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 Have All The Flowers Gone

I was at Camp Mataucha, the Boy Scout camp in Plymouth, in August, 1945, walking down the narrow road below the airport after competing in a race, when I came upon some boys running up from the camp yelling that a big bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. Glad to hear this but unaware that a new era had just begun, I told them about my race. And life went on. The world we had known would never be the same and we had no clue.

Until, that is, a week later when Nagasaki suffered the same fate and the pictures started to arrive. The newspapers told of the terrible devastation and showed some of the casualties of the first, and only-so far-atomic bombs. In the intervening 72 years, we have managed to keep from completely destroying the world even as more nations developed nuclear powers. But something crazy seems to be happening. The leader of North Korea has threatened to detonate a nuclear test at sea in response to our president’s boast to “totally destroy North Korea” in his speech last week to the United Nations, the world’s peace-keeping institution. What happened to Teddy Roosevelt’s admonition to “Speak softly-but carry a big stick.” Have we learned nothing over the past three generations? Or, perhaps, as time passes we are prone to forget the horror.

Let Marina Koren in a 9/22/17, article in The Atlantic, entitled, “What Would a Hydrogen Bomb Do to the Pacific Ocean?”, remind you. "Hydrogen bonds are far more powerful than atomic bombs, capable of producing many times more explosive energy. If an H-bomb hits the Pacific, it will detonate with a blinding flash and produce the signature mushroom cloud. The immediate effects likely would depend on the height of the detonation above the water. The initial blast could kill most of the life in the strike zone – scores of fish and other marine life – instantly. When the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, the entire population located within a radius of 1600 feet perished. (An H-Bomb is 3,000 times more powerful than an atomic bomb according Popular Mechanics magazine 10/16. rjg)

The explosion would send radioactive particles flying through the air and into the water. Wind would carry the dangerous particles over hundreds of miles.

The smoke from the blast site could block out sunlight and hinder life forms at sea that depend on photosynthesis to survive. The exposure to radiation could cause severe health problems for nearby marine life. Radioactivity is known to damage cells in humans, animals, and plants by causing changes in their genes. The changes could lead to crippling mutations in future generations. The eggs and larvae of marine organisms are especially sensitive to radiation, according to experts. Affected animals could pass the exposure up the food chain.

The test could also have damaging and long-lasting effects on humans and other wildlife if the radioactive fallout reaches land. The particles could contaminate air, soil, and water supply. More than 60 years after the United States tested a series of atomic bombs near Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, the islands remain "unlivable," according to a report from The Guardian 2014. Residents, relocated before the test, returned in the 1970s to find high levels of radiation in foods grown near the nuclear test site and were forced to leave again."

Some OLLI members remember the anxiety of the 60s and 70s? That’s what Pete Seeger is asking when he sings “Where have all the flowers gone?” The answer is,”

... Where have all the graveyards gone?
Gone to flowers, every one
Oh when will they ever learn, oh when will they ever learn?

RJG
VOLUNTEERISM

OLLI is a voluntary organization. I say that even though we pay a nominal fee for our courses, for parking and for membership. The faculty also are volunteers even though they get a minimal stipend for each class that they teach. Some even return their stipend to OLLI. Attracting volunteers is an art and a skill and is the lifeblood of any voluntary organization. At the national program that Jon Draper and I attended a speaker began this subject by discussing the needs of different age groups regarding what will stimulate them to volunteer. Knowledge of this will allow our organization to grow while our membership evolves.

Traditionalists were born from 1901 to 1945. They are loyal, disciplined, have strong work values, want to do the right thing and respect authority but resist change.

Baby boomers born 1946-1964 are the career generation. They choose to move about. They don’t stay in the same volunteer position and want flexibility. They like team work and networking. They are willing to work more hours to get better performance. They collaborate, appreciate input and use their skills hoping to gain more skills.

Of course whenever one attempts to delineate categories such as these there is always overlap. Using these categories, however, can be useful when trying to recruit volunteers.

Generation X born 1965-1980 are now about age 50. They work hard, are independent, resilient and want a challenge. Divorced working moms are in this category.

The national OLLI speaker stressed asking members what skills they would like to share and what skills they would like to learn. Earlier this year we surveyed our membership with these questions and had an acceptable response from which we culled prospective volunteers for committee membership and potential leadership positions.

The next step is to speak with potential volunteers personally. It is always an honor to be recognized and people appreciate when someone takes the time and makes the effort to ask them to volunteer. Finally we are stressing a short term rather than an open-ended commitment, meaning a couple of years. If you like what you are doing you can always volunteer again. If anyone missed the process I described and would consider volunteering contact anyone on the Leadership Council.

One caveat that I found interesting is that Traditionalists resist change. Now that UConn OLLI is 10 years old a lot of us are in our 70’s and are Traditionalists. One may be inclined to resist change, but change we must to survive and grow.

Next week I will write about this OLLI’s ideal volunteer project, and why our gardening project has been such a wonderful success.

Ira Mickenberg M.D. President

OLLI BOOK CLUB

Contact: Nancy Via at nvia@sbcglobal.net

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

FALL 2017 Meeting Schedule:

October 16.... The Marriage of Opposites, by Alice Hoffman

November 20... Elizabeth Street, by Laurie Fabiano

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 OLLI staff member.
Great Memories from the Adirondack Balloon Fest Trip

Another wonderful voyage – but that was certainly not a surprise. Once again the OLLI Travel Committee selected a trip package that exceeded expectations. Our numerous and colorful adventures were well executed by tour guide, Bob Read, who represents Friendship Tours, and Peter Pan bus driver, Bob Black. Both men are very knowledgeable and went the “extra mile” to insure everyone’s comfort. They quickly answered all questions, plus addressed any individual’s special needs.

Although the Adirondack Balloon Festival may have been the most spectacular aspect of the trip for me, the two guided tours of Lake George and Saratoga Springs by local guides were loaded with interesting information and the visit to the NY State Museum was also superb.

The hotel accommodations and helpful staff surely deserve their high ratings. Also, all the included restaurant meals were great. What’s not to love about a dinner party with live music while touring Lake George on its largest steamboat?

I cannot imagine learning or seeing more on a three day excursion – a job well done. My wife and I surely enjoyed the experience and the company. Memories of enormous, colorful balloons of many types and both close-up and panoramic mountain views of Lake George will be a topic of conversation with us for a long while.

Earl Rompre

OLLI Travel

FALL TRIPS 2017

10/11/2017 – NY Botanical Gardens (Chihuly Exhibit), NYC – member price - $77pp
11/07-08/2017 – Terracotta Warriors @ Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA (overnight) – member price $307pp dbl & triple

SPRING TRIPS 2018

3/03/18 – Metropolitan Opera House / Madame Butterfly – member price- $208pp
5/15/2018 – South Central Park / Circle Line Cruise Tour Landmark & Brooklyn Tour- $98pp
6/11-12/2018 – Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour - $297pp dbl & triple

REMINDER

Voices and Visions 2017, a compendium of contributions by our members, is available in the lobby as you come in and on tables by the MultiPurposeRoom and OLLI offices.

OLLI Travel

Flyers available at the OLLI Information Table. All prices are member prices. Non-members are charged a slight surcharge that is listed on all flyers. Call Friendship Tours for information and reservations. (1-800-243-1630). Mention OLLI Travel. (Please do not call the OLLI Office.)
OLLI Café

September 29
Heart Healthy Living
Sharon Maxwell and Laurie Figliola
Sharon and Laurie, dietitians who share many years of experience in the field of nutrition and dietetics, will talk about how you can reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke by following a healthy diet to help control weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure. Lori and Sharon will also discuss the importance of stress reduction and physical activity to support "heart healthy living."

October 6
Photography And Its Impact To His Life
Timothy Padgett

Isn't this comforting to know?
Now this is the solution that we have been looking for!

Ever walk into a room with some purpose in mind, only to completely forget what that purpose was? Turns out, doors themselves are to blame for these strange memory lapses.

Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame have discovered that passing through a doorway triggers what's known as an event boundary in the mind, separating one set of thoughts and memories from the next. Your brain files away the thoughts you had in the previous room and prepares a blank slate for the new locale.

Thank goodness for studies like this. It's not our age, it's that darn door!

Murphy's Real Laws
1. Everyone has a photographic memory. Some don't have film.
2. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
3. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
4. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
5. I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.
6. When the chips are down the buffalo is empty.
7. She's always late. In fact, her ancestors arrived on the "Juneflower."
8. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
9. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking.
10. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.

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: Dr. Ira Mickenberg
Vice President: Mila Limson
Secretary: Pat Fahey
Assistant Secretary: Joyce Conlan

We’re on the web!
WWW.OLLI.UCONN.EDU

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UConn, Waterbury

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.
Seven Angels Begins Another Season

By Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

Last April two OLLI friends and I attended a performance of “Jesus Christ Superstar” at the Seven Angels Theatre. It had been quite a few years since I’d been there, and I was impressed by the building itself, the artistic ambience, and the superb quality of the Equity production. We were there during Holy Week, and it was truly religious and spiritual experience to be swept up in the events of the days leading up to the death of Jesus Christ, as acted by the Seven Angels cast. I promised myself that I would attend performances there more regularly, and it looks like this coming season will provide me excellent reasons to do just that!

Seven Angels was founded in 1990 by Equity Actress Semina DeLaurentis and some local supporters and backers from the Waterbury area. It premiered its first production in the Spring of 1992 and has been delighting regional audiences ever since. In an interview, Ms. DeLaurentis told me that they “founded Seven Angels Theatre to make a difference in Waterbury and the region. We took the risk of being the only Equity producing theater in the region, incurring tremendous costs and obligations, but we wanted to be able to produce the best quality theater for our audiences.” This fall Seven Angels will have two major Mainstage Shows. The first is Robert Dubac’s “The Male Intellect: An Oxymoron?” This is billed as a “clever combination of theater and stand-up comedy that is laugh-out loud funny, provocative and insightful all at once. There are two types of people who should rush and see it – men and women.” (Through October 15.) “Million Dollar Quartet,” (October 26 -November 19) was a Broadway hit which was inspired by the famed recording session that brought together rock’n roll icons Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins for the first and only time. This production will bring together cast members from New York, Las Vegas and California.

I was also thinking back to a play I had seen years ago at Seven Angels, written by the late Matthew Cowles. Cowles, an extremely talented actor, screenwriter and playwright, crafted a trio of one-act stories about the lives of some of his ancestors entitled “Our Daily Bread,” the action taking place in an Irish community in Manhattan. Like one of the main characters, my grandfather’s name was also John Daly, and I remember sitting there transfixed by Cowles’ portrayal of the lives and psychological conflicts of Irish immigrants, torn between their old allegiances and the new ways of life here in the United States. Seven Angels accepted Cowles as a playwright, and didn’t pigeonhole him as an actor or a personality (some of you may remember him as Billy Clyde Tuggle, the long-running villain on “All My Children”!) They took a chance on his writing abilities which were prodigious. Seven Angels continues that tradition to this day, reading and promoting aspiring writers, such as Wolcott resident Chuck Miceli. Next Spring, Chuck’s play, “Wounded Angels,” adapted from his novel of the same name, will have a reading there. Chuck, Immediate Past President of the OLLI Leadership Council and former chair of the Voices and Visions Literary Magazine, is a published prize-winning poet and now has been offered this wonderful opportunity. DeLaurentis told me that “Chuck has a natural ability for dialogue and I saw the play’s potential for further development. We offered him an opportunity to do a reading at the theater as part of our play-reading development series some time in the New Year.” I’ll have more particulars on this event when OLLI resumes for the Spring Semester!

Seven Angels Theatre, 1 Plank Road, Waterbury, (203) 757-4676, http://sevenangelstheatre.org
MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Laura Donorfio, Ph.D., was a “tomboy” who loved to play baseball and other sports with the neighborhood boys who became an outstanding researcher and teacher on aging and intergenerational relationships.

She admits she was not particularly academic when growing up. “I loved band and chorus.” Her instrument of choice was the Glockenspiel, a percussion instrument with tuned keys made of metal rather than wood and with a higher pitch than the xylophone. At Watertown High School, she played on various girls’ teams but observes there were fewer opportunities for females then than there are now.

Her grandmothers played a major role in her childhood. One introduced her to what Dr. Donorfio refers to as “gut-wrenching music” played on an old Victrola. The favored tunes were country as recorded by artists such as Patsy Cline, known for “Walkin’ After Midnight” written by Alan Block and Donn Hecht, and “Crazy.” The latter was written by Willie Nelson and sung by Cline.

Her second grandmother “never completed high school . . . but drilled into my mind that I had to get an education.” She was the “cheerleader for my education.” Dr. Donorfio cherished both grandmothers and feels it unfortunate that many young people today often lack close bonds with grandparents.

Dr. Donorfio was unsure of what she wanted after high school. She had a talent for math and entered Mattatuck Community College, now Naugatuck Valley Community College, thinking she might pursue a business degree. After working a year with computers, she realized she “really missed working with people.” The decision was made to enter Central Connecticut State College, where a professor introduced her to Gerontology, the study of the aging process from birth to death. “I knew this was what I wanted to do.”

Dr. Donorfio soon learned that the best program in Gerontology was offered by the University of Connecticut, where she earned her master’s and doctoral degrees. The professor shook her head. “When people heard I was studying Gerontology, they thought I was pursuing Geriatrics, providing medical care for older people, as Gerontology wasn’t well known as a field of study.” It’s an increasingly important field as within “10 years, one out of five people will be 65 or older.”

In the Department of Human Development and Family studies, she was the only one in her specific area. Everyone else was pursuing either Family Therapy or Child Development.

Possibly her close relationship with her grandmothers had something to do with her career choice. She feels people who grow up without knowing their grandparents or not knowing them well miss out on an important aspect of life. They often fail to see older adults as being a diverse group of people with multiple interests who want to pursue new activities now that they are free to do so.

But accommodations will have to be made as the population ages, creating markets for new services to allow many older men and women to pursue daily life and outside activities without losing their independence. Often, driving presents obstacles for many people, especially driving at night.

Driving services dedicated solely to transporting elderly persons may need to expand.

Now an associate professor in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies, University of Connecticut, Waterbury, Dr. Donorfio is very hands-on in promoting intergenerational studies learning opportunities on campus. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI ) program provides the ideal setting for bringing students and older adults together for mutual benefit, she says. Some of her students now are working at on curriculum development that would offer new courses with strong appeal for older adults.

Having college students teach OLLI members computer literacy has been a huge success. An idea in the works is a possible class on playing Fantasy Football. The possibilities for collaboration between young students and OLLI participants are endless. —Mary Ann Martin