Sometimes It Snows in April

Well, lo and behold, instead of April’s showers this April 10th day, the lawn is covered in white snow. Will this winter ever end? But there is hope. Purple flowers and yellow crocuses push their way through the blanket of snow to show us that spring is really coming. “However, some people will point to the cold and the snow and say that it proves global warming isn’t real. That’s false: categorically, definitely, unequivocally, scientifically false. And yet it’s made over and over again by climate denialists and their paid-for politicians in Washington,” according to The Daily Beast’s Jay Michaelson in an April 6 post.

“The most important thing to remember when it comes to climate change is that it is never possible to trace any single weather event – hurricane, cold snap, dry spell – to climate change... In other words, the relevant data for climate change are long-term trends, not short-term phenomena (generally, climatologists look at 30 year averages). And there is no doubt about those trends. According to NASA, the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 1997. Based on carbon samples, the NOAA says that the last three decades have, on average, been the warmest in 1000 years... concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have risen during this period as well.”

“When you look carefully enough, even the record lows of this coming weekend are part of an overall warming trend. In the 1980s, there were 1.14 record highs recorded for every one record low. In the 1990s, there were 1.36. And in the 2000s, 2.04. That doesn’t mean there are never record lows – but there are fewer record lows and more record highs. The trendline is unmistakable.

Oh, and in 2017, the ratio was off the charts, almost 9 to 1.”

Michaelson further writes, “So, while you can always play with the data to find a couple of months or even years where average temperatures fall, when you zoom back to the big picture there is no doubt whatsoever... Now, climate change does make certain events more likely. Heating up the oceans will likely cause more hurricanes and severe storms, just as we’ve seen recently. But just as it’s irresponsible for climate realists to blame an individual hurricane on climate change, so it’s irresponsible for climate denialists to blame an individual cold snap on climate change... Okay, but if climate change is causing an overall warming trend, why are there so many cold winters? Well, because... There is no ‘Global Warming.’ There is ‘Global Climate Disruption’.”

The climatic system of the Earth is very complicated. Many events cause the changes in weather we experience. Some parts of the Earth get hotter while others get colder. Droughts and massive rainfalls cause chaos. “The overall trend is predictable, but the individual impacts are not – we’re playing with a complex system on a level never before seen in Earth’s history. Most of the consequences will be unforeseen,” Michelson says.

So, OLLI members, “If you don’t like the weather, wait a minute.” Said Mark Twain. But if you don’t like the climate – move!
OLLI at UConn is participating in our third year of Give Local, an online giving event which benefits the vital work of nonprofit organizations in our region. If you’d like to contribute, don’t forget to visit https://givelocalccf.org/ on April 24th-25th, 2018!

Why give to OLLI? OLLI is funded in several ways: by the endowment provided by the Osher Foundation, by the significant in-kind gifts from the University of Connecticut, and by registration fees. However, it is your gifts that offer the potential for development of courses and special events.

Where does a donation go? Donations to OLLI directly support programming costs. You have provided support to special projects such as an annual literary and art publication called Voices and Visions, our garden project that produces over 15,000 pounds of food for those in need in Greater Waterbury, and special lectures and events. A gift of any size is a gift of knowledge and makes a big difference in the lives of the program and our members. Your gifts to OLLI demonstrate a commitment to a lifelong learning experience that improves the quality of life for us all!

Thank you for your generosity!

Greetings OLLI’ITES...

Now that you have taken a class or two or more at OLLI, we want to invite you to submit your work to our annual publication of Voices and Visions. If you are an artist with words, pen, ink, watercolor, oil, pottery or photograph, we would like to see your work for inclusion in this year’s issue.

To submit your work, contact us at: fijanrathan@gmail.com and submit a copy of your work. Email a copy of your written work, or a photo of your other art form creation. Once submitted, we will review the work and let you know if we can accept it. Photos of creative artwork will be photographed by our Voices and Visions photographer. What we need first is your submission.

You will retain all rights to the work. We will accept submissions between now and the end of the semester in May.

Thank you, The Voices and Visions Committee
OLLI Travel

Boar’s Head Festival and Bright Nights Springfield
Evelyn Marshak

Do you want to get into the Christmas mood in a rather unique way? Then I urge you to sign up for the OLLI’s Boar’s Head Festival which is scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2018.

Before our motor couch leaves for Williamstown, MA, here’s a little history of the oldest continual festival of the Christmas season. The festival is rooted in ancient times when the boar was the sovereign of the forest.

The festival was brought to the United States by the British and French Huguenots who first learned of the custom while living in exile in England.

Our coach leaves the Chase Parkway commuter lot at 9 am and heads for the Williams Inn to be welcomed by the Beefeater Guards in the decorated lobby of the Williams Inn.

Part of the Feast is great buffet meal including cheeses, soup, vegetables, salad bar and freshly carved meat. Any holiday meal should feature great desserts and the Boar’s Feast will follow this tradition.

After our lunch, there will be singing and swings to traditional holiday music and music of the 30s, 40s and 50s offered by the Inn’s Miss B. Haven Cabaret Troup.

A hot wassail cup will be provided so we can offer up the traditional toast, “Good luck, good health and good cheer.”

Our coach moves on to Forest Park in Springfield with its spectacular holiday light display featuring more than 250,000 lights spread over 2 ½ miles. Our coach will pass through North Pole Village, Season’s Greetings, Toyland, Giant Poinsettia Candles and a Victorian Village.

Cost for this feast, which dates back to pre-Christian times in England, is $115 for members and $125 for non-members. Remember, non-members are welcome on every OLLI trip.

Our estimated time of return is 7:30.

For reservations call Friendship Tours at 1-800-243-1630.

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<th>Upcoming OLLI Travel</th>
<th>Spring Trips – 2018</th>
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<td>5/15/2018 – South</td>
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<td>Central Park / Circle</td>
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<td>Line / Cruise Tour</td>
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<td>(Wait List only)</td>
<td>11/28/2018 –</td>
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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.

The OLLI Clubs and Activities Committee invites OLLI folks and guests, who are attending Chuck Miceli’s play-reading at 7 Angels Theatre, to dine with us at Sultan’s Restaurant, Waterbury on Sunday, April 22, at 2:00 p.m., prior to the reading. Sultan’s Restaurant offers delicious Turkish food at reasonable prices. Reservations are not required but if you would like to join our tables please email: Nancy: nvia@sbcglobal.net or Toni: toniescott1@cox.net.

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<th>OLLI BOOK CLUB</th>
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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.
April 13
Breeding And Rearing Of Seahorses
Timothy Padgett
Timothy Padgett will present, through the use of videos and other images, the science of raising and breeding dwarf seahorses. His presentation will also focus on the proper feeding and training of the seahorse as well as a discussion on what happens to seahorses in the wild and why they are endangered today.

April 20
Connecticut Schoolhouses Through Time
Melinda Elliott

Doug, preparing his will, his nurse, his wife, his daughter and two sons, are with him. He asks for two witnesses to be present and a camcorder be in place to record his last wishes. When all is ready he begins to speak.

"My son, Bernie, I want you to take the Ocean Reef houses."

"My daughter Sybil, you take the apartments between mile markers 100 and Tavernier."

"My son, Jamie, I want you to take the offices over in the Marathon Government Center."

"Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings on the bay side on Blackwater Sound."

The nurse and witnesses are blown away as they did not realize his extensive holdings, and as Doug slips away, the nurse says:

"Mrs. Pender, your husband must have been such a hard-working man to have accumulated all this property.

The wife replies,

"The idiot had a paper route."

An invisible man married an invisible woman. Their kids were nothing to look at, either.

A good pun is its own reward.

If Gregor Mendel had been alive today, he would have won the Nobel Peas Prize.

If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you never tried before.

Why do people with closed minds always open their mouths?

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UConn Waterbury

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
The University of Connecticut
99 East Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06702

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS
Bob Grady 860-483-2014
Email yvoorg@aol.com
or nbloomstrom@aol.com

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.
Sometimes in this column I tend to overlook literature as “art” which is a real failing on my part. I over-emphasize the fine arts, music, dance and theater and don’t pay as much attention as I should to writing. This past week has been heavenly for a book lover such as myself, however, with visiting the Harriet Beecher Stowe Homestead, and two live talks and discussions with prominent contemporary authors.

The first was the culmination of the Wallingford Public Library’s First Annual One Town One Book event. The committee worked on this for almost a year, and was fortunate to have the author of their choice consent to travel to Chooe’s Paul Mellon Fine Arts Center. Matthew Quick, author of “The Reason You Are Here” spoke to a crowd of 300 book lovers about the life of a writer, inspiration, motivation, and the necessity of taking a chance on a sometimes very scary life choice. He explained the difference between a book or story being “based on” and being “influenced by.” In this vein, he explained how the characters in his latest work were influenced greatly by his blue collar family in New Jersey, his grandfather the World War II Veteran and his uncle Pete, a Vietnam War vet. Things aren’t always as they seem to us at first glance, Quick asserts, and this is a major theme of many of his books. Until we get to know people on a one to one basis, it is easy to pigeonhole and stereotype them. Hippies, Archie Bunkers, African Americans, veterans, the list goes on and on. How do we think about our fellow man beyond a superficial level, and how do we remedy that? Quick, whose book “Silver Linings Playbook,” won an Oscar for its screen adaptation, also spoke about his lifelong battle with depression and anxiety, a legacy, he feels from the veterans in his life, his grandfather and what he passed down to his father, and his uncle and the unspoken stories of his war. He was very candid and forthright.

The next day right here at OLLI I was thrilled to be able to see in person (and have a book inscribed to “Mary Fitzpatrick”) the prominent Irish author Colm Toibin. Toibin is an award winning author, poet, professor and essayist. He spoke about what influenced him as a writer, and how sometimes it is so difficult to discipline oneself to actually sit down and do the work. In a talk which was both humorous and informative, he spoke about the need for an author to just listen to people to gain inspiration, to notice the little details in the life of the characters he is bringing to life, which of course, are drawn from personal experience. I could relate to his talking about the smell of Brussels sprouts (cooked in the Irish way, that is, boiled to death) which brought me back to my own Irish Catholic childhood, and the very Irish attitude of always being concerned what “the neighbors” thought about you and your every action. He spoke a bit about the process of having his book “Brooklyn” made into a screenplay, and how that isn’t necessarily easy for an author, and he read extensively from one of his other books, “Nora Webster.”

What impressed me about both events was the number of people in attendance. Books certainly aren’t dead! Both events were free to the public, and they will stay with me as enriching experiences for a long time. A funny OLLI sidebar to this column – both movies “Silver Linings Playbook” (Quick) and “Brooklyn” (Toibin) were chosen as featured films in this spring’s OLLI Film Club, totally by coincidence and without knowledge of these in-person readings. A bit of pre-cognizance, perhaps?
MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

Diane Ciba’s life has taken her into many halls of academia as a student and teacher but her great passion is following a path through information found online, in print, libraries, old scrapbooks and town halls.

Having been interested in genealogy since high school, she revels in telling stories of her own ancestors as well as helping people “build their family trees” using research skills she shares. She likes the enthusiasm and interest found in her classes at OLLI, where she currently is presenting “Unearth Your Roots – Conversations in Genealogy.”

Her personal specialty is researching her own French-Canadian ancestry. She learned a number of her ancestors were Filles a Marier (Marriageable Girls), who immigrated to Canada in search of husbands. Diane said about 80 of the approximately 250 that arrived in Canada between 1634 and 1662 “were related to me.”

She explained many fur traders who came to Canada to hunt beaver and make their fortunes wanted to marry but no French girls were available locally. They sought to recruit young French women interested in marrying.

Many women who came were convent-schooled and were literate unlike their potential spouses. Their average age was 22, according to an online article “Perrault and Moisier... climbing the family tree,” whose source was Peter J. Gagne’s Before the King’s Daughters: The Filles a Marier 1634-1662.

Back in France, their marriage options were limited. In Canada these women could choose whom to marry. Diane also learned one of her ancestors, a woman, was hanged. Further investigation showed the woman was “fiercely protective of her daughter” and killed her son-in-law for abusing his wife.

Diane grew up in the small town of Newport, Vermont, with a number of brothers and sisters and 63 first cousins. She says her interest in genealogy may have begun by figuring out “who belonged to whom.”

Hers was a “free ranging childhood,” with the only real rule being “be home by 5 o’clock.” She belonged to the Girl Scouts, played the guitar and enjoyed singing around the campfire. Diane also was a high school debater, played trumpet and even won a bowling trophy.

The Great Books curriculum drew her to St. John’s College, Annapolis, where she met Michael Ciba, who was two years older. Two years later the couple married and headed for the University of Chicago, where Michael began graduate studies. She enrolled at the Illinois Institute of Technology with a math major.

The birth of a daughter, followed quickly by birth of a son, interrupted her studies. Another move came when her husband got a job with a large corporation in Kansas City, MO. Diane enrolled in the University of Missouri, where she finished her bachelor’s degree 10 years from the time she enrolled in college.

After a transfer to St. Paul, MN, Michael decided to enter the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities to become a minister for the United Church of Christ. Needing a job, Diane couldn’t find a position as a math major but could type “123 words a minute,” which got her a job with a law firm. She then worked for a second law firm where Diane’s computer skills caught attention.

Her first technical assignment was to install a TI line that connected computers in the firm’s offices, one located in Minneapolis and the other in its “sister city” of St. Paul.

Michael’s first church was outside of Youngstown, Ohio. Diane earned an MBA in Marketing from Youngstown State University and eventually was put in charge of the computer lab in the School of Business with its 300 computers.

Another move took the couple to Connecticut, where Michael served the Mill Plain Church in Waterbury before becoming Southwest Regional Minister for the Connecticut Conference of United Church of Christ with primary offices in Hartford. A friend told Diane about OLLI, which led to her becoming a presenter.

—Mary Ann Martin