowned warrior-poet Antara ibn Shaddad who lived on the Arabian Peninsula.

The legendary poet had to prove himself through extraordinary deeds to be able to marry the woman he loved. His story was the inspiration for the Symphony No. 2 by Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, per Poem-Hunter.com. **-Mary Ann Martin**

