



# OLLI *News*

**UConn**  
WATERBURY

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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.

## THE NEAR FUTURE?

OLLI Fall classes are over and you are about to become a Snowbird in Florida for the next six months. You load up the car and head out to Route 84 to start your journey. Big trailers, RVs, and all kinds of nasty drivers are on the road with you. But you need the car so you have to put up with all that traffic. Wouldn't it be nice if you could just program the GPS and let the car do the driving for you. You must've read much of the news out there in California and Arizona about the driverless vehicles of Google and the race to put out driverless cars by major manufacturers in the very near future. You say to yourself I have got to get one of those cars to make the drive to Florida much more pleasant.

Well, dream on! It is not going to happen very soon according to Hannah Fry, PhD, who is a British mathematician who studies the patterns of human behavior and how mathematics can apply to them. She has written an interesting book about algorithms which she called, Hello World, (an interesting title which she explains in the book.) An algorithm is a step-by-step procedure for solving a problem or accomplishing some end, especially by a computer. She subtitled the book "Being Human in the Age of Algorithms". Dr. Fry points out the vast amounts of data that have been gathered about each and every one of us as we merrily go through the Internet or use our credit cards. She shows how this data is being used in every facet of our lives – the law, medicine, engineering, etc. – and writes about these algorithms on which we increasingly, but perhaps unknowingly, rely.

I was especially interested in the chapter entitled, "Cars." She writes, "On the surface, building a driver-

less car sounds as if it should be relatively easy. Most humans managed to master the requisite skills to drive. Plus, there's only two possible outputs: speed and direction. It's a question of how much gas to apply and how much to turn the wheel. How hard can that be?"

Suppose you're on a country road which is gently curved and a vehicle approaches. The human driver will know enough to say on his side of the road and avoid the oncoming car. But there is a long period of time where it looks like you are going to hit each other. How do you program a driverless vehicle not to panic in that situation? Remember, that these cars are only ever making educated guesses about what to do. How do you get it to guess right every single time. That, writes Fry, "is a hard, hard problem." What is hard is all the problems with driving that have nothing to do with driving. How do you devise a program that will teach a driverless car to be especially careful around a bunch of kids playing ball?

"If we want fully autonomous cars, we will almost certainly have to do something and limit the number of aggressive drivers, ice cream trucks, kids playing in the road, roadworks, signs, difficult pedestrians, emergency vehicles, cyclists, mobility scooters and everything else that makes the problem of autonomy so difficult. That's fine, but it's a little different than the way the idea is currently being sold to us."

She also points out the human factor and how hard it is to maintain focus for a long period of time. If you don't do a task for a long period of time how good at doing

*Cont. from page 1*

that task in an emergency are you going to be? How sure can you be that your car will be in perfectly good shape forever?

Dr. Fry concludes, “So, knowing that errors are inevitable, knowing that if we proceed we have no choice but to embrace uncertainty, the conundrums within the world of driverless cars will force us to decide how good something needs to be before we’re willing to let it loose on our streets. That’s an important question, and it applies elsewhere. How good is good enough? Once you’ve built a *flawed* algorithm that can calculate something, should you let it?”

Are you really, OLLI members, ready to go driverless, yet?

RJG



## PARKING

Where to Park - with OLLI /UConn Parking Permit:

1. Friday: Level 2 & 3 of the UConn Parking Garage (entrance North Elm Street). Parking space is available on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. Monday - Friday: Level 5 & 6 of the Scovill Street Municipal Garage (entrance Scovill Street).

Where to Park - without OLLI /UConn Parking Permit:

3. Parking is available at the private, street-level parking lot between 141 East Main Street and the UConn campus (on the east side of the campus near the bookstore). The lot has reasonable daily rates.

**Need to purchase an OLLI/UConn parking permit?**

**If you have not done so already, you must submit an application for a parking permit at:**

<https://park.uconn.edu/olli-parking-information-2/>

**Payment can be made online or by check to:  
Parking Services, 3 Discovery Drive, Storrs, CT  
06269**

- OLLI Members are now permitted to park in the attached garage AFTER 5:00pm Monday - Thursday, too.

Questions? Call (860) 486-4930

**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](mailto:yvoorg@aol.com) or any OLLI staff member.

**We're on the web!**

**WWW.OLLI.UCONN.EDU**

**Look for the newsletter in the Publications link**



## 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.

**Nov. 19 The Last Painting of Sara deVos...  
by Dominic Smith**



## Finger Lakes Trip by Evelyn Marshak

Is it too early to promote an OLLI trip that leaves on June 4, 2019? The answer to the question is not that simple. For those who are inclined to answer "yes", their argument could be the trip is eight months away! For those who say "no", I have faith in you thinking that this is a wonderful trip featuring a wine tour, a cruise on the Erie Canal and a trip to the Corning Glass Museum will help me (us) endure a New England winter with all its snow.

With both Christmas and Hanukkah coming and with these holidays come the often-dreaded gift giving dilemma, a gift of money could be nicely used to help pay for the trip.

Many years ago, my pen pal needed to be convinced that the Corning Glass Museum was a worthwhile place for us to visit. She kept thinking that the museum would only feature Corning glassware. After our visit to the museum, she admitted that the visit was indeed a worthwhile use of time with its incredible displays.

Let's call this article a teaser designed to help you decide to join fellow OLLIs on this trip. Note that non-OLLI members are welcome to join us. Non-members will be asked to pay \$20 extra.

I admit a chance to ride on the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825, fascinates me. Another enticement is the tour of Pleasant Valley Winery.

Cost per person for the trip which includes a double or triple room, is \$561 including the deluxe motor coach, two nights at the Ramada Plaza Lakefront Hotel- June 4-6, 2019. Also included in the cost are five meals, all sightseeing fees, and gratuities for the driver and escort. Cost for a single room is \$691.

A \$200 deposit is due by March 19, 2019. Final payment is due April 23th.

Departure is at 7:30am from the Chase Parkway Commuter Park & Ride lot, across from Naugatuck Valley Community College, 750 Chase Parkway, Waterbury.

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

When the winter weather is nasty, thinking about this trip should help you better deal with winter.

### Upcoming OLLI Travel

#### **Fall Trips – 2018**

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

**11/03/2018** – Carmen/Metropolitan NYC – **SOLD OUT**

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

#### **Spring/Summer – 2019**

**4/06/2019** – Tosca/Metropolitan NYC – member cost \$142

**6/04-06/2019** – Finger Lakes – member cost \$561(dbl); \$691(single)

**TBA (July)** – Tanglewood/Naumkeag – member cost TBA

**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 Café

October 19

### The Dogs of Camelot

**Joan Lownds and Margaret Reed**

Co-authors, Joan Lownds and Margaret Reed, a professional animal trainer, have written the story of the Kennedys' lifelong love of dogs and the unparalleled canine core they bought to the White House. The presentation will show rare and previously unpublished photos and stories, with a fascinating new angle about the Kennedys that is deeply revealing about their character and compassion.

October 26

### Understanding Your Best Friend-

**Phil The Dog Listener**

**Phil Klein**



### 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: Ira Mickenberg M.D.

Vice President: Mila Limson

Secretary: Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

Assistant Secretary: Joyce Conlan



## CAPTAIN JACK'S

A group of 15 year old boys discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at the McDonald's next to Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because they only had six dollars among them. They could ride their bikes there. Jennie Webster, that cute girl in Social Studies, lives on the same street and they might see her.

Ten years later, now 25 year old guys discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the beer was cheap, the bar had free snacks, the house band was good, there was no cover charge and there were a lot of cute girls.

Ten years later, at 35, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was decided they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the booze was good, it was near their gym and, if they went late enough, there wouldn't be too many whiney little kids.

Ten years later, at 45, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the martinis were big and the waitresses were gorgeous.

Ten years later, now 55, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the prices were reasonable, they have a nice wine list and fish is good for your cholesterol.

Ten years later, at 65 years of age, once again the group discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the lighting was good and they have an early bird special.

Ten years later, at 75 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because the food was not too spicy and the restaurant was handicapped accessible.

Ten years later, at 85 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner.

It was agreed they would meet at Captain Jack's Seafood Grille because they had never been there before.

## Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UConn Waterbury

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute  
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### NEWSLETTER CONTACTS

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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.

## OLLI *artBeat* **Ghosts, Ghouls and Great Music** by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

You know it's coming.....the day the Irish call "Samhain" when the spirits of the dead come to roam the earth. All Hallow's Eve, before the cleansing power of All Saint's Day on November 1. For those of us raised Catholic in the 50's both days were important, but Halloween was a heck of a lot more fun. Growing up in Queens, this day was something we looked forward to all year. I vividly remember on Halloween afternoon regular classroom work was suspended, and we spent the rest of the day wearing our costumes, running around the classroom, eating candy, playing games, and maybe in the last one or two years even watching a movie (which always broke down, of course.) Even the nuns gave us candy! And then we'd go home and start the process all over with extensive trick or treating. So many houses to visit as single-family homes usually shared a driveway and there were blocks and blocks (and blocks) to cover in our quest of the coveted sugar.

So, at our age, I do not suggest you dress up and forage your neighborhood for candy. I can, however, offer some alternative fun events to celebrate Halloween and take in some music, Connecticut history, and even a museum!

**Waterbury Symphony Orchestra –“Scary Tales,” Sunday, October 28 at 3 pm., at Naugatuck Valley Community College.** WSO celebrates Halloween in the second of its Subscription Series. Enjoy The Sorcerer's Apprentice, selections from Psycho and music of John Williams, as well as many other classical favorites, such as Night on Bald Mountain, Witches Sabbath and Dance Macabre. Audience members are invited to dress in their Halloween costume to enhance this Spooktacular experience. Director Leif Bjaland and the WSO musicians will be dressed up for this very special occasion. Special Halloween treats will be enjoyed after the performance. A pre-concert showcase from 2 – 2:30 pm will feature WSO education programs including Bravo Waterbury! (203) 574-4283.

**St. John's Episcopal Church, West Hartford – Friday, October 26 at 7:30 pm. “Pipescreams! Spooktacular Pipe Organ Concert.”** Hear St. John's majestic Austin organ played by a stunning cast of costumed players in this spooky concert. The music will be kooky, creepy, dramatic, doleful, featuring old favorites as well as some pieces you may not have heard before. Reception with ghoulish treats follows. Fun for all ages. A free will offering will help support the L Cameron Johnson Memorial Organ Competition for young organists.

**Wethersfield – “Witches and More” at the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, 211 Main Street. October 27-28, 10-4 pm, \$18.** An up close and creepy examination of all things funereal, the tour begins in the museum's Stevens House. Visitors step back in time and into the parlor set up for the wake of little Henry Stevens, who perished in 1828 at the age of three. The tiny coffin is surrounded by tansy and rosemary, herbs used to mask any “odors.” A guide will detail 19<sup>th</sup> century mourning practices, how illnesses were treated, and how the living dealt with fears of being buried alive. Second stop is the Wethersfield Ancient Burying Ground. Among other gruesome sites, visitors will view the graves of those who met their end during Connecticut's first mass murder and see how gravestones warn the living of their own impending end. Third on the tour is the 1714 Buttolph Williams House for tales from the notorious Wethersfield Witch Trials which preceded those in Salem by 30 years! **Tours include walking on uneven ground and use of stairs and are not appropriate for people under age 12.**

**Bristol Historical Society, 98 Summer Street, administers the “Witch's Dungeon Classic Movie Museum.”** This is a wax museum style tribute to the classic horror films of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, Vincent Price and the artistry of the makeup in these vintage thrillers. Each life size figure is in a scene based on the films, and some original movie costumes and props are used in the sets. Special voice tracks by Vincent Price and Mark Hamill, among others guide you through the tour. This event is a celebration of the museum's 50<sup>th</sup> Halloween season. **October 19-21, 26-28, 31. 7-10 pm, \$6 donation.** Sounds like a bargain for a really fun time!

**Wishing a happy, and hopefully, a very scary Halloween to all!**



## MEET A LONGTIME MEMBER

**Pollyann Merriman** leads a full and fruitful life filled with friends, world travel, diverse experiences and, always, learning new things.

At one time or another, Pollyann has worked in a vineyard, planting and pruning grapes; co-founded and helped run a needlework store and ushered at local theatres, including Waterbury's Palace where she serves as an usher captain.

Reflecting on her travels, Pollyann said one of her best trips was a cruise on the Volga River from Moscow to St. Petersburg with stops that included visits to peasant farms and ornate palaces. She remembers one of the guides saying that her "inheritance from her mother was equivalent to a loaf of bread."

The lifelong resident of Watertown has fond memories of a trip to China with the Waterbury Chorale and another with the Road Scholar program, a non-profit organization offering educational travel to adults, to Alaska. "I love to learn and the Road Scholar program offers many opportunities."

She would like to return to Bhutan, a tiny country in the Himalayas, where the people were "sort of wonderful but very primitive and happy."

Pollyann had a "wonderful childhood" growing up in Watertown, where she participated in activities of the First Congregational Church and the Girl Scouts. She enjoyed hiking, swimming, and going on overnight camping trips. She remains a staunch advocate of the values of scouting.

After graduation from Watertown High School, Pollyann majored in English and minored in social work at Wheaton College. A social work position followed at the YMCA in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

She then enrolled in a teaching program sponsored by the State of Connecticut in New Britain because Connecticut was experiencing a teacher shortage and created the two-year, summer program to train college graduates to teach. After the first summer, she taught fourth grade for a year in Wethersfield.

She met and soon married Bill Merriman, also of Watertown, a widower with two young children. Pollyann gladly helped Bill raise the two children.

One of the great adventures the family took was to Scotland so the children could meet their Scottish relatives. The excursion began with "doing all the sights in London, then on



to Scotland" for the visit with relatives before ending with a visit to Ireland. "Dublin was great!"

The art of needlework came naturally to Pollyann. "I love making things and have made valances, wall hangings and pillows for my home." Many people were interested in learning how to knit, do crewel and quilt. Pollyann and a friend opened a store where she taught. After ten years, they closed the store but Pollyann continued to teach knitting at many venues in the Watertown area. She enjoyed the creativity and the teaching. "I am still close to some of the knitting people."

For a number of years, Pollyann often could be found at Haight Vineyard in Litchfield. At times she worked in the field and on Saturdays at the wine bar. "It was great fun." The workday ended with owner and founder Sherman Haight telling stories over a glass of wine to the staff. She left when Haight sold the vineyard in 2007 and it became Haight-Brown Vineyard.

After her husband's death, a friend suggested that Pollyann do some ushering at an area theater. She soon found herself in the aisles of three theaters, Thomaston Opera House and Waterbury's Seven Angels and the Palace.

A beloved tradition of hers is attending a gathering of the literary society Sexta Feira (sixth day in Portuguese) on Fridays from November to April in Watertown. After a member presents a paper of her choice, the group enjoys a formal tea. "This is a special part of my life."

At OLLI, Pollyann is a member of the Travel Committee and has taken many classes, including one on China and another in astronomy. **-Mary Ann Martin**