



OLLI *News*

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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.



VOTE-NOVEMBER 6



OLLI is an educational organization which we try to keep nonpolitical to facilitate the learning process. Learning is most effective in a safe protected environment. To learn, one must be exposed to various points of view. Then evaluate the points of view using one's experience and intuition and knowledge reaching a conclusion which may be reinforced or rejected with continual awareness and experience.

I am writing this essay because I feel that in this mid-term election climate we are losing our moorings about existing in a comforting, accepting, supportive environment. A frenzied climate of misinformation and hatred has led to existential fear. Reaction to fear has led to violence against "others."

This is not political fear. I am talking of irrational fear against external terrorists "such as a caravan of women and children," whereas domestic terrorism, "hate crimes," runs rampant. We have reached the era of the truism "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." To be silent is to be complacent, accepting the destruction of our democracy by demeaning minorities, criticizing the free press and spewing lies at a rate which overwhelms the public.

As president of OLLI, I condemn hateful rhetoric and promote arming the electorate with powerful weapons. I welcome careful insightful evaluation of the news so that voters, armed with information, can assess events and then cast a meaningful vote.

A democracy cannot exist without an educated public primed by a free press. When voting for a person, his or her character, at this time, is as important, or more important, than his or her platform. Speak up and vote.

**Ira Mickenberg M.D. President Leadership Council
OLLI at UConn.**

I would like to echo the sentiments of Dr. Mickenberg concerning the necessity of exercising our rights as citizens. As I quoted from Jon Meacham's book, The Soul of America, a few weeks ago, "For all of our darker impulses, for all of our shortcomings, and for all of the dreams denied and deferred, the experiment begun so long ago, carried out so imperfectly, is worth the fight. There is, in fact, no struggle more important, and none nobler, than the one we wage in the service of those better angels who, however besieged, are always ready for battle."

This experiment, the United States of America, seems to be in one of its darker phases. Discord, tribalism, extremism, fear of the 'other' make a mockery of the slogan, "e pluribus unum-from many, come one." The horrible actions of the previous week- mailed bomb threats and murders in the temple - threaten to push us into the past which we thought we had overcome. Apparently, we have not. That is why it is necessary for every citizen to engage in the struggle for our 'better angels' by becoming a more educated voter and selecting leaders who will help us in that struggle.

Quoting Carl Sagan, who, while talking about science, encapsulates ideally the soul of America, "Science - or rather its delicate mix of openness and skepticism, and its **encouragement of diversity and debate...**" seems to be among the missing in our present society. We scream from the extremes and drown out the middle. We have forgotten what makes democracy work - **compromise!**

RJG



OLLI tour of Asheville, NC and Charlottesville, VA

This was my fourth Friendship trip with “B and B” – the two Bobs, one our bus driver and the other our tour director. All, who were on the trip, I am sure will agree, that we were in good hands. Our driver has an unusual sense of humor, much like mine, so we enjoyed our daily banter back and forth and thankfully none of us had to worry about traffic or map reading or schedules – he did it all and kept us safe on our 1, 800 mile trek. The other Bob has the patience of Job. His history of the areas we visited was spot on and he gracefully and patiently took on the challenge of being our ‘go to man’ anytime we had a personal request or need. Moreover, I bet we will be more competent Jeopardy watchers because of the thought-provoking information he shared on the bus – one was that our first overnight stay would be in the home town of Patsy Cline. She was a country music star who died in a plane crash in 1963. Two of her memorable hits were: Walking After Midnight and I Fall To Pieces.

Now the journey begins – my favorite spot was the National Bridge State Park in Virginia. I did not tour the whole park, but I was spellbound by the beauty of the bridge – it was a tonic for my mind, body and spirit (as the brochure explains) and I need all those things. This park was sacred to the Monacan Indians who were the first to inhabit the area. It was a source of wonder and inspiration to Thomas Jefferson who owned the property in 1774. Sources also tell us that individuals such as Daniel Boone and Sam Huston passed by on their way West and our group drove over the very same bridge, part of the South Lee Highway, on our way to our next destination, the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, after an overnight stay in Winchester, Virginia.

The Biltmore Estate, all 125,000 acres nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, was the brain child of the youngest son of Cornelius Vanderbilt, George Washington Vanderbilt, who was a bachelor at the time that the house was built. Frederick Law Olmstead was a landscape designer and Connecticut native whose works include Central Park and Prospect Park in New York as well as other areas in Waterbury and Naugatuck, Connecticut. Vanderbilt also worked closely with architect, Robert Morris Hunt, to build one of the most opulent and largest private homes replete with 250 rooms, 65 fireplaces and 43 bathrooms (none of which are functional at this time). No worry, however, as there are plenty of public bathrooms on the

grounds. Every nook and cranny of the interior of the house was a feast for the eyes, with magnificent furnishings, priceless paintings, full length ancient murals and sculptures in every room, many bought and shipped to North Carolina from many areas Vanderbilt visited in the world. When we arrived, they were already preparing for Christmas which certainly added to the color schemes and further brightened every area. There had been a Chihuly glass exhibit at the estate just prior to our arrival and we were able to see them in front of the home, already dismantled and ready to be packed carefully and either sent back to the museum or to another exhibition elsewhere. If you like Dale Chihuly’s work, you can see some in Connecticut as well as his museum in New York State. I also saw quite a few large John Singer Sargent portraits and paintings which was such a treat as he is one of my favorite artists. The two of note were portraits of Hunt and Olmstead. I also enjoy the novels of Edith Wharton and I understand that she stayed there with the family on occasion. I believe she was also the author and/or coauthor of several architectural books, so I am sure she offered some valuable advice as she appreciated what had already been accomplished. The grounds are spectacular and well groomed; everywhere one looked there was a remarkable view, a priceless sculpture or the amazing forests, flower and vegetable gardens situated between the glorious mountains in the distance. All in all, it must have been a wonderful retreat for G. W. Vanderbilt and his family in contrast to his other homes in NYC, the Hamptons, and Newport. I must mention the wine tasting on the estate. It was not a cozy experience, but more like a taste and buy situation. However I bought a few bottles and will save them to share with my family at Thanksgiving as I share my experiences of our trip.

Our next two estates visited were very different from the Vanderbilt Estate and, indeed very different from each other. The first one was the Smithfield Plantation (No, not Smithfield hams which many of us thought it to be. That company, while in Virginia, is quite some distance from Charlottesville.) Although Smithfield was modeled after homes in the South, it reminded me of ones I have visited at Cape Cod. i.e., rather minimal and utilitarian with little or no frills. I was interested, as a former archivist, to visit the downtown area of Charlottesville to see what was being done to save the historic statues that were taken down, but apparently it was not on our schedule.

Monticello was the last of our historic house tours, and I must say, I was fascinated by Thomas Jefferson’s ingenuity and cleverness which was very evident in his home.



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Our docent was a wonderful story teller and had such great knowledge of the history of the time, the house and the surrounding area and shared with us wonderful tales about Jefferson and his family. He included information about one slave, Sally Hemings, Jefferson's mistress, or property, and the mother of six of his children. I got the sense that our docent preferred talking about Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, our 3rd president of the United States and his founding of the University of Virginia rather than his dalliances, but he answered thoroughly any and all questions asked about Hemings and her family. He also mentioned that her heirs were back recently to see the new exhibits.

Now the journey story is almost over and I am filled with relevant and memorable information I gleaned from the

trip. More importantly, I believe, I will remember all the laughter on the bus and while dining on succulent barbecue ribs or prime ribs (delicious, but enough for four hungry people!) and, of course our 'favorite' lunch place. There were always caring individuals in our group who took the time to help when it was needed. Friendship Tours is a good name for the tour organization. It is about revisiting familiar friends and meeting very special new ones. Hopefully many of us will choose to sign up for another tour to see remarkable places and to share great memories. Some of us, I feel, will not wait until then, but will get together soon and often.

Ann Moriarty

Upcoming OLLI Travel

Fall Trips – 2018

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)

(July) TBA – 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 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.

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



OLLI *artBeat* Reporting from the OLLI Convention by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

This week I'm taking a bit of a break from my usual arts and culture column to report on my experiences at the **OLLI National Convention**. I was so fortunate to attend with our **OLLI Executive Director Fiona DeMerell**. This year's convention was held in Scottsdale, Arizona, and I enjoyed every minute of this incredible experience. My special thanks to **OLLI Leadership Council Vice President Mila Limson**. Mila had prior plans to be in Italy for a vacation at this time, so as Secretary of the Leadership Council, I was next in the queue!

We left Bradley last Sunday and were off to the **McCormick Scottsdale resort** which is beyond gorgeous. As Fiona had a Directors' meeting that first night, I was on my own in the resort restaurant. I pretended I was a grownup and enjoyed a delicious dinner. My waitress, Amy, was a walking comedy show and I had a wonderful time watching her antics as she sailed from table to table and entertained us. I sat, people-watched, and enjoyed my alone time. Next morning, I had time to take a trip into "**Old Town**," a conclave of gift shops, jewelry stores, art galleries and restaurants. While I was waiting for a cab, another OLLI member from UMass joined me, as she was also headed there. Believe me, there are no coincidences in life. This lovely woman, whom I'll call Sharon (well, because her name is Sharon) and I had so much in common. We have similar families, are facing similar challenges, she was a Fitzgerald and I was a Fitzpatrick, we are both left-handed, had the same ages and sexes of grandchildren, and shared similar outlooks on life and how to enjoy it. What a blessing to meet her and share resources and stories. We've already made plans to meet up for lunch in Sturbridge!

Convening session took place on Monday afternoon. Far from the usual boring housekeeping details, this was an interesting 90 minutes of introductions of national **OSHER** staff members and their stories. We were privileged to listen to the founder, 91 year old **Bernard Osher**, who spoke to the 250 attendees. We learned a lot about different OLLI programs nationwide. Did you know there are 122 OLLIs with 165,000 members? A video featuring OLLI members from all around the country, **including ours**, made for a delightful end to the afternoon. Dinner was outside on a lovely terrace, and we watched the full moon rise. Fiona and I marveled at how fortunate we were to be in such a beautiful setting and able to meet so many interesting and friendly people.

After breakfast on Tuesday workshops for all attendees were in full swing. Then on to a very special keynote session which **featured Nobel Prize winner biologist Elizabeth Blackburn** who discovered **telomeres**, the caps on our DNA which predict and cause aging. She spoke about what might counteract this underlying mechanism of aging, and that we might have more control over it than we think.

Other seminars I attended were **Leadership Excellence for Advisory Committees** and **Attracting and Keeping Volunteers**, but the one that stands out most in my mind was the one on **Diversity and Inclusion**, a challenge that all OLLIs across the nation face. The speaker and facilitator was **Dr. Destiny Peery, an African American attorney, Associate Professor of Law at Northwestern**, who spoke on race, and our subconscious perceptions of people based on appearance. One segment featured eight headshots, and we were to construct our impressions of them and stories about them. All of us had different reactions, and all based on our preconceived notions!

I had a great time connecting with people and learned so much about OLLIs nationwide, their different structures and similar challenges. I met people from Florida, Texas, Alaska, Massachusetts and even Wyoming! I also had fun finding celebrity lookalikes. I saw Kira Sedgwick, Kelsey Grammar, Bonnie Hunt, and even a lookalike for my primary care physician. People really have a lot of similarities! Only our fears and perceived differences keep us apart. There's not enough room here to talk about all of my experiences, but it really did confirm what health professionals and social scientists keep telling us. **Social connections keep people happier, healthier and living longer! Viva OLLI!**



First time I heard about paraproverbs, I liked them.

Paraproverbs are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and is frequently humorous. (Winston Churchill loved them.)

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ...but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up -- we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
10. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, notify.." I answered "a doctor."
11. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
12. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
13. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.
14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
15. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
16. You're never too old to learn something stupid.
17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

Contributed by Sheila Morissette

We're on the web!

WWW.OLLI.UCONN.EDU

Look for the newsletter in the Publications link

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 or any OLLI staff member.

"Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road of life is paved with flat squirrels who couldn't make a decision."

~Unknown~

SHARED ON I'M NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD.COM