



OLLI *News*

UConn
WATERBURY

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March 1st, 2019

OLLI @ UConn

WHERE LEARNING
NEVER RETIRES

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Everyone likes a good story. Humans seem to want to know the beginning and ending of something so they can make sense of it. People want to know "why." Just listen to your grandkids. What seems to be their favorite word? (Not counting newly-learned swear words!) So it would seem with all societies. They want to know how they came to be. Thus, we have many origin stories: Greco Roman myths, Norse tales, American Indian beliefs, the Bible. "In the beginning... Once upon a time..."

I have just finished reading (actually listening to an audible book) David Christian's book, "Origin Story, A Big History of Everything," in which he tells about the beginnings of the universe and how it is eventually going to end - but using science to tell his tale. As an historian at McQuarrie University in Sydney, Australia, Dr. Christian became concerned there was so much information becoming available that teaching history was becoming too narrow and students were not getting the big picture. He asked his colleagues in the various disciplines to help him devise a course which would allow him to rectify this situation and help show how everything is connected and affects everything else.

His argument is that everything starts out simple and becomes more complex causing change. The universe started with a Big Bang and morphed into the billions of objects that inhabit it now. Life started from simple single cell beginnings to the complex humans of today. Speaking of people, Dr. Christian points out that in 1800 there were 900 million humans on earth. By 1900, there were 1 1/2 billion. During his lifetime, human numbers have increased by another 5 billion. In the 200 years since 1800, the number of humans has increased by another 5 billion. "Each additional human had to be fed, clothed, housed, and employed, and most had to be educated. The challenge of producing enough resources in just 200 years to support an extra 6 billion humans was colossal...Remarkably, the challenge was met with modern technologies, modern fossil fuels and modern managerial skills," says Dr. Christian.

He further states, "Behind all these changes was the bonanza of cheap energy fossil fuels... Total energy consumption doubled in the 19th century and then rose by 10 times in the 20th century. Human consumption of energy rose much faster than human populations...The fossil fuel revolution and the Great Acceleration (of knowledge and technology) did not just transform human societies; they are also transforming the biosphere... It has taken researchers a long time to realize that the impact of human activities is now as great as that of the major biogeochemical processes that maintain the stability of the biosphere. Without really understanding what we are doing, we are fiddling with the biospheric thermostats that have kept the Earth's surface within habitable temperature for four billion years," remarks Dr. Christian.

OLLI members, is it just coincidence that these massive changes have taken place since the beginning of the Industrial Age? Or might Dr. Christian's story of how we got to here have some relevance? The answer just might change his idea of the Earth's ultimate demise.

OLLI Trip to Opera

by Evelyn Marshak

Thirty-two can be a magic number and when 32 people have signed up for a pending OLLI trip, members of the Travel Committee smile because they know that the trip will proceed as planned. For example, the bus will leave the Waterbury's Chase Parkway Commuter lot at 9 AM and head for New York City and the Metropolitan Opera House where Puccini's opera, Tosca, will be performed.

Yes, you still have time to call Friendship Tours at 1-800-243-1630 and reserve a seat(s). Should you treat yourself to a matinee performance of Tosca on April 6, 2019? Definitely! Some reasons why you deserve a treat include: you have survived the winter blahs; you love opera or maybe seeing a live opera performance is on your bucket list. Maybe you and a friend have been promising each other to do something special together. Maybe your children are telling you they want to give you a nice present such as pay for this trip.

OLLI trips are fairly carefree because once you board your bus, you relax. There is no reason to fret over traffic on the Connecticut Turnpike or Manhattan streets. Parking is not a problem. There is a well-prepared tour director on board, to answer your questions about the Lincoln Center area, home to the Met, that offers a variety of places for a nice meal or a snack. Our seats are orchestra balance seats which offer you a good view of the diva Tosca and her passionate lover, Cavaradossi. The opera is a love triangle because the wicked Captain Scarpia is determined to have Tosca at any cost.

The cost for OLLI members is \$142. The cost for non-OLLI members is \$152 and all are welcome. Estimated return time is 8 PM. For questions or reservations call Friendship Tours at 1-800-243-1630.

BOAR'S HEAD FEAST and BRIGHT LIGHTS

by David Bill

Last November 28th, the OLLI Travel Committee enjoyed a one-day bus trip to the Boar's Head Feast in Williamstown, Massachusetts and the Bright Lights display at Forest Park in Springfield as a pre-Christmas treat. We met at the commuter parking lot near Naugatuck Valley Community College at 9am. All 49 people on the trip were prompt, and we left right on time. Bob Read from Friendship Tours was our docent. We have had the pleasure of his company before, and he is polite and knowledgeable. We also had a very good driver. We had light snow flurries all day, but they were just enough to add to the holiday spirit without causing travel problems. We arrived at the Williams Inn at 11:30am. Seating wasn't until noon, so we had time to freshen up. There was a little ceremony about the Boar's Head in the lobby, which was well attended with people from a few other tours as well.

Our meal was buffet style. The salad bar was large and had a wide selection of vegetables and fresh shrimp. The main course consisted of a variety of fish and meat. Then, there was a huge dessert table with different kinds of cakes, cookies, pies, and pudding. Everything was delicious! The waitresses came around the entire time with coffee and water. After the meal, we enjoyed the singing of Christmas carols by two young women accompanied by an excellent piano player. We left about 3pm for the ride to the Bright Lights display.

We arrived at Forest Park in Springfield at about 4:45pm. They open at 5pm, but already there was a line of cars waiting to get in. The line moved quickly once they opened the gate. We slowly drove through the park. The tour took about an hour. The displays were beautiful! There were Santas, angels, reindeer, gingerbread houses, the Grinch, skaters, and many more in a multi-colored light display.

Our group arrived back at the commuter parking lot in Waterbury at 7:15pm. It was a great day with good food, good OLLI friends, a beautiful lighting display and no travel problems.



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.

NEWSLETTER CONTACTS

Bob Grady 860-483-2014
Email yvoorg@aol.com
or nblomstrom@aol.com

OLLI Book Club

Mar. 18: Love and Ghost Letters by Chantel Acevedo
Apr. 15: Once We Were Brothers by Ronald H. Balson
May 20: Ruthless Tide by Al Roker
June 17: The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd
July 15: The Ensemble by Aja Gabel
Aug. 19: The House at the End of Hope Street by Menna Van Praag
Sept. 16: Clock Dance by Anne Tyler
Oct. 21: Georgia by Dawn Tripp
Nov. 18: Bel Canto by Ann Patchett

*The Book Club meets the third Monday of every month in Room 102 @ 1:00pm. Come by!

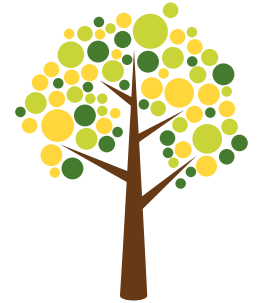


OLLI Genealogy Club

Spring '19 Meetings:
Tues. March 19 & Tues. April 16
 12:00 - 1:30pm

Join us to learn more about your family history, to plan events and activities, provide answers to questions, and discover service projects in genealogy.

Questions? Email Diane Ciba (dianeciba@gmail.com)



OLLI Film Club

Spring '19 theme:
Loss of Innocence

Wed. March 13: Absence of Malice (1981)
Wed. April 10: To Kill A Mockingbird (1962)

The purpose of the Film Club is to encourage lively discussions about the films shown. There will be activities both before and after each showing to aid in these discussions. The members of the Film Club committee will present information about the writer, actors and background to each film.

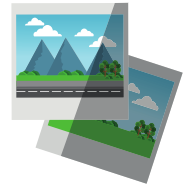


Bring a bag lunch, beverage, and be ready to actively participate in discussion. We'll provide the popcorn.

All films held in Room 302 in the Rectory building (directly across the street from the main building)

OLLI Photography Club

Attend monthly meetings with photographic challenges and critiques as well as advice on composition, exposure and contrast as well as creating black and white images. No experience needed! Meets the last Friday of each month at 2:00pm in Room 119.



Interested? Contact Timothy Padgett (t.padgett@hotmail.com).



"A Walk on the Wild Side" with Dr. Paula Philbrick

THURSDAY, MARCH 28th
 10:00 - 11:00AM
 ROOM 113

Orchids are deceitful lovers, raindrops carry sperm, lichens live where nothing else can, carnivorous plants live all around you. Curious? Come along and prepare to be surprised!



"Climate Change – History, Risks, and Myths" with Professor Howard Winston

THURSDAY, APRIL 4th
 10:00 - 11:00AM
 ROOM 113

This lecture will start with the history of climate science. Then we'll use this background to understand how human activity is driving climate change. The fallacies and misconceptions of climate science denial will also be explained.

Register for the UConn Faculty course at olli.uconn.edu or call 203-236-9924 to find out more!

Find a list of OLLI Clubs and Committees on Page 5 of the course catalog!



OLLI members with University-issued parking decals may park in the following locations on the following days:

Fridays, any time: UConn's attached ramp garage (entrance on North Elm St.) or Scovill Street Garage (33 Scovill Street)

Monday - Thursday, morning - 5:00pm: Scovill Street Garage

Monday - Thursday, 5:00pm or later: UConn's attached ramp garage or Scovill Street Garage

If you would like to utilize OLLI at UConn's parking options, you must submit an application for a parking permit at: park.uconn.edu/olli-parking-permit-application/

Questions? Call (860) 486-4930

OLLI Café

Today: March 1st, 2019
12:00 - 1:30pm, Room 113

Connecticut Civilian Conservation Corps: History, Memories, and Legacy with Martin Podskoch

Martin Podskoch will discuss his book, Connecticut Civilian Conservation Corps Camps: Their History, Memories and Legacy. The CCC was a public works program that operated from 1933-1942 as part of FDR's new Deal. Podskoch's book describes the history and projects of the twenty-two CC camps located in CT. Interviews and photos of camp life capture the vitality of the young men who worked to improve forests, which had been ravaged by fires, lumbering, and storms. Their labors created the woodlands and state parks that we continue to enjoy today.

Coming Up Next: March 8th, 2019

How Can the Akashic Record Help You Move Forward in Life with Jiayuh Chyan

**When you are bored just think about a few things that
don't make sense, like.....**

1. If poison expires, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?
2. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?
3. Do twins ever realize that one of them is unplanned?
4. Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V?
5. Maybe oxygen is slowly killing you and it just takes 75-100 years to fully work.
6. Every time you clean something, you just make something else dirty.
7. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims"
8. 100 years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.
9. If you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them.

Six great confusions still unresolved:

1. At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours?
2. If people evolve from monkeys, why are monkeys still around?
3. Why is there a 'D' in fridge, but not in refrigerator?
4. Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made?

And now Vagaries of English Language!

- Wonder why the word funeral starts with FUN?
- Why isn't a Fireman called a Water-man?
- If a Vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a Humanitarian eat?
- How do you get off a non-stop Flight?
- Why are goods sent by ship called CARGO and those sent by truck SHIPMENT?
- Why do we put cups in the dishwasher and the dishes in the Cupboard?

We cannot find all the answers, can we?

So just enjoy the pun and fun of the English language. -Sheila Morissette

Upcoming OLLI Travel



Spring/Summer – 2019

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

6/04 - 06/2019: Fingerlakes – member cost \$561 (dbl/triple); \$691 (single)

8/18/2019: Tanglewood/Naumkeag – member cost \$135

Fall – 2019

9/17/2019: Beaufort Princess Cruiselines/Gloucester, MA - member cost \$107

10/1-4/2019: Ocean City, MD – member Cost \$585pp (dbl/triple); \$731 (single)

10/22/2019: Murder on the Bellevue Express, Newport/RI – member cost \$116

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.)
RSVP: osher@uconn.edu / 203-236-9924

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.

**OLLI Travelers
Save the date!**

**Pre-Trip Informational
Talk & Presentation on
The Finger Lakes of NY**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH, 2019

**1 PM – 2 PM
Room WREC 402 in the
Rectory Building across the street**



**See who else is going!
Hope to see you there!**

Join us as

Brett Isaacson, President of **Friendship Tours**, will give us an informational talk and presentation on the **Finger Lakes of New York**.

Join us as he gives us background on all the points of interest we will be seeing on our upcoming trip on **June 4th -6th** to this wonderful location taking in wine, Corning glass, the Erie Canal and more.

Light refreshments will be available and also time for questions afterward.

**Want to attend? Call 203-236-9924 or email
osher@uconn.edu to RSVP**

OLLI artBeat

by Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler

An Afternoon at the Opera (Right in Your Own Backyard)

Hmmm, my title sounds like something the Marx Brothers might have had some fun with! And, as some of you know, I really like to have fun with my opera reviews! If you are wondering what to do this weekend as March comes roaring in, tomorrow, March 2, is your last chance to see Donizetti's *La Fille du Regiment*. The opera closes tomorrow at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and luckily for us is being shown live in select theaters at 12:55pm across Connecticut as part of the Met's Live Streaming program. For a fraction of the price of buying a ticket, finding transportation and eating out, you can enjoy these beautiful presentations in the comfort and closeness of your local theater.

Gaetano Donizetti premiered this opera in 1840. The setting is the Tyrol mountains. It is an opera comique in two acts, and it was Donizetti's first opera set to a French text. He is also known for composing *Lucia de Lammermoor*, which by the way, was the first opera I attended at the Met as a college student in 1970. (I convinced my boyfriend that we had to see an opera to expand our horizons.) Back to *La Fille*, the opera recovered from its somewhat iffy premiere, and soon became a favorite at the Opera-Comique reaching 1000 performances by 1908. While not the most well-known of operas, it has been staged many times through the past 180 years and is a delightful, relaxing, fun time with an improbable (of course, it's an opera!) theme. The requisite mixed-up identities, patriotism and valor provide backup to the main story of romance, and I think you will enjoy it.



The plot, which has been updated to a World War I timeframe for this production, revolves around Marie, the "adopted daughter" of the 21st regiment of the French army, who is in love with Tonio, a Tyrolean. He returns her feelings, but alas, Marie has promised to marry only a soldier from the 21st (of course, want to keep those bloodlines pure....) The Marquise of Berkenfield just happens to be traveling through the area - what luck, what serendipity!, and learns how Marie was found as an orphan. Amazingly, the Marquise recognizes her as her niece and takes Marie back to her castle. Tonio, meanwhile, has enlisted just so that he can marry Marie (what a guy!), but she has to leave him. Now, the Marquise, of course, has arranged a marriage for Marie to the Duke of Krakenthorp (now that sounds like a Marx Brothers' name!). She is unhappy about this, but her despair soon turns to delight when the entire regiment arrives to save her. (Well, wouldn't you be happy about that, too?) Long story short, the Marquise is not Marie's aunt - she is her MOTHER!! Just as Marie is about to sign the marriage contract, the regiment, led by Tonio, storms in to rescue her! The Marquise gives her blessing. A happy ending!

This production at the Met has garnered excellent reviews for the entire cast, but especially for tenor Javier Camarena whose show-stopping aria "Ah! Mes amis" which requires the singer to hit nine high C's. Mr. Camarena apparently not only accomplished this feat at one of the performances, but after the audience got to its feet, gained "permission" through eye contact with the conductor, and sang it again. As the New York Times review reads, "18 high C's for the price of nine." Let's hope he does this again tomorrow!

Throughout the years many famous opera singers have been featured in this work including Anna Moffo, Beverly Sills, Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti. An extra fun twist for this production is that actress Kathleen Turner whom you may know from her roles in *The War of the Roses*, *Peggy Sue Got Married* and *Romancing the Stone*, agreed to take on the non-singing part of the Duchess of Krakenthorp. It's worth going just to see this! Many OLLI members enjoy these shows at the Regal Cinemas in Waterbury, and some others at the Warner Theatre in Torrington. Google Metropolitan Opera Live Streaming for other venues.

MEET YOUR OLLI INSTRUCTORS

by Mary Ann Martin

A career social worker known for her ability to deal with difficult people and situations, Deirdre Wright also has a well-earned reputation for creating beautiful pieces of fiber art and writing poetry.

She has long advocated for those who are mentally ill and living on the streets and for prison reform that would focus on educating and preparing young offenders for jobs rather than letting them slip into a life of repeated incarcerations. Given her profession as a social worker, she has seen much suffering but finds that poetry “takes you out of reality” and allows moments of happiness as well as reflection on the whole of life. Deirdre also is happy when creating crocheted blankets, clothing, and tapestries that are works of art rather than crafts. A staunch advocate against violence, Deirdre has given some of her fiber works to families who have lost children or others to violence, both to comfort the survivors and remember the victims.

The Waterbury native who has moved back to the city has long been inspired by the works of Langston Hughes, the famed poet who wrote poems and novels depicting the culture of his fellow black people. Her own family, Deirdre says, “came out of slavery” in South Carolina. The family moved to Waterbury “four or five generations ago.” Deirdre was the oldest daughter and second child of seven in a close-knit family living in a multi-generational house with her grandmother on the first floor. Deirdre soon learned to enjoy making products from different fibers. At age eight, she was knitting and later began crocheting with ongoing studies in fiber work in Washington, D.C.

She has few fond memories of her early education in Waterbury. “At Wilby High School, “I sat in the back of the class.” “The saving grace in Waterbury was the Girls Club.” At the club, Deirdre enjoyed cooking, ceramics and sewing classes. “I still have puppies I made in ceramics.” Other favorite places were Silas Bronson Library and the YWCA. Her reading tastes included Nancy Drew books and eventually expanded to include novels by African-American authors, including James Baldwin.

When the time to attend college came, Deirdre wanted to be part of the civil rights movement and decided she wanted to go the Washington, DC area. But she needed to improve her preparation to be able to do college work. She matriculated at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Morgan State offered a program to prepare students for success in college. Two teachers stand out in her memory. One taught English and would discuss Langston Hughes’ work with her. He “loaned” her the Anthology of Negro Poetry that he never got back. “I loved his classes.” The other was a man from East India, who worked with her on math skills. “I got an A in both subjects for the first time ever!” Now academically prepared, she earned a degree from the university in elementary education. After a stint of substitute teaching, Deirdre realized she didn’t want to continue in this field.

After moving to Washington and working for a rape center, Deirdre realized she needed a graduate degree in social work, which she obtained from Howard University. During a long career in mental health, she developed and implemented a supportive living program for deinstitutionalized, chronically mentally ill clients with a history of being homeless.

She still writes poetry.

"Good friends are like the wind
which blows in and filter
through the web of one's fingers
here but for a moment to touch
then gone on to eternity"

At OLLI, she is presenting African American Poets and Humanities and the African Diaspora this term.

