



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.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Believe it or not, the 10 week Fall semester comes to an end this Friday. The unending electoral season also has come to an end and ads on the TV will revert to just toothpaste and toilet paper rather than the bickering of talking heads spouting nonsense and partisanship. But just because classes come to an end at OLLI, it doesn't mean that OLLI shuts down and goes away. Au contraire, OLLI members!

Next week, we have **Dr. Laura Donorfio's** intergenerational class' presentation on Adulthood and Aging. Also, on Friday, we have "Home of the Brave" with Ed Edelson, a documentary film about the German Bund movement in Southbury. **The Travel Club** is still active, as is the **Book Club**. **Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler** has suggested many activities for members to get together during the holidays. In January, we have the Winter session soon followed by the Spring session of OLLI.

I would like to thank my committee for all the work they have done, especially **Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler** and **Mary Ann Martin** for their weekly columns and for all who have contributed or suggested ideas for the newsletter. For example, we thank Carol Ann for her poem from Nancy Whitney's class-a good illustration of the camaraderie and talent of our OLLI community.

RJG



Hypergraphia is said to be a rare disease
But I have found a sturdy band of sufferers, if you please

My Friday morning's writing group, with each a willing victim
Such a cohesive group, as though an angel picked them

Nancy leads our merry group with writing prompts so varied
Our talents can take charge and run, no longer to be buried

Everyone is welcome here, as writing keeps us sated
Allowing each to stalk his muse, so long as it is not X – rated

Carol Ann Laferriere
October 2018

FAREWELL
is not forever
only for a little while
so until we meet again
we will miss you and always remember you!

OLLI Trip to the Metropolitan Opera

by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

What a beautiful way to wrap up our Fall term at OLLI – a trip to New York City to see the *Metropolitan Opera's production of Carmen*. The day began last Saturday at the commuter lot near Naugatuck Valley, with rainy and dreary skies. Forty OLLI members arrived to find our wonderful driver Bob (half of Bob and Bob) and personable guide Debbie there to greet us. Little by little the skies started to clear as we set out, and by the time we stopped for a coffee refresher in Darien, things were looking up weather-wise. We arrived in Manhattan at 12:15 with time for a visit to the Met gift shop before curtain call.

Opera-going nowadays is enhanced by the availability of a plethora of information on line, so many of us were armed with internet articles and information. Many on the trip were fortunate to have been able to attend *OLLI's opera expert Nunzio DeFilippis'* October 18th session on Carmen, so we had quite a bit of info under our belts which helped us enjoy and understand the experience. Throw in the “closed captioned” translations on the seat in front of you and you really get the picture of what is going on. You could hear laughter through the audience when reading some of the funnier lines or jokes in the script, which otherwise you wouldn't understand unless you were a Carmen expert or an instantaneous translator of sung operatic French!

This production of Carmen showcased incredibly beautiful singing voices. A standout was *Quanqun Yu* who sang the part of Micaela. *Yonghoon Lee*, who played Don Jose, was also not only a gifted singer, but also a very good actor. The story is easy to follow, straightforward, with only four main characters. Carmen, a Gypsy woman who works in a cigarette factory, is an independent soul, to say the least. She was liberated before liberated was cool. Carmen does what she wants, with whom she wants, and everybody else can go to the devil. In a nutshell, she seduces the inexperienced Army corporal Don Jose, drives him mad with love, lust and longing and then flings him aside (after earning him a jail sentence) and goes off with the toreador Escamillo.

This production, judging from the women's dresses and the presence of a “man on the street” flash photographer at the Toreador parade, appears to be set in the 1930's, about sixty years after Bizet premiered it to boos, walkouts and dismal reviews. How things change! Carmen has been restaged in various settings over the years and even in the award-winning American film Carmen Jones. There is a poignant and jarring ending. Carmen is dead on stage at the hands of Don Jose. On the other side of the stage stands the matador, with estoque raised over an oversized bull which he has killed. The symbolism, of course, is the futility of violence in any arena. The political overtones for our times are undeniable.

We were on our own for dinner. My friend and I reprised a visit to Shun Lee, a Chinese restaurant we had discovered last spring when on the Madama Butterfly OLLI trip. I had also read recently in the *New York Times Magazine* that the actress Glenda Jackson was interviewed there about her Broadway stint in Edward Albee's Three Tall Women. So I felt in good company, even though I didn't see Glenda there this Saturday afternoon.

Back on the bus at 6:15 and home to Waterbury at 8:15. All was well, happy OLLI members with another memorable trip enjoyed in the company of interesting and engaged people. It is always great to get down to the city for a change of pace and to leave the day-to-day behind. **Thank you to driver Bob, guide Debbie, Friendship Tours, the Metropolitan Opera, and most of all to the OLLI Travel Committee for arranging another successful OLLI trip!**





A Visit to the Norman Rockwell Museum by Evelyn Marshak

Thinking back to an October trip to the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, I found it difficult to decide which section off the museum did I enjoy the most. Maybe it was the lower level featuring a 12- minute film biography of Rockwell's life. The three surrounding walls showed every cover that Rockwell drew for the covers of 317 Saturday Evening Post's magazine.

With the 55th anniversary of President John Kennedy's assassination approaching, I did linger at the two covers featuring the 39th president. The second Kennedy cover was a duplicate of the first and was issued following President's death in Dallas on November 22, 1963. Other than these two covers, no person was ever honored by being featured on a Post cover twice.

The museum's display of four Rockwell paintings portraying the Four Freedoms President Franklin D. Roosevelt highlighted in a 1943 speech are wonderfully displayed in an open rotunda area. The paintings,

featuring Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want, Freedom of Worship and Freedom of Speech can be tied to many current events including the caravan of Central American refugees seeking asylum in the United States.

These four paintings took Rockwell six months to complete and then went on a very successful tour of our country as a war bond fund raiser.

There was some disappointment voiced by others on our mini-bus because the foliage, along our route wasn't great. Okay, it was disappointing.

The Norman Rockwell Museum is about 70 miles from Waterbury. The admission fee for seniors is \$18 but you need to tell the ticket seller that you are a senior. Otherwise you'll pay the regular \$20 admission fee.

There is food to purchase. If the weather is nice, you can eat at the picnic tables provided by the museum. You may also bring your own lunch.,

With the holidays approaching, the gift shop is very attractive. There are puzzles, postcards, magnets, playing cards and other items featuring the Post's covers.

Norman Rockwell is buried in the nearby Stockbridge Cemetery. It's a tradition that visitors to his grave place a small paint brush on his tombstone.

Upcoming OLLI Travel

Fall Trips – 2018

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)

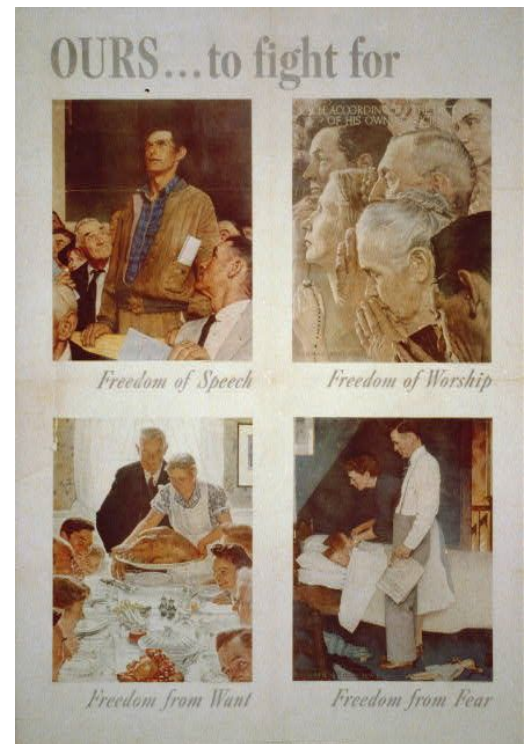
Flyers available at the OLLI Information Table. All prices are member prices. Non-members are charged a slight surcharge that is listed on all flyers. Call Friendship Tours for information and reservations (1-800-243-1630). Mention OLLI Travel. (Please do not call the OLLI Office.)

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

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*

Holiday Happenings

by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

I know I say this at the end of every semester, but as I'm admitting it, indulge me. Holy cow, that went by quickly! At the beginning of each OLLI term I say to myself, "How am I going to come up with ten columns?" And I know my intrepid editor **Bob Grady** feels the same way. But here we are again, saying good-bye to another semester and to each other, until we meet again either in the Winter Session, or for you snowbirds, in the Spring. But, to keep ourselves busy, engaged and entertained during the weeks to come, here are a few suggestions for holiday events and fun. (Vaguely in date order.)

Connecticut Master Chorale, First Congregational Church of Danbury, 164 Deer Hill Avenue, on Sunday, November 18 at 3 pm. A diverse selection for Christmas, Advent, Hanukkah and Winter features "A Russian Christmas" and includes classics, carols, lullabies, Big Band and gospel! **\$20 in advance - \$25 at the door www.cmchorale.org**

The Shubert, New Haven, 247 College St., – "A Christmas Carol" on Saturday, November 24 at 2 and 7:30pm and Sunday, November 25 at 2 pm. Charles Dickens' story of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge performed by a spirited ensemble of actors, singers and dancers with the music of 26 beloved carols woven through this classic tale. **Call 203.562.5666 for tickets.** Recommended for ages 7 and up. A great family holiday event!

Goodspeed Opera House in Chester – "A Connecticut Christmas Carol 2018" Friday, November 30 through Saturday, December 30 in The Terris Theatre, 33 North Main Street, Chester NOT at the main Goodspeed house. This is an imaginative re-working of the Dickens' classic in which historical figures from CT, including Mark Twain, P.T. Barnum and William Gillette play their parts. Something innovative and not to be missed! **Box office 860 873-8668.**

Concora – This spectacular choral group will perform **Handel's Messiah on Friday, November 30 at 7:30 in St. James Episcopal Church, West Hartford.** It is a wonderful group – I saw them perform Mozart's Requiem last April, and St. James is a terrific venue for a concert. If you've never been there, it's worth the ride to West Hartford, and there are plenty of restaurants in the area for you to enjoy before the concert. **www.concora.org.**

Waterbury Symphony Orchestra Handel's Messiah, Sunday, December 2 at 3 pm, Naugatuck Valley Community College. With the Hartford Chorale and vocal soloists from the Yale Opera Program. Pre-concert lecture by WSO Cultural Ambassador **Dr. Vincent DeLuise** at 2 pm. Also at **St. Anthony of Padua Church in Litchfield on Saturday, December 1 at 7:30pm. Don't forget to get your 20% OLLI discount – call 203 574-4283, www.waterburysymphony.org**

The Bushnell, Hartford - A perennial holiday favorite, "**The Nutcracker**" will be performed by **Nutmeg Ballet on Saturday, December 8 at and Sunday, December 9 at 12:30 and 4:30 pm – bushnell.org** and again at **The Warner Theatre Torrington on Saturday, 12/15 at 2, 4 and 7 pm and on Sunday, 12/16 at 2 pm. www.warnertheatre.org**

Connecticut Gay Men's Chorus – "Pole to Pole: Holiday Celebrations from Around the World" The CTGMC's Christmas show is always entertaining with a blend of "reinvented" tunes and the classic songs with the Chorus' own special take on how to enjoy the holidays. **Saturday, December 1 at 1pm at The Kate in Old Saybrook and Saturday, December 15 at 8 pm at The Theatre at The CoOp in New Haven. For mature audiences. www.ctgmc.org**

Kent Singers, "Make We Merry" Sunday, December 16, 3 pm at St. Andrew's Church, Kent. They will also perform a benefit concert of **seasonal carols at Hunt Hill Farm (The Silo), 44 Upland Road, New Milford on Friday, December 14 at 7 pm. www.kentsingers.com.**

Okay, I've run out of room! I wish you all a lovely season, **Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, "Habari Gani?" Kwanzaa, and a very Happy New Year** to all! See you in 2019!



[This Photo](#) by



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MEET YOUR PRESENTERS

When growing up in Novosibirsk, Siberia, **Dr. Sergei Kambalov** wanted to be a diplomat and see the world. Other people and their cultures fascinated him but none so much as Americans. He often went to his local library to read and “became hooked on America” when he read about the country in 1964 in a two-volume *Encyclopedia of the United States*.

He was intrigued by the energy, music, politics, history and literature of the U.S. He wanted to learn more about the world in a time when Russian people “were not permitted to travel at all other than on official business.” He stressed that he didn’t “ever think about becoming a resident of the United States.” Historical events centering around the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in his deciding to stay in the U.S. following a career that included working for the United Nations and, earlier, as a First Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

He thinks the U.S. must deal with Vladimir Putin. “That is reality.” But is President Trump up to the job? Sergei thinks not because Trump lacks the temperament and other qualities needed to cope with Putin, who “has a mind like a computer and is well read.”

Sergei was born in Riga in Latvia but went with his mother to Siberia, where she was from, following the divorce of his parents. After reading about the U.S., he began studying English at school and with a private teacher. He noted Russians were required to study a foreign language beginning in pre-school. “I focused mostly on English.”

Sergei graduated magna cum laude from the Department of Economics of Moscow State University and earned his doctorate in economics from the Diplomatic Academy, Moscow.

He became a researcher studying the American economy and American –Soviet trade matters. When gathering material for his doctorate, he spent a year in Washington D. C. During that time, he visited New York to interview businesses trading with the Soviet Union. Among the few firms then doing so were IBM, Pfizer and Coca-Cola.

In 1987 Sergei joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the department dealing with the United States. “This was the best period of my life,” he says today. In 1987 he helped with the arrangements for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev’s visit to the U.S. as well as with a subsequent meeting when U.S. President Ronald Reagan met with Gorbachev in Moscow in 1988. “I even got a

medal,” Sergei said of his work making preparations for major meetings of international leaders, including writing speeches for Soviet leaders and providing them with briefing materials.

Over the years, Sergei made many good friends, including economist Richard Rahn, now chairman of the Institute for Global Economic Growth, and the late Viktor Sukhodrev, who was the personal translator for Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev and later worked at the U.N. Sukhodrev was among the “great people” Sergei worked with over the years.

Sergei’s career took another turn in 1989 when he was sent to New York to the United Nations Secretariat not as a diplomat but as an “international civil servant.” He expected to return to Russia in three or four years. Everything changed in 1991 when “the Soviet Union ceased to exist. The situation in Moscow was unclear. I didn’t know if I had a job to return to.”

He chose to remain in the U.S. and secured a permanent contract with the U.N. Secretariat. Sergei retired as the executive coordinator for the United Nations Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development in 2010. He became a U.S. citizen in 2014.

Sergei still loves to read, often choosing books about history and people he has met. He teaches a graduate course, “Global Development and Peace Program,” at the University of Bridgeport. During the Fall Semester, he taught “Russia: Partner or Adversary” at OLLI. “I just love this kind of audience,” he says of the OLLI class, where he finds people open-minded, motivated and prepared by their life experiences. **-Mary Ann Martin**

