VOLUNTEERING

Have you ever wondered what makes OLLI work? It is you. You attend classes and become a part of the process and make OLLI the vibrant and necessary part of the community that it has come to be. But it doesn’t just magically happen. The heartbeats of OLLI are the volunteers behind the scenes, the ones who teach the classes, and the ones who volunteer their time to keep the organization running smoothly.

The Leadership Council consists of the four elected officers, the co-chairs of all the committees and clubs, and four members-at-large representing the membership, who meet monthly to make their reports and recommendations.

The Spring semester is half over and Spring has finally sprung – at least according to the calendar! Today, I would like to talk about two committees that solicit your contributions especially at this time in the semester when some courses end, and some people may forget to send their artwork or writing to these committees. The first is Voices and Visions, which is the literary volume which gathers together all your writings, poems, paintings and photos which you have created at OLLI and might want to share with the membership. Voices and Visions celebrates the awesome talent of the members of OLLI. Don't be shy about submitting because the Voices and Visions Editorial Committee members are there to help you polish your masterpiece for publication. This will be the ninth edition. Without you, there is no Voices and Visions.

The second committee is the Newsletter Committee whose purpose is to publish a weekly edition during the fall and spring semesters. The Newsletter tries to keep the membership aware of what is happening at OLLI and of coming events and travel. Because it is a weekly endeavor, the Newsletter seems to be unique among the national OLLI community. Most do not have weekly publications. But it works here because you send in your ideas, jokes, travel and art pieces, just to name a few. The Newsletter encourages and thanks you for your participation. Find contact information for submissions on Page 3.

So, OLLI members, keep your volunteering going to maintain OLLI as the vibrant community it has become.
TANGLEWOOD & NAUMKEAG TRIP COMING UP!

Do you want to have something wonderful to look forward to in mid-August after the June weddings and the graduation parties are over? Did you have a great Fourth of July picnic but are sad that there isn’t much on the August calendar to look forward to?

Come with us, members of the OLLI Travel Committee, to Naumkeag, a marvelous Berkshire “cottage” in Massachusetts, famous for its elegant gardens. I used quotation marks around the word “cottage” because Naumkeag has 44 rooms and is really too large to be labeled a cottage. It was designed in 1885 and was the summer home of Joseph Hodges Choate, a leading nineteenth century attorney.

Part one of this unique trip is a guided tour of Naumkeag and its exquisite gardens. The highlight of the tour might be its Blue Steps which are a series of deep blue pools flanked by four flights of stairs and a grove of white birch trees.

When we reach Tanglewood, our first experience is an elegant boxed lunch. You have four choices of lunch. Each includes chips, a jumbo cookie and a bottle of water. When you call Friendship Tours at 1-800-243-1630, to book a seat, they will give your details about the four sandwich choices and ask you to pick one for your lunch to be enjoyed prior to a matinee performance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The price of the trip includes a reserved shed seat. The music will be from Brahms and Schumann. Sharing the spotlight will be Yo-Yo Ma on the cello and members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Horn Section. Frank Xavier Ross will be the conductor.

The date for this unique trip is August 18th, 2019. Our bus leaves the Chase Parkway Commuter Parking Lot at 8:15 am and returns around 7 pm.

The price, $135 for OLLI members, includes the Naumkeag tour, lunch and reserved shed tickets at Tanglewood for the Boston Symphony Orchestra concert. It also include gratuities for the Friendship Tour escort and driver.

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: Beauport 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.
Have you read the last copy of Voices and Visions? It is available at the front desk or in racks around the campus. Pick one up and enjoy it. Voices and Visions is a yearly OLLI publication of prose, poetry, and art work of all kinds created by the OLLI membership.

Who can have their work published in Voices and Visions? You can! If you are an OLLI student at any time this year, you are invited to submit your work for review to the Editorial Committee. Who is on the Committee? Your fellow students are.

Check the table for guidelines and submission forms.

We accept submissions by email: UConnOlliReview@gmail.com AND LizHanahan@aol.com

Missed a newsletter? Find past issues online @ https://olli.uconn.edu/weekly-newsletters/

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.

UCONN GIVES EVENT

Screenwriter Risa Mickenberg, who grew up in Southbury and graduated from Pomperaug High School, will introduce the film and have a Q&A session afterwards. Risa is OLLI President Dr. Ira Mickenberg’s daughter.

*EGG* stars Christina Hendricks (Mad Men), Alysia Reiner (Orange Is The New Black), Anna Camp (Pitch Perfect), Gbenga Akinnagbe (The Wire), and David Alan Basche (The Good Wife). It was directed by Marianna Palka (also an actor on the tv show GLOW.)

This event is free to attend, but there will be a donation box if you wish to contribute to our UConn Gives campaign!

We thank you for your generosity!

ALL PAWS IN!
Just for Laughs

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retired for the night. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his faithful friend. “Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see.”

“I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes,” replies Watson.

“And what do you deduce from that?”

Watson ponders for a minute, then says, “Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observed that Saturn is in Leo. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are a small and significant part of the universe. But what does it tell you, Holmes?”

“Watson, you idiot!” Holmes says. “Someone has stolen our tent!”

Young Chuck moved to Texas and bought a donkey from a farmer for $100. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day. The next day he drove up and said, “Sorry son, but I have some bad news. The donkey died.”

Chuck replied, “Well, then just give me my money back.”

Farmer said, “Can’t do that. I went and spent it already.”

Chuck said, “Okay, then, just bring me the dead donkey.”

The farmer asked, “What you gonna do with him?”

Chuck said, “I’m going to raffle him off.”

The farmer said, “You can’t raffle off a dead donkey!”

Chuck said, “Sure I can. Watch me. I just won’t tell anybody he’s dead.”

A month later, the farmer met up with Chuck and asked, “What happened with that that donkey?”

Chuck said, “I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars a piece and made a profit of $998.”

The farmer said, “Didn’t anyone complain?”

Chuck said, “Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two dollars back.”

OLLI Café

Today: March 22nd, 2019
12:00 - 1:30pm, Room 113

The Museum That Would Not Quit with John Ellsworth

Can you imagine the world without radio, television, or computers? Our world would be completely different from what it is today. Join us in learning about the history and development of the Vintage Radio and Communications Museum of Connecticut from its beginning in 1990 to the present. It’s a fascinating story of how volunteerism and persistence resulted in a world-class attraction.

Coming Up Next: March 29th, 2019

Russia: Partner or Adversary? with Dr. Sergei Kambalov

OLLI Welcomes a New Club – The Photography Club by Evelyn Marshak

Do you have grandchildren and would like to photograph them? Have you thought to yourself that it would be fun to be able to take pictures of people you encounter in your travels or at some annual event in your town? Chances are the grandchildren will likely be happy to pose. However, some strangers may not react well if you don’t ask permission. The newly formed OLLI Photography Club may be able to help you out.

This new club’s next meeting will be held on Friday, March 29th from 2:30 to 4:30 in Room 119. Plans are to take pictures on the Historic Waterbury Green. Tim Padgett, the president of the club, told me that one thing he will teach is how to get the needed permission of a person you want to photograph. He reminded me, however, that pictures of children and those under 18 are illegal according to state statues without proper permission and sign-offs.

The club is also planning several trips to New York including the Botanical Gardens and the Bronx Zoo. Upcoming in Connecticut are the Meriden Daffodil Festival and a steamboat trip up the Connecticut River. Each of these locations offers incredible venues for photographers. Think big cats at the zoo, the incredible bonsai collection at the Botanical Gardens, gorgeous daffodils and rolling up the majestic Connecticut River. Details of these trips are also part of the agenda for the March 29th meeting.

If you are fretting over owning the right camera needed to upgrade your skills, Padgett showed me a picture he took with a cell phone camera. If you have a cell phone capable of taking photos, you have the necessary equipment to take great pictures. Of course, if you own a professional level camera, you are also welcome to join the members at any of the above locations.

I have mentioned OLLI many times to many people to attract new members. Tim’s plans as a member of the Leadership Council’s Membership Committee include increasing the membership of the only OLLI chapter in our state by offering new events. He was also excited to share with me that Photography Club members will soon have access to an on-campus dark room.

The Photography Club welcomes all new members regardless of their level of skill and meets the last Friday of the month from 2:30 to 4:30 pm in Room 119.
Leisure, the Basis of Culture (or time for my semi-annual philosophical musing)

“What if we stopped celebrating being busy as a measure of importance? What if instead we celebrated how much time we had spent listening, pondering, meditating, and enjoying time with the most important people in our lives?” - Greg McKeown

The above quote came across my Facebook page the other day, and it started me thinking about how “busy” we all are. It seems to have become part of our collective identities or consciousness, that if we aren’t busy, then perhaps we aren’t involved in life, paying attention, or even needed. Well, probably the exact opposite is true.

When I was a student at St. John’s University, we were required to take fifteen credits of philosophy as part of our “core curriculum.” Most of you remember “the core,” right? Well, the first class we took as freshmen was Logic. I was terrible at it, as it is definitely math-related, and I struggled to get through it. However, something good came out of the class. Our professor assigned us Joseph Pieper’s “Leisure, the Basis of Culture.” There was a lot of moaning and groaning heard from the 17 and 18-year olds in the class, but this was one thing I could relate to. In this iconic work first published in 1947, Pieper, a university professor of philosophical anthropology at the University of Munster, delves into what makes a civilized society and what differentiates thinking people from those who were unfortunately caught up as cogs in the wheel of the Industrial Revolution and post-World Wars rebuilding.

All our cultural and extra-curricular activities, however, do not qualify as or rise to the heights of what Pieper calls true leisure. When my friend Pat and I make our semi-annual jaunt to New York to the Metropolitan Museum, we start by driving from mid-state Connecticut to Brewster to catch the hour and a half train ride, then from Grand Central we take the Fifth Avenue bus. By the time we get there I am usually exhausted, and though I do enjoy my trips to see the art and take advantage of the free mini-tours, I wouldn’t call it relaxing or “leisurely.” What then really is leisure?

According to Pieper, leisure has three parts: silence or stillness, celebration or festivity, and non-instrumentality, i.e., a time in which we produce nothing in the sense of economic utility. Leisure provides us the time to look beyond our productive, social function and be oriented toward the whole of reality. Leisure, he explains, is the attitude of one who lets go and let himself go, to become fully human and to engage the fundamental questions of our being: origin (where did I come from), destiny (where am I going) and present (who am I.) Leisure embraces this wholeness and helps us to be authentically free to be who we were meant to be, not merely free to do whatever we want.

How can we slow down and incorporate more leisure into our lives, particularly in our cultural pursuits? Certainly, enjoying more of nature is one way. Many opportunities for pleinaire painting can be found in Connecticut. Most nature preserves around the state offer guided hikes, and Spring is probably the best time of the year for that in terms of comfort. Take a book to your favorite lake. Sit and read it or not. Go for a ride to a specific destination by yourself. Turn off the radio and the audio book – and think along the way. When you get there, relax, meditate or veg out, and think some more. Enjoy the view. You might want to take a grandchild or special friend along for the ride. Check out one of the labyrinths at a retreat center – Holy Family in West Hartford and Someday Farm in Killingworth are just two. Perhaps entertain the notion of re-incorporating a Sabbath Day into your life. Remember Sundays (or Saturdays) when we were kids and things were quiet and still? Perhaps it seemed deadly boring to us then, but now, doesn’t it sound blissful?

I know I have been guilty of joking to my friends that I am so busy now in retirement that I am thinking about going back to work to get some rest. You may have said the same. It’s time for me to change that and enjoy my leisure time now for its own sake, and for the sake of health, sanity, happiness and fulfillment. Yes, it’s time to re-read “Leisure, the Basis of Culture,” in a leisurely way, of course!
Should you tune in to radio station WATR, 1320 AM on the dial, you may hear Julie Fernandez bantering with host Jay Crawford about the music being played on the Music Museum show.

Her deep knowledge of Rock and Roll performers from the mid-1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s, and her enjoyment talking on the phone to listeners, makes her an ideal “volunteer co-host,” as she describes her position.

Julie’s role on Music Museum, which is broadcast live Sundays from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., began 15 years ago when Jay asked her to “stop by the radio station” when she ran into him one day. The audience liked their back and forth chatter so much that she continues to stop by to look up the history of the music and talk about rock favorites.

“I still love anything Elvis!” She has fond memories of Bill Haley and the Comets and likes talking to fans, both local and from places as distant as Texas and even one from Australia. She also has met some rock celebrities through the show and “that’s a bonus.”

A graduate of Crosby High School, Julie recalls whiling away free afternoons with friends playing canasta. She was always a “big reader,” who loved James Michener’s *Hawaii*, Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*, and Taylor Caldwell’s *Great Lion of God*. Of Ernest Hemingway, she notes he “writes so simply, so vividly.”

Julie, now retired, took eight years to complete college. She began taking college courses at age 40, juggling classwork while working and raising her family and studying at Post College and Southern Connecticut State University. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Southern.

The new teacher sought a teaching job when she “was almost 50” and jobs in the profession were scarce. “Salaries had been enhanced in the mid-90s and every job had about one hundred applicants.” She began her career at Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, where she taught social studies and worked with Junior Achievement, a program to help students learn about entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Some students from Russia came for two weeks that year and participated in Junior Achievement. Oliver Wolcott Technical High School in Torrington had an opening the following year for a teacher of English and history, where she was to spend the rest of her career, retiring in 2013.

Upon retirement, Julie began taking classes at OLLI. “I’ve been coming here ever since; I never left school.”

She has indulged herself by taking classes in writing and photography. A memorable course was a literature class taught by Bill Blair on the Jack Kerouac novel *On the Road*, a fictionalized story of the beatnik author’s own travels across the country.

Julie treasures the hours she spends in the garden class From Planting to Harvest to Table: The Greening of Waterbury with presenter Nunzio De Filippis. Participants work “very hard” at the Fulton Park site in Waterbury. Always a gardener, Julie liked the idea of learning more about gardening and with like-minded people. “It has become a wonderful, family experience.” The OLLI volunteers help prepare the soil, plant, cultivate, and harvest the vegetables.

“We all pitch in and do what we can do.” Some volunteers have problems kneeling and are given assignments that don’t require them to kneel, for example.

Perhaps the best part is distributing vegetables to various places for the benefit of people who can’t always afford to purchase them. Produce is delivered for distribution to a number of organizations, including the Naugatuck Food Bank, Thomaston’s Green Manor, and Interfaith Ministries in Waterbury. Vegetables are delivered to Interfaith Ministries at 10:30 a.m. and become part of the luncheon served the same day.

Julie now is a member of OLLI’s Leadership Council by virtue of co-chairing the OLLI Café Committee with Mila Limson. The committee seeks out speakers that both inform and entertain OLLI members at lunchtime.