The World Series shows us the ways of superstition. Example - the beards of most of the Boston players supposedly bringing them good luck. It worked in that case. Sports seem to be full of superstitious rituals, from favorite bats or other equipment to strange movements before performing. Knock on wood or not, superstition appears to have played a positive role in evolution and it continues to affect human behavior. Lucky us.

Modern Halloween celebrations focus on fun frights, but superstitions associated with the holiday's predecessor, the Celtic festival of the dead, were no laughing matter. Families left "treats" for departed loved ones to discourage nasty “tricks” from beyond the grave.

Many people have anecdotes telling about their grandparents using a dowser to find water for a well. Dowsers probably believe that the forked rod or pendulum or branch they hold vibrates as they pass over underground water, but there is no science to support the notion. In fact, as early as the 19th century, dowsing doubters such as French chemist Michel Eugene Chevreul suggested the vibrations came from unintentional muscle movements. The German government tested 500 dowsers in the 1980s. Six "showed an extraordinarily high rate of success, which can scarcely, if at all, be explained as due to chance," the study says. However, in further tests they could not replicate their results. Oops!

Evolutionary biologist Kevin Foster defines superstitions as incorrect identification of causal links. Foster doesn’t consider "superstition" derogatory. You don’t need to understand cause to benefit from a behavior. Believing that rustling grass always means a predator is approaching, for example, means that you will hoof it whenever you hear the sound, whether it is caused by the wind or a hungry lion. You will live to share your superstition with your children, they will tell their children and so on, protecting your progeny from grass-rustling. Foster believes that, among early humans, natural selection favored the superstitious.

Superstition can still be a plus - sort of. German researchers reported in 2010 that the more strongly participants believed in their good luck charms, the more confident they were. The study also showed that the more confident superstitious participants were, the better they performed, perhaps due to self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's own ability to succeed at a specific challenge, which has been linked to how willing people are to persist at a given task. Or maybe brains trump beliefs. In 1974, Georgia researchers found smart high school students were less superstitious than those of average intelligence. OLLI participants surely will find themselves in the former category!
TRAFFIC WOES

Downtown is clogged with traffic
As I plod my way to school;
Although I left quite early,
This log-jam had me fooled.

Meriden Road was crowded,
So I turned left, onto Frost,
Which got me ‘most a mile;
At East Main, again, I lost.

The state roads are a wasteland
As they work on ‘84;
Most people leave the highway
To fill local roads some more.

“It’s now ahead of schedule”
Our newest Governor cries;
Based on past performance,
His rhetoric is lies.

A warning to you students
Who still try to drive to class:
For Tuesday class, leave Monday-
This mess won’t let you pass.

-Carol Ann Laferriere

Thanks for your timely description.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

How To Wash a Cat

1. Put both lids of the toilet up and add 1/8 cup of pet shampoo to the water in the bowl.
2. Pick up the cat and soothe him while you carry him towards the bathroom.
3. In one smooth movement, put the cat in the toilet and close the lid. You may need to stand on the lid.
4. At this point the cat will self-agitate and make ample suds. Never mind that noises coming from the toilet – the cat is actually enjoying this.
5. Flush the toilet three or four times. This provides a "Power-Wash" and "Rinse."
6. Have someone open the front door of your home. Be sure that there are no people between the bathroom and the front door.
7. Stand well back behind the toilet as far as you can and quickly lift the lid.
8. The cat will rocket out of the toilet, streak through the bathroom, and go outside where he will dry himself off.
9. Both the toilet and the cat will be sparkling clean.

Yours sincerely, The Dog

TECHNOLOGY CLINIC

with UNDERGRAD STUDENTS!

9/13, 9/27, 10/11, 10/25, & 11/8
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm, FREE!

Need some help figuring out your laptop, smartphone, or iPad/tablet? Would you like to make a PowerPoint presentation for your family photos? Do you want to understand the online games your grandchildren play? Do you want to play games on your computer or phone? We can show you how!

UConn Adulthood & Aging students are here to help! Just stop by and receive free, individualized technology training in an intergenerational setting. Have your questions answered and gain some clarity over sometimes-frustrating modern technology.

The clinic will be held on five Friday afternoons over the course of the fall semester (9/13, 9/27, 10/11, 10/25, and 11/8) from 1:30 – 2:30 pm in Room 317 (computer lab).

OLLi Café

Today: October 11th, 2019
12:15 - 1:30pm, Room 113

GERALD O’CONNELL:
ARE WE IN ROME?

This talk will focus on the impact that Rome has had on the United States’ political culture, law, architecture, holidays and even our day-to-day lives. “Innocent until proven guilty,” E pluribus unum, the arch, the names of the months and so many more things that are in our lives today all come from Ancient Rome. You’ll even find out what ancient Roman symbols are here in Waterbury!

Coming Up Next: October 18th, 2019

JUAN SANTIAGO: BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO AFRO CUBAN/LATIN JAZZ MUSIC
A Century of Ammonia

For centuries, growers relied on manure and crop rotation to keep soil fertile. But in 1908, German chemists invented a way to transform nitrogen gas and hydrogen into a liquid chemical — ammonia — that could be sprayed onto soil to make it almost instantly fertile. Relatively cheap to produce and easily mixed with other nutrients like phosphorus, potassium and sulfur, this new way to fertilize sparked an agricultural revolution. Crop yields skyrocketed 30% to 50%. So did the world’s population, which went from 1.65 billion in 1900 to 7.6 billion today.

Fertilizer use comes at a cost, though. Manufacturing it produces 3% of the world’s carbon emissions. Most commercial farmers in the US apply between 160 and 220 pounds of mainly inorganic fertilizer per acre. Nearly 1/3 to 1/2 of that is lost to the environment.

Rains can soak fertilizer into the soil, where it pollutes groundwater. Soil bacteria process ammonia from both inorganic and organic fertilizer and turn it into nitrous oxide, the third most significant greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide and methane. Washed into rivers, lakes and oceans, nitrogen increases the population of microscopic organisms. Toxic cyanobacteria poison fish and other aquatic animals. Blooms of algae decrease oxygen in the water. The decay from dead marine animals further consumes oxygen in the water, creating a dead zone, like those in the Gulf of Mexico and the Chesapeake Bay.

Inorganic fertilizer has become an agricultural Catch-22, polluting the world it feeds. Without it, yields would decline by 40%, putting millions of people at risk of starvation. But if corn, the most prevalent crop in the US, could fix its own nitrogen, some estimates say fertilizer use on that crop could drop by 25 to 50%.

Scientists are practicing their magic.

Discover 11/19

Still Time to Reserve a Seat on the Murder Mystery Train

by Ann Rompre

For any of you who are murder mystery buffs, there is just a small amount of time to get in on a fantastic trip on the Rhode Island Railroad where you can be involved in solving an intriguing murder case acted out by the Marley Bridges Theatre Company. In addition, you will be involved in this while having a scrumptious luncheon served to you and being able to view the wonderful scenery as we travel along.

If you are interested, there are some seats left. Please call Friendship Tours (1-800-243-1630) and ask about OLLI’s October 22nd trip, Murder on the Bellevue Express. Cost for OLLI members is $116 with a $10 surcharge for non-members. Flyers with more information on this trip are on the OLLI Information Table in the main hallway. Hope to see you there!
OLLI Book Club
The Book Club meets the third Monday of every month in Room 102 @ 1:00pm. Come by!

Oct. 21: Georgia by Dawn Tripp
Nov. 18: Bel Canto by Ann Patchett

Contact: nvia@sbcglobal.net

OLLI Genealogy Club
The Genealogy Club meets the third Thursday of the month. This semester: October 17th, and November 21st. 10:00 am - 11:30 am in Room 317 (computer lab on third floor of main building)

Contact: dianeciba@gmail.com

OLLI Film Club
The Film Club meets on three Wednesdays in the Fall and Spring semesters.

The showing of *Antonia’s Line* will be held on Wednesday, October 16th, 2019 in Room WREC 402 (on the fourth floor of the Rectory building, located directly across the street from the main building - entrance between Starbucks and the Palace Theater) 12:00 - 3:00pm. NO RSVP - Just show up! Free popcorn!

OLLI Photography Club
The Photography Club meets the last Friday of each month at 3:30pm in Room 102.

Contact: (t.padgett@hotmail.com).

OLLI Reiki Club
Meetings are the first Monday of each month at 1:00pm in Room 102.

Contact: barbara.schafer@comcast.net

OLLI LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
Council Members
OLLI officers are part of the Leadership Council, which is the principal representative body of the OLLI membership.

President
Ira Mickenberg

Vice President
Mila Limson

Secretary
Mary Peitler

Asst. Secretary
Joyce Conlan

PARKING INFORMATION
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/

If you do not want to purchase a permit, find other local parking areas here: http://www.waterburyparking.com/pricing/
All American Art

I try to review the exhibitions at the Museum of American Art in New Britain at least once a year. A couple of weeks ago I visited and enjoyed two of their current offerings which I will tell you about, and preview an exciting opening next week.

Founded in 1903, it enjoys the distinction of being the first museum of strictly American art in the country. A tremendous asset to the arts scene in Connecticut, it is a short 25 minute ride from OLLI. Ask your GPS lady for directions and you should have no problem finding it. For those of you new to the museum, admission is free on Saturday mornings until noon due to the generosity of the American Savings Foundation. This is how I first started going there about five years ago. I loved the atmosphere and offerings so much that I became a member.

For those of us who are already nostalgic for summer, “The Art and Artists of Monhegan Island” showcases the art of this beloved “Artist’s Island” off the coast of Maine. For over 150 years Monhegan has been the home of one of America’s best-known and enduring art colonies. An artist named Aaron Shattuck of the Hudson River School discovered Monhegan in 1858 while on a lighthouse tour and to this day it remains a refuge for artists to capture on canvas the sublime power of land and sea. The visual drama of Monhegan’s cliffs and ocean are found in the artwork. My favorite was “Stormy Day” painted in 1937 by Andrew Winters. I love a good thunderstorm. This painting immediately transported me there and I was entranced by nature’s might. “Monhegan Lobsterman,” another by Winters, portrays the courage and daring of those who made their living in the rough coastal waters of Maine and the formidable force of the ocean. Winter had worked as a seaman before becoming a painter and it really shows! A lecture about this show will take place on Sunday, November 17 at 3 pm by Kiia Shahi of Princeton University. Open to all.

A sweet small show entitled “Chairway to Heaven” displays chairs made by the American Shaker colonies. Most of the Shaker colonies in the United States in the 19th century made chairs, stools and benches for their own use but then realized they could have a good source of income from these utilitarian objects. They began crafting them for sale to be able to purchase other necessary goods from “the World” outside. From a tiny high chair, which a robust modern day baby would probably break the first time in it, to a bench for two (sort of an uncomfortable version of a modern love seat) you can appreciate the beautiful craftsmanship of these religious people. We are fortunate to have a permanent Shaker gallery at MMA, as this sect has deep roots in New England.

Coming up, and not to be missed, is “For America: Paintings from the National Academy of Design” which opens next Thursday, October 17 and will run for three months. It may not have the PR pizzazz of recent MMA shows like the Dali three year ago or last year’s George O’Keefe show, but this promises to be a winner. The National Academy of Design was founded in New York City in 1825 by artists including Samuel F. B. Morse and Thomas Cole and is the oldest artist honorary society in the country. This extraordinary show will feature 90 paintings that represent not only famous artists’ works, but a portrait of each artist, either done by the artists themselves or by a fellow artist. This blockbuster of an exhibition will comprise five sections: Founding an American School, A New Internationalism, Painting America, Post War Realism and For America, a contemporary look which also harkens back to America’s past. I will be there to enjoy this treasure, and hope some of you will, too!
A Tour of Great Britain

My wife Pat and I missed the first half of the OLLI term because we were on a tour of Great Britian. I thought I would share with the OLLI members several points of interest I learned that folks may not be aware of.

In preparation for World War II there was a massive evacuation of children from London and some other cities to the English countryside. Overnight over three million children were transported from their homes in the cities to recipient homes in the countryside. When the expected bombing did not occur in 1939 some of the children returned to their city homes but many remained in rural areas. The recipient families did this out of patriotism, although some of the stories of the transported children revealed hardships. Some children stayed away for the duration of the war or six years. Hastily executed, there was little oversight of this massive logistical endeavor.

During the war in anticipation of potential bombing, in churches such as York Minster, the stained glass windows which were 5X50 feet were removed and put in a safe place until the end of the war when they were replaced. This successful attempt at preserving cultural heritage was done at a great expense.

Visiting the Scottish highlands we learned of the Highland Clearances which took place from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. The Scottish farmers lived as tenant farmers on subsistence patches of land, owned by English landowners to whom they paid a tithe. The Englishmen decided to convert the land to sheep raising and forced the farmers off of their land. If they resisted their homes were destroyed and the tenants were beaten. This led to a mass migration of Scots to places like Nova Scotia and the United States. The highland area of Scotland is very sparsely populated to this day.

Another insight that I would like to share from our trip concerned the very beautiful Lake District of northern England where Beatrice Potter and the Lake Poets such as William Wordsworth lived. The Vikings supplanted the conquering Romans in this area and introduced Herdwick sheep to the area. These sheep are born black and as they age their wool turns white. Their wool is waterproof, and since they always return to their birthplace they can be left to roam. They are feisty and stare down organizing sheep dogs. Beatrice Potter donated vast tracks of Lake District lands to the British version of the National Park Service to preserve the sheep which indicated that the Herdwick sheep are part of the land.

OLLI promotes travel, with the Travel Committee, as part of its learning experience. I thought a few insights I received while missing OLLI classes deserved sharing. The OLLI newsletter seems like an appropriate venue!

Ira Mickenberg M.D. President of the OLLI Leadership Council

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 presenter or staff member.