



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

**SPECIAL EVENTS AT UCONN WATERBURY**



**Poetry Reading: Brian Turner, soldier-poet**

**Tuesday, October 28, 12:30-2:00 Room MPR 113-116**

Brian Turner is a soldier-poet who is the author of two poetry collections, *Phantom Noise* (2010) and *Here, Bullet* (2005) which won the 2005 Beatrice Hawley Award, the New York Times "Editor's Choice" selection, and the 2007 Poets Prize, among others. His memoir, *My Life as a Foreign Country*, that retraces his war experience, has just been published (2014).

Turner served seven years in the US Army, including one year as an infantry team leader in Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Prior to that, he was deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999-2000 with the 10th Mountain Division. Turner's poetry has been published in *Poetry Daily*, *The Georgia Review*, and other journals. He earned an MFA from the University of Oregon.

**Waterbury Author Mary Donnarumma Sharnick will read from her book**

***PLAGUED: Coming of age in the Venetian Fleet***

**Thursday, October 30, 2014 from 4 to 6 PM MPR 113 and 116.**

Mary Donnarumma Sharnick writes historical fiction and memoir. Her first novel, *THIRST*, set in seventeenth-century Venice, was published by Fireship Press in 2012, and is presently being adapted for the operatic stage by composer Gerard Chiusano and librettists Mary Noonan-Chiusano and Robert Cutrofello.

*PLAGUED*, the first in an anticipated series about the historical Michael of Rhodes, takes place in fifteenth-century Venice and at sea, and was released by Fireship in June 2014.

Mary's work has appeared in *America*, *The American Journal of Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*, *Italian Americana*, *The New York Journal of Books*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and a variety of other journals. Mary has presented at the 41st annual convention of The American Italian Historical Association, Auburn (AL) University Writers' Conference, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Waterbury's University of Connecticut Campus, Mark Twain House, and at various libraries and schools throughout Connecticut. Mary teaches writing and chairs the English Department at Chase Collegiate School.



**PLEASE RSVP TODAY**

Now, Three Easy Options:  
RSVP through online registration at: [olli.uconn.edu/events-open-to-the-public](http://olli.uconn.edu/events-open-to-the-public)  
Email: [osher@uconn.edu](mailto:osher@uconn.edu)  
Call: 203-236-9924/25

### BODY FACTS

"For its size, your body is as busy as the galaxy. Even when we're resting and daydreaming, internal activity is nonstop. The brain, of course, the crown jewel of our nervous system it has 85 billion neural cells and 150 trillion synapses. These are its electrical connections, its possibilities. This figure is nearly 1000 times as great as the number of stars in the Milky Way.

The number of brain neurons is impressive. To count them the rate of one a second would require 3200 years. But the brain synapses, or electrical connections, are beyond belief. Those 150 trillion could be counted in 3 million years. And that's still not the end of the matter.

The heart beats 2 1/2 billion times in a lifetime. The 5 quarts of blood of an adult male continually pumps, flow at an average speed of 3 to 4 mph-walking speed. That's fast enough so that drug injected into an arm reaches the brain in only a few seconds. But this blood speed is just

an average. It starts out progressing through the aorta at an impressive 15 inches per second then slows to different rates in various parts of the body. Speed decreases as capillaries narrow.

Some other signals from the body travel at varying speeds. From the brain, thought signals travel at 70 mph and reflex signals travel at 250 mph. Pain signals travel at 3 mph which is why when you stub your toe you don't feel it right away. Air intake averages 2 gallons per minute. Blinking takes one 10th of a second and happens about 10 times per minute. The fastest sneeze was recorded at 102 mph. A sneeze can release 40,000 particles at high-speed. Some claim it's the only body event that breaks the sound barrier." So avoid people with the flu.

These facts are taken from an article in the July/August 2014 issue of Discover Magazine by Bob Berman and excerpted from his forthcoming book, *Zoom-How Everything Moves*.

#### OLLI POETRY COFFEE HOUSE

2nd Thurs at John Bale Bookshop -10:00am  
Contact Denise Whelan (denisewhelan@yahoo.com)

#### OLLI BOOK CLUB

Contact: Nancy Via at [nvia@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nvia@sbcglobal.net)

Monday, Oct. 20.....The Botany of Desire  
Michael Pollan

Monday, Nov. 17.....Unbroken Laurel Hillenbrand

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

### PARKING

**UConn Police Officers conduct routine parking enforcement in the attached campus parking garage and all cars will be ticketed for parking violations. These violations include, but are not limited to:**

**Failure to display a UConn parking decal, parking in an unauthorized area –**

**NO PARKING ON LEVEL ONE, fire lanes, handicap and reserved spaces.**

**Parking fines can be as high as \$250 for parking in handicap spaces or misuse of a handicap permit. The fine for not displaying a University decal is \$30.**

Reminder of the importance of parking your vehicles correctly while in the UCONN parking garage. As everyone knows, parking is limited and every parking space is needed. So please, once you park your vehicle in a space, make sure it's within the space provided

**ALL REPLACEMENT PARKING STICKERS – including newly purchased vehicle stickers: \$10**

#### OLLI Food Drive

Thanksgiving is a great day for most people. There is family to visit with and food, and football games on TV and food, and Black Friday shopping events that begin on Thursday and leftovers.

The Thanksgiving holiday is not a special day for the poor and the homeless who may not have a turkey or even some of the trimmings.

You can help by joining with the OLLI Clubs and Activities committee that is sponsoring its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Food Drive on November 7<sup>th</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup>.

Canned food such as vegetables, spaghetti and meatballs, boxes filled with pasta or cereal and bottles such as peanut butter and jelly, can be left at the OLLI information table across from the UConn bookstore.

All items from the two Friday drives will be given to the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries.



## OLLI CAFE

**Oct 17 "Uncle John, Portraits of a True Yankee Farmer"** A book that took 30 years to compile, come hear readings from this tribute to her next-door neighbor / farmer who plowed with horses and then with tractors, and milked cows by hand into his late nineties. View her striking photos (taken over 16 years) and hear excerpts from Uncle John's oral histories that he shared with her while out in the fields — these stories represent an unsentimental look at a bygone way of life.

**Georgia Sheron** is a member of the Professional Photographers of America, holding a master craftsman certificate, is a five-time recipient of the Kodak Award of Excellence and a six-time recipient of the Fuji Masterpiece Award for her photography.

**Oct 24**

### **ATRIAL FIBRIL—WHAT?**

**Jaye Howes** is a masters-prepared Adult Nurse Practitioner with more than 30 years' experience in the nursing field. She managed the Telemetry Unit at Waterbury Hospital and shared her love of Cardiology by teaching her patients about their cardiac diseases. She currently works in the Cardiovascular Unit of Waterbury Hospital.

## OGUNQUIT and STRAWBERRY BANK

June 7-9, (Sun. - Tues.) 2015

Previous articles on OLLI's next two-night excursion, in the Spring of 2015 to Ogunquit and Strawberry Bank, have concentrated on all the wonderful places we shall visit. The purpose of this article is to focus in particular on the area in Maine that connects Perkins Cove to Ogunquit Beach. While visiting the Perkins Cove area, time allows for a stroll by the seaside along the "Marginal Way," which begins on a pathway very close by. A sign marks the entrance where visitors wanting to walk may begin.

On this scenic shore path of about a mile, magnificent ocean vistas abound. Can you just picture crashing waves pounding the coastline? Camera buffs should be delighted with the numerous photo opportunities offered here. Also, benches are conveniently placed along the path for anyone wishing to sit and absorb the beauty of the moment, or to just rest a while and breathe in the fresh ocean air. It is truly a picture postcard setting.

To avoid disappointment, contact Friendship Tours (860 243 1630) to register now for this wonderful excursion. Hope to see you on the bus. Please refer to our colorful flyer for specific details.

### **A Suggestion to our OLLI Travelers ~**

When reserving a seat for one of our day trips, it is very important for you to get your reservations in as early as possible. If they have not received an adequate number of people (usually 35 or 40) for a day trip, Friendship Tours is required to start a cancellation process about 2 weeks ahead of the date of that trip. That means that, although we know many of our trips are popular and were planned because many members suggested them, if many people wait until the last two weeks, the trip you are calling for may already be cancelled. So please make sure to reserve trips early to make sure you get the trips you want. (Just a note – Of course, overnight trips need to be reserved much earlier.)

**Ann Rompre, Co-Chairperson of Travel**



## DIG THE WELL BEFORE YOU ARE THIRSTY

Chinese Proverb

***Do Worry, But Be Happy*** is the title of an article written by Michael Grunwald in the October 20th issue of *Time Magazine*. He writes: " It's easy to get gloomy about climate change when melting sea ice has forced 35,000 walrus onto a skinny patch of Alaska shoreline. When the first 13 years of this century were among the 14 hottest years on record-and this year could end up topping them all. When scientists who have spent years issuing apocalyptic warnings about epic droughts and rising seas and irreversible tipping points keep concluding that the situation is far worse than they expected...It's also easy to get gloomy about our ability to reverse these terrifying trends."

World leaders keep holding summits where they talk about climate change and end up doing nothing. The political parties of the U.S. can agree on nothing which is what they keep doing. Meanwhile oil spills, crazy weather patterns and receding ice cover do not seem to convince the greater numbers of the population that climate change is here and that *we* might have something to do with it. Grunwald points out: "The world is pumping more and more carbon into an atmosphere that can't handle too much more of it. Fracking and other technologies are unlocking more petroleum than ever before. How will we break the cycle?...Actually, we're already breaking it. We're starting to decarbonize. The only question is whether we'll do it fast enough to avoid a planetary catastrophe-which granted, is an important question. I'm not arguing for a don't worry-be happy attitude. We should worry! But we're not doomed. The Stone Age didn't end because we ran out of stones, and the carbon age will end when alternatives are more

attractive than carbon. The happy news is that we've reached the beginning of that end."

How do we know that? Wind and solar prices keep dropping drastically and now make up the majority of the U.S.'s new power generating capacity. Consumers are buying LED lighting and programmable thermostats and super efficient windows and cars that guzzle less gasoline. "Battery prices are plunging, which is why electric vehicle sales are doubling every year...U.S. emissions have fallen 10% since 2005. In the past four years, one third of U.S. coal plants have been scheduled to close, and August set a new record for retirements. Globally, solar power has quadrupled since 2010. The cheaper solar gets, the more it is deployed, which further drives prices down, which further accelerates deployment....Official energy forecasts suggest that we'll still have a predominantly fossil-fueled economy for decades to come...We've managed to solve intractable problems like filthy rivers and smoggy air and acid rain. There's just as plausible a case for optimism about the carbon problem... The human race does a lot of stupid things, but we've got a powerful incentive to save the only planet that has pizza and Yosemite and our children. The arc of the logical universe is long and, hopefully, bends toward common sense."

As pointed out in an earlier article in the Newsletter on climate change, reasonable people can do what Grunwald suggests:

**Do Worry, Be Happy, but then Do Something!**

RJG

## MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Many teachers urge students to reach for the stars but **Rosalie Griffin** has actually experienced seeing one of hers blast into space.

Rosalie taught math for 35 years at Waterbury's Crosby High School where astronaut Rick Mastracchio, Class of 1978, took her calculus class. Rosalie was among a small group of Waterbury teachers NASA invited in 2000 to travel with their personal guests to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to see Rick and his four crewmates start their journey into space. Their mission was to prepare the International Space Station for the arrival of the station's first resident crew.

The trip to Florida was wonderful with "so many things to see," Rosalie said. The astronauts themselves didn't appear at any of the pre-launch festivities.

Rosalie recalled speaking to Rick's mother about his adventure. She was "very nervous, very, very worried. As a mother, I could relate to that."

Rick recently completed his fourth space mission. This time his tasks included walking in space to make repairs at the International Space Station. In February 2014 while still aloft, the astronaut spoke by satellite to area students at the Palace Theater, Waterbury. His image was beamed onto a large screen for the program.

Students asked many questions, including what food did the astronauts eat and could you see planets? After Rick's responses to student questions, Rosalie said, "I was allowed to approach the mic."

She asked for his response to a question that kids often ask her: "When am I ever going to use this stuff (math)?" Rick replied that in some fields, such as his, you use the formulas learned in the study of math. "Math," he observed, "teaches you how to be a thinker and a problem solver, skills which can be used in any field."

After his most recent return from space, Rick addressed students at Crosby and Chase Elementary School, which he also attended, as



well at the Palace Theater. As one who grew up in Waterbury, Rosalie is pleased that Rick never forgot his hometown.

When the future astronaut arrived in her class of 12-14 students, Rosalie saw that Rick was a standout student with excellent critical thinking skills. She describes him a quiet boy, who "was well-rounded and popular with his peers." He played on the Crosby varsity football team.

Rosalie stresses Rick's achievements are the result of his own vigorous effort although he has credited his Waterbury teachers for helping him become what he is today. When Rick appeared at the Palace

in September, he told students to never give up. He spent nine years applying to be an astronaut, saying "even though someone told me I couldn't be an astronaut, I didn't take no for an answer and kept trying," per a story in the *Republican American* by Michael Puffer.

Rosalie always knew she wanted to teach and decided to specialize in mathematics because, "my favorite course as a (college) freshman was "Principles of Mathematics." She earned her bachelor's at Albertus Magnus College and her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan University.

The Waterbury native grew up on Welton Street in a closely-knit neighborhood that was ethnically mixed. She has many fond memories of teaching at Crosby from which she also graduated but acknowledges her special feelings for the original building, which was located at 255 East Main Street. In 1974, Crosby moved to Pierpont Road in the East End.

A creative teacher who likes to make learning fun, Rosalie has taught a number of math courses at OLLI. Among them were "A Magical Mystery Tour of Mathematics" that discussed the symmetry in nature and other topics; another on TI Graphing Calculators; and one titled "Fun, Factual and Fascinating Mathematics." She now teaches part-time at Sacred Heart High School.

-Mary Ann Martin

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