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.
Are You Ready Yet?

OLLI members, After three major snowstorms in the last ten days or so, I think I know the answer. This article I just read will not change the weather but maybe it will help to understand what is happening to the climate.

As average temperatures rise across the planet, the frozen Arctic is heating up faster than anywhere else. With that warmth comes a surprising twist: Unusually warm Arctic winter temperatures are linked to bitter cold and snow in other parts of the Northern Hemisphere, such as the northeastern U.S., parts of northern Europe and northern Asia, according to an analysis of 66 years' worth of climate data

And the relationship between Arctic warmth and severe winter weather was strongest in in the northeastern U.S. — in fact, a temperature spike in the Arctic meant that the U.S. Northeast was two to four times more likely than usual to experience a bout of extreme winter weather, the scientists reported in a new study
Past climate projections predicted that, in a warming world, winters would be the seasons to heat up the fastest — and yet recent winters in the Northern Hemisphere were more severe than scientists anticipated, said Judah Cohen, the study's lead author and director of seasonal forecasting at Atmospheric and Environmental Research, an organization that assesses risks from weather events and climate change.

To understand what might be driving these unusual episodes, Cohen and his colleagues looked at pulses of warmth in the Arctic during winter months, to see how they lined up against weather anomalies elsewhere in the globe.
"When the Arctic pulse is warm, you tend to get an increase in occurrences of extreme winter weather across the midlatitudes, including the eastern U.S., northern Europe and northern Asia," Cohen told Live Science. The relationship between spiking Arctic warmth and pockets of cold to the south was "really, really strong" — and it was strongest in the eastern U.S., Cohen said.

Since 1990, the eastern U.S. has been visited by winter storms so severe that they earned highly dramatic nicknames, such as "Snowzilla," "Snowmageddon" and "Snowpocalypse." The increase in incidences of extreme storms with heavy snowfall corresponded with periods of excessive Arctic warmth, the study authors wrote. How does this relationship work? As the scientists' observations reflected only the comparison of weather patterns over time — and not what was driving them—the researchers could not conclude that a warmer Arctic was directly responsible for harsh winter storms in the U.S., they reported in the study.

But answers may lie in another atmospheric disturbance linked to a warming Arctic, Cohen said.
Accounding to the study, data from past decades showed that fall snow cover in Siberia increased as the Arctic warmed, which cooled northeastern Eurasia. Meanwhile, melting sea ice fueled warmer temperatures in northwestern Eurasia.

These air-temperature changes close to the surface led to similar changes higher up in the atmosphere. This, in turn, affected the jet stream — a conveyer belt of wind that carries warm air and moisture around the globe — by increasing its "waviness," making jetstream waves dive farther south and stretch farther to the north. In turn, this extra amplification can alter the movement of cold air masses near the pole, otherwise known as the polar vortex, Cohen explained.

And this disturbance of the polar vortex could end up shaping conditions that worsen winter weather in the U.S.
"The cold air that's normally confined to the Arctic, it's kind of dammed in by the polar vortex itself — because winds normally blow from west to east inside the polar vortex, so it acts as barrier, keeps the cold air to the north and the mild air to the south," Cohen said. "When it breaks down, the cold air that's penned up in the Arctic spills to lower latitudes, and that's when you get those episodes of severe winter weather."

Arctic scientists like to say that "what happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic," but the interconnectivity between Earth's dynamic atmospheric systems is no laughing matter, Cohen said. The complexity of these systems is reflected in emerging disruptions that are likely the products of climate change, though there is still much to be learned about how climate change could shape weather patterns around the world, the study authors reported.
"I'd argue that our expectations for climate change were overly simplistic," Cohen said. "It was kind of expected that if you warm the Arctic, the only thing that's going to lead to is just milder temperatures everywhere — and that's not a complete picture."

The findings were published online today (March 13) in the journal Nature Communications. Original article on Live Science.
Upcoming OLLI Travel

Spring Trips – 2018
5/15/2018 – South Central Park / Circle Line Cruise Tour Landmark & Brooklyn Tour – member price $98pp (Wait List only)
6/11-12/2018 – Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour – member price $297pp dbl & triple

Fall Trips – 2018
10/13-18/2018 – Biltmore, Ashville NC & Monticello VA – member price $1179 pp/dbl & triple

Early Dec. 2018 – Boarshead Feast, Williamstown MA – details to come

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.)

Please Note – All OLLI Trips will depart from and return to the Chase Parkway DOT Commuter Lot, Waterbury. Maps of this Departure Area are available on the OLLI Information Table in the main hall.

OLLI BOOK CLUB
2018 Book Selections

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>The Book of Unknown Americans</td>
<td>Cristina Henriquez</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>The Refugees</td>
<td>Viet Thanh Nguyen</td>
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<td>May 21</td>
<td>Rules of Civility</td>
<td>Amor Towles</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 18</td>
<td>All the Light We Cannot See</td>
<td>Anthony Doerr</td>
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OLLI Book Club meetings are held on the third Monday of the month, 1:00 p.m. in room 102D, UConn/Waterbury.
Chuck Miceli is the son of a coalminer. His father, Philip, like many young boys growing up in eastern Pennsylvania, was pulled out of school in the fourth grade to work up to 15 hours a day in anthracite coal mines. Those minds fueled the Industrial Revolution and help to provide Americans with the highest standard of living in the world. They made a select few wealthy beyond imagination while condemning others to poverty, sickness and often death. Mining created a surreal world of dampness, danger and absolute darkness hundreds of feet beneath the surface. In this presentation, Chuck Miceli will take you into that world and introduce you to the history, experiences and legacy of life and death deep in the earth.

Please Note: Due to an unforeseen Café cancellation, our new presentation for March 23 (next week) is as follows...

Senior Safety Tips | Tiffany Healey
Waterbury police officer, Tiffany Healey, will give a presentation about useful senior safety tips. Healey is currently assigned to the community relations division in Waterbury and has been a police officer for over 14 years. In the last three years, she has been a community officer and has presented senior safety, personal safety, building safety, and several other topics to the community.

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

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.
Yes, I confess. Every year at this time I feel the urge to get my Irish on. Since this is ostensibly an arts column, I’ll try to keep my musings on enjoying Irish culture in an artsy way! But, forgive me if I wander a bit, as we Irish tend to do.

Ah, museums! Well, I thought that I had this column in the bag well in advance, but to my chagrin and sadness the Great Hunger Museum in Hamden, which usually has a spectacular St. Patrick’s Day exhibition is temporarily closed in preparation for a major exhibition, “Making America: The Irish in the Civil War Era,” which will open in April. Much of the museum’s own extraordinary collection will be on view in Dublin and Skibbereen in September as part of an artistic exchange program.

I did get down to the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, however, for a talk on WWI and Irish Independence, part of a lecture series in conjunction with a beautiful exhibit entitled “World War I: Beyond the Front Lines” regarding the American experience in World War I. It is very interesting, contains many wonderful artifacts and an especially well-done recreation of trench warfare in France. The lecturer’s main point was that while the Uprising in Ireland did not immediately bring about Irish independence, it was the terrible punishments and executions by the British which further spurred the rebellion by creating even deeper resentment and emotional fervor. As he was talking, I thought of Sandy Hook, and all the horror and devastation of so many mass shootings since then, and I believe that the young people of Parkland, Florida, may finally provide the impetus for our government to take action on strict gun control. The exhibition runs through the end of this year, and it is well worth the trip.

What else in terms of Irish culture? Well, of course, there are always Irish movies, many of which can be found on Netflix. A favorite of mine is Waking Ned Devine, which is one of the funniest ethnic films of all time. The motorcycle scene with the naked David Kelley is a classic and makes me laugh out loud every time I watch it.

Books: When I downsized, I divested myself of over a thousand books. It was a long, painful but necessary process. I did, however, out of sheer sentimentality, keep two shelves of books about Ireland, including my entire Maeve Binchy collection, and my Alice Taylor books. Google for lists of Irish novels – the supply is endless!

Plays: I’ll be going this weekend to the Warner Theater in Torrington to see Frank McCourt’s “The Irish and How They Got That Way.” McCourt, of course, was the author of “Angela’s Ashes.” An emigrant, he really made the most out of his American experience, and spent his final years in Roxbury, CT. Though some Irish were quite resentful of his portrayal of his impoverished childhood in the lanes of Limerick, to my eyes he was a truth-teller.

How about some up close and personal Irish?? The award-winning Irish novelist, short story writer, essayist, playwright, journalist, critic and poet Colm Toibin will be speaking right here at UConn, Waterbury on Thursday, April 5 at 12:30 p.m. The author of “Brooklyn,” which many of us have enjoyed, will be here in the flesh! Email the OLLI office to reserve your seat.

So, if all of this seems a bit exhausting, tune in tomorrow to NBC at 11 am and watch the NYC Saint Patrick’s Day Parade. Sit back, sip a wee pint, relax and revel in your Celtic heritage. And if you don’t have Irish genes, well, tomorrow you can be just a bit! And you might just be surprised - I have a few friends who found out through Ancestry DNA that they have long-lost Irish ancestors about whom they never knew! Slainte and Erin Go Bragh!
MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Retired chemist turned “exceptional experience artist” Nina Lesiga is excited about the new phase of her life.

After 30 years working for the global giant Unilever, she has embarked on a life of teaching the ukulele, participating in flash mobs, being a storyteller and keynote speaker, going on solo day trips and simply “enjoying the moment.”

“I was always an artist,” Nina says describing some of the unorthodox activities she experienced since retiring from Unilever four years ago.

One of Nina’s favorite adventures happened on December when she walked into an elevator at iconic Macy’s on Herald Square in New York and played her ukulele for three hours to the puzzlement of some passengers and delight of others. The performance was part of a world-wide event promoting artists performing uninvited in elevators.

Before boarding the elevator, she worried she might be arrested. But then she thought “this is New York” where the unexpected happens routinely. A security guard approached and asked if she was carrying a ukulele. Nina nervously confirmed she was. Instead of chasing her out of the store, he asked her to play a tune because “I love the ukulele.” After she played, he thanked her and went on his way. She went to the elevator, got on and played a tune of friendship, You’ve Got a Friend.

Nina grew up in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York. She had a gift for science and mathematics but also loved music and stringed instruments. About age seven, she began taking guitar lessons and played the flute in school bands and the orchestra. Reflecting on her love for the guitar, Nina said, “I wanted to be like the Beatles.”

She held onto the idea of leading an artistic life while the logical side of her brain nudged her toward science as a career. Finally, she chose science after deciding pursuing a full-time career in the arts would be too much of a financial struggle. But she did some “moonlighting as an artist” during the Unilever years.

She earned her bachelor’s degree from Polytechnic University, now part of New York University. She also did graduate work in biochemistry at City University of New York, Queens College.

When the young chemist joined Unilever, a maker of soaps and foods, she first worked in a position supporting her team’s work by researching information pertinent to the success of its projects. Eventually, Nina became Global Communications Manager/Operations Manager. Her role in knowledge management included working in communications.

Among her tasks was providing information designed to build employee relations across nine countries and cultures that, in turn, helped enhance efficiency and productivity. She also debriefed experts leaving the company to glean useful information they didn’t think to include in official reports.

The only chemistry Nina practices now is “cooking in the kitchen” in her home in Stratford. She often takes a “daycation,” going to places that will allow her to return home at nightfall. One of the best, she says, was going for the first time the Big E, the huge fair held annually in Springfield, MA, and “having the time of my life.” She loved watching the pig race, viewing giant vegetables and seeing folks eating huge cream puffs. Nina finds traveling solo often opens up experiences you wouldn’t have otherwise and helps expands her comfort zone.

Three years ago, Nina decided to play the ukulele. She quickly adapted to the instrument, wanted to share the joy she found playing it, and soon was teaching a number of classes at various venues. At OLLI she teaches Ukulele Adventure. At her suggestion, her fall OLLI class did a “flash mob,” by going into the hallway outside the classroom and onto the stairs as a group and spontaneously playing songs. They had a grand time and shared smiles and laughter.

And Nina is already thinking of ways she can develop her OLLI class into something really special. Stay tuned.

–Mary Ann Martin

Bernie Weiss