I met my first computer in the summer of ‘66. It was at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, where I was attending an NDEA Institute with forty other English teachers. This computer was located in the English department administration building on campus. The machine, as I remember it, must’ve been about 8 feet tall, 6 feet wide and 6 feet deep. The instructors were trying to get it to listen to words and react. They weren’t very successful.

Today, I am sitting before my laptop using Dragon software to write this. All I do is speak my thoughts and the computer writes them down much faster than I can type them. We certainly have come a long way from that massive machine of the 60s. Computers have insidiously immersed themselves in our lives so that they have almost become invisible. And they have had a profound effect on us as humans.

Yuval Noah Harari is an Israeli historian who has written three books, Sapiens: A Brief History Of Humankind, Homo Deus: A Brief History Of The Future, and 21 Lessons For The 21st Century, which is a series of essays of the present. One of the essays from the latter is entitled “Education” which raises some interesting questions. He asks us to imagine what a teacher in 1850 – the beginning of the Industrial Revolution – was tasked to teach. For 9,000 years the main industry was agriculture. Could that teacher possibly have foreseen all the changes that would take place in the next 50 years or the next 100? “The Industrial Revolution has bequeathed us the production line of education,” writes Harari. “It is easy to laugh at this model, and almost everybody agrees that, no matter its past achievements, it is now bankrupt. But so far we haven’t created a viable alternative.”

We are now in the 21st century, yet we are still teaching as if we were in the 1850s. We still do not know what the essence of education is. We are part of the Information Age due in no small part to computers. The amount of data being collected is beyond our ability to assimilate it all. But Google, Amazon, Facebook and other big corporations are able to utilize it. And they do! Last fall I wrote about algorithms which is a step-by-step procedure for solving a problem to accomplish some end, especially by a computer. 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 is being used in every facet of our lives – the law, medicine, engineering, etc. by these algorithms upon which we increasingly, but perhaps unknowingly, rely. “As biotechnology and machine learning improve, it will become easier to manipulate people’s deepest emotions and desires, and it will become more dangerous than ever to just follow your heart. When Coca-Cola, Amazon, or the government knows how to pull the strings of your heart and press the buttons of your brain, will you be able to tell the difference between yourself and their marketing experts?” asks Harari.

“The algorithms are watching you right now. They are watching where you go, what you buy, whom you meet. Soon they will monitor all your steps, all your breaths, all your heartbeats. They are relying on Big Data and machine learning get to know you better and better. And once these algorithms know you better than you know yourself, they can control and manipulate you, and you will not be able to do much about it. In the end, it’s a simple empirical matter: if the algorithms indeed understand what’s happening within you better than you understand yourself, authority shifts to them.”

So, OLLI members, just what does a modern teacher teach –STEM, liberal arts, or a combination of both? The only constant seems to be change. If you think education is expensive – try ignorance!
Important Travel News - Fall Trips Need Summer Reservations

by Ann Rompre

OLLI has three excellent trips planned for the Fall of 2019 – a cruise on the Gloucester, Massachusetts shoreline, a relaxing overnight trip to Ocean City, Maryland, and a really intriguing combined train ride, dinner and interactive murder mystery!

HOWEVER – many times people who want to go on these Fall trips miss out on them because they wait until Fall to call for reservations which might seem logical to do. However, when Friendship Tours is in the process of working on our trips, they also have to keep in mind whether the number of people signed up is large enough to go forward with a trip. If not, at a certain point, they need to think of cancelling the trip. This usually takes place about 2 months in advance so that they can notify all the destinations and people in time to keep from losing a large amount of money.

As you may have realized by now, our last Fall trip of 2019 is scheduled in October. This means Friendship Tours will start looking into whether any of our Fall trips should be cancelled by August. By that point, if the number of reservations is not high enough, they will need to start cancelling any trip with low numbers.

Because of the summer break that OLLI always has during July and August, the crucial time for reservations to have a sufficient number to avoid cancellations usually occurs during these inactive months every year when you are not thinking of OLLI activities. Therefore, if you are considering a Fall trip, please make sure that you remind yourself to call Friendship Tours by August, or hopefully earlier, to make your reservation. It would be a shame if a trip was cancelled just because people were not aware that they needed to have their reservations in by then. We will send emails to all members about the Fall trips occasionally during these inactive OLLI summer months to help remind you.

So remember, early reservations make successful trips. We look forward to sharing our adventures with you while we travel.

Upcoming OLLI Travel

Spring/Summer – 2019

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.
Ocean City Overnight Trip

It was in one of my first years of teaching 6th grade that I was introduced to the famous wild ponies that draw visitors to Assateague Island off the coast of Maryland. Now you can see these famous ponies that my class and I only read about.

Our bus leaves the Chase Parkway Commuter lot at 7:00 AM on October 1, 2019 for a 4 day/3 night trip. Yes, you can bring your coffee cup and donuts aboard. We are headed for our hotel, the Dunes Manor, in Ocean City, Maryland where all of our rooms face the ocean.

After you unpack, you may choose between a splash in the hotel’s indoor pool or enjoy the lounge and the hotel’s daily afternoon tradition of tea and cookies. Either way there will be traditional afternoon tea and cookies. Later our bus will take us to dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 2: After breakfast, our bus will take us for a visit to Assateague Island with its unspoiled wilderness and the ponies. Visitors have remarked that these “beach horses” have extraordinary strength and endurance.

Then we’ll stop in the historic town of Berlin. Disney’s movie, “Tuck Everlasting,” is based on this town and the film “Runaway Bride” was filmed there.

When we return to the Dunes Manor, you’ll again have the option of the indoor pool or the lounge. Either way there will be the traditional afternoon tea and cookies. Later our bus will take us to dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 3: Many claim that Ocean City’s most beautiful attraction is The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art. Here you will see beautifully detailed replicas that were inspired by nature and carved by master sculptors.

Day 4: After breakfast on Friday, our bus heads north to Waterbury after a few days of well-deserved relaxation and fascination.

The cost of the trip is $585 per person if you share a double or triple room. The cost includes the deluxe bus and three nights at the Dunes Manor Hotel with oceanfront rooms that offer a private balcony. Also included are three breakfasts and three dinners, admissions costs and gratuities for both the tour director and driver.

For questions and to make reservations, call Friendship Tours at 1-800-243-1630. A $250 deposit is due when you make your reservations. Final payment is due August 20, 2019.

Just to let you know that the word is getting around about the Clubs & Activity Committee’s upcoming ethnic luncheon on April 29 at 12 noon at Muyuri Indian Bistro, 1245 W. Main Street in Waterbury. The cost is $15 per person, including tax and gratuity.

Thank you to those of you who have signed up to join us, and please let this serve as a reminder that we need your support to reach our goal of 50 diners. We encourage you to bring a guest, and please pass the word around.

Reservations are mandatory and, to sign up, you may contact either me at delvilway@aol.com; phone 860-274-8621 or Barbara Gavin at bar1005@yahoo.com; phone 1-201-506-0288.

Thanks for your support! -Delma

by Evelyn Marshak

Enjoy an afternoon at leisure on the famous boardwalk. You can visit the Lifesaving Station, shop, relax on your veranda or swim in the pool. This being 2019, you might want to use your smartphone to tell friends and family what you have seen or take many pictures. Dinner tonight will be served at the hotel.

OLLI BOOK CLUB

May 20: Ruthless Tide by Al Roker
June 17: The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd
July 15: The Ensemble by Aja Gabel

The Book Club meets the third Monday of every month in Room 102 @ 1:00 PM. Come by!
Missed a newsletter? Find past issues online @

https://olli.uconn.edu/weekly-newsletters/

Hello, OLLlites... Our latest copy of *Voices and Visions* is filling up, but we DO need more submissions from you. Art, prose, poetry, thoughts, maybe some of your thoughts about a class you took this year that sparked your imagination and curiosity. Let us know.

The deadline for submissions will be May 15th, 2019... and we don’t want to extend it if we don’t have to. Please consider sending us your thoughts and submissions. If you were a registered OLLI student anytime in 2018 or 2019, your submissions are welcome. Remember, you retain all rights to your work, so it can be published elsewhere.

Send your contributions to:
UconnOLLlreview@gmail.com AND lizhanahan@aol.com.

Write on!

The *Voices and Visions* Committee thanks YOU!
An Afternoon of Contrasts

“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft a-gley” by Bobby Byrnes

Last Sunday a friend and I eagerly ventured out to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. My goal, OLLI friends, was to validate for you what the museum said was the recent exciting authentication of Van Gogh’s *Poppies*, which had been in their possession for years but had never been truly certified as the great impressionist master’s. My task was to put my many years as an OLLI columnist and certified dilettante to let you rest assured that it is indeed a true work of Vincent’s. Sadly, the painting wasn’t there! It was still “in transit” as the guide informed us, but will be there this weekend as part of the museum’s annual “Flowers” show. So, you will get to judge for yourself if you go this weekend and after that, it whether it meets your standards! Seriously, the museum has done its due diligence in certifying the authenticity, and it’s going to be worth the trip to see it in its new light sometime this spring or summer.

But since we were there, we decided to look at the current temporary and permanent exhibitions that this beautiful space has to offer. First, we poked around in the modern art section – there are some pieces by artists we all know including Robert Rauschenberg whose Retroactive 1, 1963 is very interesting. It includes images of JFK, an astronaut, and pictures taken from Life and National Geographic. Conceived before the assassination and finished during the month following this tragic event, the juxtaposition of media images is intended to prompt viewers to form new interpretations about contemporary life. Fifty-six years later it makes an even stronger impression. The museum also owns paintings by Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso, Rene Magritte, Marc Chagall and Diego Rivera. Definitely worth a trip for this room alone.

Then we took a docent-guided tour of Sean Scully’s “Land Lines.” This exhibition takes a look at Scully’s attempts to compress sky, land and sea into horizontal lines of color. The artist, an immigrant who moved here from Ireland in the 1960’s, uses different colors and as his inspiration a photograph of his own that he took on the Aran Islands looking out toward America. The Baltic and Far Blue Lake paintings in the show were inspired by a recent trip to Venice where all his works in his show sold. Maybe I’m just not that big on modern art of this type, but I thought most of the paintings looked like towels piled up for sale in Target. One, which to me was slightly more interesting, looked like an open cardboard box on a living room rug, the kind a little kid would like to climb into and play. When the docent asked what we saw, I said so. She looked a little peeved. But the interesting part was that at the end of the tour we found out that Scully was influenced by a job he had at Woolworth’s early in his days in the USA where his duties included putting corrugated cardboard boxes into a compressor machine which he called his “first work of art.” Ah, I felt vindicated in my interpretation! The docent did, however, take the time to compare Scully’s work with Gustave Courbet’s impressionistic landscape “Sunset Effect: The Shore at Trouville” (1866). I’ll take the Courbet, thank you.

A sharp contrast to the Scully exhibition is another temporary one entitled “At Home in Early New England.” I’m a big fan of early American history and I enjoyed looking at the furniture, textiles and other household effects of the period which reflect trade from Asia, Europe and the West Indies which was very active then - globalization, indeed!

Wadsworth Athenaeum, 600 Main Street, Hartford, CT. The museum has a lovely café and a tempting gift shop. With a little forethought you can get free passes through most public libraries.
I am sitting here on Tuesday afternoon looking out the kitchen window and diligently procrastinating on writing this column. It is 73 degrees out, the trees are budding, and the outdoors is calling me. Alas, here I sit as a result of my delay in writing. But the weather is a good inspiration – spring is truly here, and we are at the beginning of Eastertide, the Christian observance of the time from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, and Passover, the Jewish holiday which commemorates their liberation from slavery in ancient Egypt and freedom as a nation under Moses’ leadership. The two feasts are certainly related to each other and have deep cultural roots as spring festivals. So, what better way to celebrate spring than to attend a concert? For those looking for something last minute to do this weekend, I have a few suggestions.

Waterbury Symphony Orchestra – The WSO closes out its regular season, “Atlas of Sound,” this Saturday evening (tomorrow, April 27 at 7:30) with Haydn’s Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major featuring Yun Han, winner of WSO’s Young Artist Concerto competition. Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), of course, was the Austrian composer who helped develop chamber music such as the piano trio, string quartet as well as the symphony. He has become known as the “Father of the Symphony.” The orchestra will also perform Mahler’s Symphony No 5 in C sharp minor. Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), also an Austrian, was a Jewish composer and conductor who acted as a bridge between the 19th and 20th century styles of composition. Because of his religion the performance of his music was actually banned in much of Europe during the Nazi era. He is now one of the most frequently performed and recorded of all composers. Don’t forget to make use of your OLLI discount – 20% off on all $35 and $55 tickets. The concert will be preceded at 6:30 pm with insights by WSO Cultural Ambassador, musician, and friend of OLLI, Dr. Vincent DeLuise, whose thoughts are always illuminating and entertaining.

Music at the Red Door at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 679 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford. Spring Chamber Music – flutist Suzanne Bona and pianist Brenda Moore Miller will perform a varied program ranging from baroque sonatas by Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, as well as music by living composers including two American women – Dianne Rahbee and Judith Zaimont, British musician Ian Venables and American composer Pieter Schickele (whom many of you may remember as PDQ Bach!) Tomorrow, Saturday, April 27 at 3 pm. Free admission, but a suggested donation of $20.

If vocal music is more to your liking, at the same venue, this Sunday, April 28 at 5 pm the Trinity New Haven Choir of Men and Boys will perform Willan’s Rise up, my love, Psalm 150 - Anglican chant, and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ Easter (from Five Mystical Songs) among other pieces. Free admission. No tickets required.

West Hartford has a plethora of excellent restaurants and interesting shops. Either Saturday or Sunday, you can make a day of it and celebrate Eastertide, Passover, and Spring.