



OLLI *News*

UConn
WATERBURY

Volume 20, Issue 4

September 28, 2018

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.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS

Riding through the Litchfield woods last Saturday I realized that autumn was upon us. Not fully, yet, but you can see the signs. The greens of the trees have dulled considerably. Maples may have a patch of light pink or orange here and there. Goldenrod jumps out alongside the road. Sumac bushes are turning purple before they turn bright red. Birch trees are fading to yellow. Most of the cow corn's cut, leaving tan stubble in the fields along Hard Hill. So, it's coming, but I wonder if this year is going to be spectacular or just gorgeous.

Perhaps you've noticed that in some years, the red fall colors seem brighter and more spectacular than in other years. What causes this? Temperature and cloud cover can make a big difference in a tree's red colors from year to year.

According to an article on the Internet, the best fall colors come when there's been a warm wet spring and a summer that's not too hot or dry and a fall with plenty of warm sunny days and cool nights.

"When a number of warm, sunny autumn days and cool, but not freezing nights, come one after another, it's going to be a good year for reds. In the daytime, the leaves can produce lots of sugar, but the cool night temperatures prevent sugar sap flowing through the leaf veins and down into the branches and trunk. Anthocyanins to the rescue! Researchers have found out that anthocyanins are produced as a form of protection. They allow the plant to recover nutrients in the leaves before they fall off. This helps make sure that the tree will be ready for the next growing season. Anthocyanins give leaves their bright, brilliant shades of red, purple and crimson.

Yellow, gold and orange colors created by carotenoid remain fairly constant from year to year. That's because carotenoids are always present in leaves and the amount does not change in response to the weather.

The amount of rain in a year also affects autumn leaf color. Severe drought can delay the arrival of fall colors by a few weeks. A warm, wet period during fall will lower the intensity, or brightness, of autumn colors. A severe frost will kill the leaves, turning them brown and causing them to drop early."

So, OLLI members, hope for a late frost and little rain and get out and enjoy another spectacular spectacle of New England autumn.

RJG



DOG FACTS

Don't even try to hide treats from your dog. His nose knows you have them. Just don't let him get his paws on any foods dogs can't eat. Dogs' sense of smell is 10,000 to 100,000 times more sensitive than that of humans. Just how powerful is that? As James Walker, former director of the Sensory Research Institute at Florida State University, [told PBS](#), "If you make the analogy to vision, what you and I can see at a third of a mile, a dog could see more than 3,000 miles away and still see as well."

There are some [weather myths you shouldn't believe](#), like lightning never strikes the same place twice. But here's one you should never doubt: Dogs can sense when bad weather is coming. Researchers don't have an exact explanation—maybe your pet actually is a superhero!—but they have some theories. Dogs are sensitive to drops in barometric pressure that come with severe storms, and they can hear low frequencies that humans can't, like far-off thunder and earthquake rumbles. You shouldn't solely rely on your pet over meteorologists, but don't let their weird behavior go unnoticed. It could save your life.

As if having an extra extremity wasn't cool to begin with, dogs can also use their tails to communicate. They lower their tails when they feel scared or nervous. When they're alert or aroused, the tails wag higher. If a pooch is aggressive or feeling threatened, that tail will stick straight up in the air. Plus, dogs can tell how other canines are feeling based on what direction they wag in. [Italian researchers](#) discovered that dogs became more anxious when they saw others wag their tails to the left, as opposed to the right side or not at all. Previous studies showed that left-leaning tail wagging was a result of a dog having a negative experience, like facing a nasty dog.

Dogs and humans know how to take care of each other. Dogs can tell when you're not 100 percent healthy, sometimes even before you know it. Thanks to their powerful

sense of smell, dogs can pick up on volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in human bodies, which include diseases like cancer. In 2006, dogs trained at the [In Situ Foundation](#) were able to detect lung cancer with 97 percent accuracy and breast cancer with 88 percent accuracy, just by sniffing breath samples from patients. Those are better results than needle biopsies.

Well, kind of. Dogs can't exactly read your mind, but they do know how you're feeling. In a study published in [Biology Letters](#), researchers showed dogs photos of faces displaying different emotions while also playing an audio clip that showed a distinct emotion. What's interesting is that the dogs looked at the face that corresponded to the type of voice that was being played, like a mad face when the audio clip was an angry voice. So your pet may not be able to process the words "You ate all of my cereal?!" like humans can, but she can definitely use your facial expressions and tone to pick up that you're not in a great mood.

Yes, empathy is a superpower. Not only do dogs and pups understand your feelings, but they can also empathize with you, according to a report from [Psychology Today](#). Psychologists from Goldsmiths College in London conducted the same study on 18 dogs: Each dog would watch while its owner sat across from a stranger. The two individuals would take turns talking normally, humming in an unusual pattern, and pretending to cry. The psychologists reasoned that when its owners cried, the pets would lie on them, nuzzle, lick, or otherwise try to comfort them. But the dogs ended up also comforting the crying strangers, even though they had no emotional connection, just because they saw that they were distressed. Wouldn't the world be a better place if we all empathized like dogs?

From Readers' Digest online

POETS OF THE PIANO

On Sunday afternoon September 23, 2018 the Poli Club of the Palace Theatre was full. The audience was there to hear a talk and performance by a world renowned pianist, Nathan Carterette. Nathan has taught a popular OLLI course at Carnegie Mellon called "Poets of the Piano." The course is now on national tour and came to Waterbury this Sunday. We heard "A Night at the Theater," one of the four versions of his tour. Nathan gave a 30-minute talk about excerpts of music from Bach to opera to popular music which were transformed from their original versions to modern day renditions. From the program notes, "None of the pieces on today's program started out as piano music. Instead they came from the theater, opera, ballet,

Broadway. Somewhere along the line, someone wanted to experience the music on their own, with their own two hands, and so took it off-stage and adapted it for a new venue- a one-person orchestra, the piano....The origin of each of the pieces is the story of an encounter, in a time and place, and in the atmosphere of the culture that surrounded it." His talk was informative and his piano playing was superb. Those of us who attended were delighted to attend this OLLI sponsored event on a Sunday afternoon. The setting was comfortable, ample snacks were supplied and the concert was wonderful, all for a very modest fee.

Ira Mickenberg



What's Coming Up in Travel for Spring 2019

Even though all of our OLLI trips in the Fall are sold out, we have much to look forward to in travel for the Spring/Summer semesters coming up in 2019. Even though these trips are still being worked on at Friendship tours, flyers for them will soon be out, some sooner than others depending on when each of the locations' schedules are available for release to be able to make arrangements and book tickets.

Since we already know the date for it, probably the first flyer you will see available on the Information Table will be for the opera **Tosca** on **Saturday, April 6, 2019** at the **Metropolitan** in New York City. Friendship Tours should have these flyers out shortly and then we will be able to let you know the exact price of the opera. So, for those of you that have missed out on getting to see **Carmen** this Fall because it sold out, you can still look forward to **Tosca** in April. Watch for flyers shortly.

The next trip to look forward to will be a 3 day/2 night overnight in the the **Finger Lakes of New York** which will take place in **early June**. Highlights of this trip will be a welcome dinner at the historic **Belhurst Castle** with a fantastic view of Seneca Lake, the **Corning Museum of Glass**, **Pleasant Valley Winery**, and a **Cruise on the Historic Erie Canal**, among other things. As usual we will have excellent

accommodations at the **Canandaigua Inn on the Lake**. Flyers for this trip should be coming out soon.

Lastly, a day trip in July to **Tanglewood** in Lenox, MA to take in a summer concert will bring a smile to our music lovers. On the same day we will take in **Naumkeag**, in Stockbridge, MA, the 44 room "cottage" of the **Choate family**, designed by the firm of **McKim, Mead, & White**. Enjoy not only the house but the many gardens of this National Historic Landmark. Because the summer schedule of **Tanglewood** is not out until late December or early January, flyers for this trip will probably be out in our Winter and Spring semesters, but in plenty of time for you to reserve your seat.

Make sure to get your reservations in early for any of these trips. As with this semester's trips, they may fill up quickly. To reserve any of these trips **after the flyers come out**, simply call **Friendship Tours** at **1-800-243-1630**, and ask about **OLLI trips**. Please make sure to mention if you are a member or, if you have more than one person in your party, please specify who is a member and who is not a member since there is a difference in price. You may pay by credit card on the phone or by check through the mail.

Ann Rompre

Upcoming OLLI Travel

Fall Trips – 2018

ALL FALL TRIPS SOLD OUT

10/13-18/2018 – Biltmore, Asheville NC & Monticello VA

11/03/2018 – Carmen/Metropolitan NYC

11/28/2018 – Boar's Head Feast, Williamstown MA/
Bright Nights, Springfield, MA

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

OLLI Book Club meetings are held on the third Monday of the month, 1:00 p.m. in room 102, UConn/Waterbury.

Oct. 15 News of the World by Paulette Jiles
Nov. 19 The Last Painting of Sara deVos...
by Dominic Smith

Talk on the Opera, Carmen

Speaker: Nunzio DeFilippis

Thursday, Oct. 18, 2018; 2:30pm – 4pm

Rm. 113/116

OPERA FANS! –Join us for an informative talk given by our favorite opera buff, **Nunzio DeFilippis**, about the opera, **Carmen**. On Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018, OLLI will be traveling with Friendship Tours to the Metropolitan to take in Bizet's wonderful opera of the gypsy seductress who lives by her own rules. As usual, in his talk, Nunzio will let us know fascinating background material and also let us know key parts to look forward to in this opera.

Even though this talk is in conjunction with the upcoming trip, any members and their guests who are interested in learning about this opera are invited. You may either call the OLLI office at **203-236-9924/9925** or e-mail them at osher@uconn.edu to let them know that you are interested in attending on Thursday, Oct. 18th.

OLLI artBeat

by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

The Florence Griswold Museum - Art on the River in Old Lyme

I was fortunate to be able to spend some time at a friend's beach house in Old Lyme a few weeks ago. On a day that so-so weather was predicted we took off to explore the *Florence Griswold Museum*. Happily, the forecast was wrong (amazing!) and it turned into a beautiful day, which made for a great opportunity to learn the story of Florence Griswold and the genesis of the Lyme Art Colony.

The Griswolds were a venerable family in Connecticut – statesmen, lawyers, politicians. Florence's father, however, was a sea captain, who due to a series of disastrous investments went bankrupt. When Florence inherited the beautiful Georgian mansion, she had to earn money and decided to turn it into a boardinghouse. The artist *Henry Ward Ranger* was looking for a place to establish an art colony that fit his specifications – easily accessible from New York, interesting material for inspiration, and a place to stay, paint and sell. In 1900 “a merry band of painters” arrived at Miss Griswold's doorstep and the colony was born. *Childe Hassam*, who is credited with bringing impressionism to America, called his time there “an excursion into Bohemia.” There would be 20, 30 or even 40 artists staying there at one time, painting during the day, enjoying communal meals produced by Florence's small staff, and having a very good time for themselves in the evening. Or as Hassam said, “just the place for high thinking and low living.” And what a group of bohemians it was! Besides Hassam, *Willard Metcalf*, *Henry Ward Ranger*, *Henry Rankin Poore*, and *William Chadwick* were among the famous artists to spend time there. Only one woman, Matilda Browne, could stay in the house along with Florence and the other artists, and she was invited to paint a scene on the door of Florence's bedroom. By our standards today, Florence really lived in poverty during all her adult years, genteel though it may have been, and her generosity to the artists is remarkable.

One of the most interesting parts of her house, which was named a *National Historic Landmark* in 1993, are the painted panels on almost all the interior doors in the house. An artist had to be invited to paint a scene on one. We also enjoyed Poore's 9' by 6" mural “*The Fox Chase*” which depicts the group which called themselves “The Knockers” because they were always teasing each other and “knocking” each other's work. It not only important artistically but also historically as it really captures the time and the flavor of what this group was about. Matilda Browne is included in the whimsical painting which shows the high esteem in which the men held her.

Besides the house which holds the permanent collection of Old Lyme painters, there is a new building which has changing exhibitions. We watched a 20-minute film which introduces visitors to the history of the house and the colony, and then viewed the current exhibition “An American Place, the Art Colony at Old Lyme.” We also had a chance to step inside *William Chadwick's studio* (with the coveted napping couch) and other outbuildings.

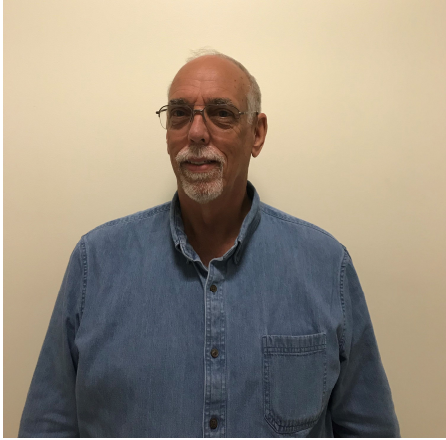
The museum also hosts special events. From *September 29 to October 28*, you will be able to search for some *wee fairies* in the beautiful lush gardens! A perfect opportunity for a day trip with the *grandchildren or great-grandchildren*. You'll be given a *DIRECTIONARY* and sent off to find over three dozen hidden fairy abodes. You'll even have a chance to create your very own faerie house! Sounds like a perfect autumn excursion with young companions.

And if you get hungry after you've toured the house, museum, outbuildings and gardens, don't despair! You can enjoy a delicious reasonably priced lunch at *Miss Flo's Café* which is right on the Lieutenant River. Inside and outdoor seating are available. I had a lobster BLT which was out of this world! The museum is open all year long. For more details go to www.florencegriswoldmuseum.org.

To sum up, I'll quote Florence herself. “So, you see, at first the artists adopted Lyme, then Lyme adopted the artists, and now today Lyme and art are synonymous.” Amen!



MEET YOUR PRESENTERS



Fascinated by aircraft and spacecraft when growing up, **John “Jack” Lewis** remembers carving aircraft models out of balsa wood with the design based on what he observed and saw flying overhead in the sky and in photos.

His enthusiasm to learn about airplanes and space vehicles during the age of Sputnik led him to pursue a career in aerospace engineering. Today, he indulges himself in writing while helping students in his OLLI class “do an inventory of their lives” to develop story ideas.

A doting grandfather of seven children, Jack himself has completed writing a book, *River Dance*, about a boy and his grandfather and is looking for an illustrator.

A multi-faceted man, Jack loves to sing and is a baritone with the Naugatuck Community Choir. He began singing choral music when attending Naugatuck High School where the last formal piece in a concert always was Handel’s “Alleluia Chorus” in the *Messiah*.

But Jack’s musical taste isn’t limited to soaring classical music. He likes fun pieces as well, citing Lewis Carroll’s nonsense poem “Jabberwocky” set to music as an example of a tune he enjoys.

After graduating from high school, Jack headed south to Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. He chose the college because it had an excellent aerospace and co-op program, which helped him earn his way through college, and he wanted to meet new people.

After graduation, Jack realized the Virginia area didn’t offer a young aerospace engineer job opportunities. He returned to Connecticut, where he worked for several manufacturing companies, including Dresser Industries, where he was both a test and a design engi-

neer. While at Dresser, Jack earned an MBA from the University of New Haven.

He worked on heat transfer equipment and found he liked working in testing better than designing. “I got to break things.” Jack found he could predict the lifecycle of a product and explain analytically what went wrong. His writing focused on analytical reports. He became Senior Engineer in charge of testing and ended up at the company as Engineering Manager.

He later worked for defense sub-contractor Raymond Engineering Inc., Middletown, where his MBA came into play. Jack eventually became Manager of Budgets.

Jack also worked for two years as Associate State Director for the Connecticut Small Business Development Center, hosted by the University of Connecticut at Storrs and part of a national program.

According to its website, CSBDC provides no-cost, confidential business advising services to small Connecticut businesses and entrepreneurs.

Among Jack’s clients at the center was one shop developing products such as solar technology and another was working on digital X-ray equipment to be used in space flight to assess how that affected the bones of people working in space.

Jack had enjoyed creative writing when growing up. As an engineer he wrote countless analytical reports and with other commitments, including teaching nights at community colleges he had little time for other kinds of writing.

He was inspired to write non-technical stories again because of his grandchildren, who are “a big part of my life.” When Jack’s older grandson was not yet three, the child’s other grandfather died. “I decided I am going to be around as long as I can and share as much as I can with my grandchildren.” He began putting family stories on paper.

When Jack retired several years ago, a friend encouraged him to take classes at OLLI. After attending some OLLI classes, Jack decided to offer a course on writing that would help people wanting to write but not knowing how to begin. He firmly believes everyone has a story to tell unique to themselves. “I use the tools I have to wake up their memory.” This term he is teaching “Igniting Passion: Writing from Life” at OLLI. —**Mary Ann Martin**