The coronavirus has reached the United States. Unfortunately, it has become political. There are some who say it is a hoax. There are some who say it is the most dangerous virus that has ever been seen. The truth may be somewhere in the middle, but until we get more data we will not know just how dangerous it can become. One fact that is known is that OLLI members are in the group that is most vulnerable. The virus seems to be easily transmissible which makes it very dangerous because of something called ‘exponential growth.’

Recently in the newsletter I wrote about this phenomenon but it was about computer power. The analogy used was about chessboards and grains of rice. However, if you replace the grain of rice with the individual who has contracted the virus, you may be able to visualize why the coronavirus is so dangerous.

Six years ago Andre McAfee, a research scientist at MIT and co-author with Eric Brynjolfsson, wrote in a book called Race Against the Machine about "the possibility of robots and algorithms (a set of rules for solving a problem in a finite number of steps) getting so good at solving our problems that they may soon not need humans to do the job at all." They have a new book out entitled The Second Machine Age, in which they are surprised to find that the pace of technological improvement has increased exponentially. More so than they thought possible three years ago. They make reference to a law called Moore’s law. Gordon Moore is best known for a prediction he made in an article published in 1965. Essentially this meant that computing power would double each year. As it turned out however, Moore’s biggest mistake was in being too conservative. "His ‘law’ has held up astonishingly well for over four decades and has been true for digital progress in areas other than integrated circuits. In 1975 Moore revised his estimate from one year to two, and today it’s common to use 18 months as the doubling for general computing power. This is because of something called exponential growth.

Our brains are not well equipped to understand sustained exponential growth. In particular, we severely underestimate how big the numbers can get. To make this clearer they use a story out of India about the inventor of chess who presented his brainchild to the Emperor. The Emperor was so impressed that he offered the inventor a reward. The inventor praised him for his generosity and said, "All I desire is some rice to feed my family." And suggested that they use the chessboard to determine the amount of rice he would be given. "Place one single grain of rice on the first square of the board, two on the second, four on the third, and so on," the inventor proposed, "so that each square receives twice as many grains as the previous." The Emperor replied, impressed by the inventor’s apparent modesty, "Make it so."

"Moore’s law allows us to see what the Emperor did not: 63 instances of doubling yields a fantastically big number, even when starting with a single unit. If his request were fully honored, the inventor would wind up with 18 quintillion grains of rice-more rice than has been produced in the history of the world. After 32 squares, the Emperor had given the inventor about 4 billion grains of rice." It was as they headed into the second half of the chessboard that the trouble began.

In the first half of the chessboard, we still come across numbers in the real world - Congressional budgets, for instance. In the second half of the chessboard as the numbers mountain to trillions, quadrillions, etc. we cannot even conceive of them.

Of course, not every individual infected will pass it on, especially as we become more aware of those things that will help prevent it. That is why the University is taking the precautions it has. That is why it is up to you, as enlightened OLLI members, to find the real facts.
Just For Laughs

Subject: No Parent Left Behind!!!!

These are real notes written by parents in the Memphis school district. Spellings have been left intact.

>>> 1. My son is under a doctor's care and should not take PE today. Please execute him.
>>> 2. Please excuse Lisa for being absent she was sick and I had her shot.
>>> 3. Dear school: please excuse John being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and also 33.
>>> 4. Please excuse Gloria from Jim today. She is ad-ministrating.
>>> 5. Please excuse Roland from P.E. for a few days. Yesterday he fell out of a tree and misplaced his hip.
>>> 6. John has been absent because he had two teeth taken out of his face.
>>> 7. Carlos was absent yesterday because he was playing football. He was hurt in the growing part.
>>> 8. Megan could not come to school today because she has been bothered by very close veins.
>>> 9. Chris will not be in school cus he has an acre in his side.
>>> 10. Please excuse Ray Friday from school. He has very loose vowels.

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.

OLLI Café, 3/13/2020 - CANCELLED

Please see page 6.
Thank you for your understanding.
VOICES and VISIONS

Enrolled in an art, photography, or writing course? The OLLI Editorial Committee invites you, as an OLLI student, to submit your work to our yearly literary and arts publication, Voices and Visions. Have you wondered what Voices and Visions is? Voices and Visions is a yearly publication created by OLLI members that showcases your writing skills, your interests, or your creative works in the form of artwork of any kind. We want to see what you have created and what you would like to share with the OLLI community. If you are an OLLI member this year, and have taken classes, you are eligible to submit your work. As your Editorial Committee, we meet and go over the submissions to find places for them in Voices and Visions. If needed, we will get in touch with you about any editing that might need to be gently done. We have a photographer who will work with you to be sure we get photos of your artwork to look its best. Guidelines and submission forms are online. If possible, we ask you to submit your forms online to LizHanahan@aol.com OR leave them in the OLLI office, though an email to Liz is highly preferable. DEADLINE: June 15th, 2020

Walking Activity

“Nature quiets the mind by engaging with an intelligence larger than our own.”

Come and walk in nature with some OLLI friends. Experience the beauty in our different communities. All walks are easy with some minor hill climbing. We will walk for approximately an hour. Third Wednesday at 10:00am. Meet at parking area. Bad weather will cancel the walk.

March 18th: Scovill Reservoir Loop in Wolcott Park. Park at St. Pius Church, 517 Woodtick Road. Flat 3.5-mile loop.

April 15th: DeDominicus Preserve, Old Lane, Cheshire. (Route 10 to Old Farms Road. At crest of hill there is a kiosk on left. Park on the side of the road. The trail is through the woods. More challenging, as it is not paved and there are hills. The beauty is well worth it! Hiking boots recommended.

May 20th: Hopbrook Trail, Naugatuck. Parking at lot at the intersection of Routes 63 and 188.

Questions? Diane Visconti (203)215-8548 or email Vis1795@aol.com

OLLI Travel:

While we understand that these trips are organized between Friendship Tours and individual members (and non-members), and can’t be cancelled directly by OLLI, we strongly advise that all travel and trips arranged by the Travel Committee are cancelled until further notice.

Upcoming OLLI Travel

SPRING 2020

4/22/2020: Harlem, NYC – member cost $109
6/5/2020: NYC Philharmonic - Copland & Nico Muhly conducted by Jaap VanZweden- member cost $122 pp

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 at 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.

REMINDER TO OLLI TRAVELERS FOR THE PHILHARMONIC TRIP

Reservations for the Philharmonic Day Trip, June 5, 2020, need to be in by the end of MARCH. Please make sure to reserve this trip early.

TECHNOLOGY CLINIC

with Timothy Padgett

4/3 & 4/17 in Rm 317
12:00 pm - 1:00 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! Walk-ins welcome!
CLUB CORNER

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

March 16: Lost Roses by Martha Hall Kelly
April 20: The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See
May 18: The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah
June 15: Unsheltered by Barbara Kingsolver
July 20: Warlight by Michael Ondaatje
August 17: Tobacco Road by Erskine Caldwell
September 21: Appetite for America by Stephen Fried
Contact: nvia@sbcglobal.net

OLLI Genealogy Club
The Genealogy Club meets the second Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will take place on April 14, 12:00 - 1:30pm in Room 317 (computer lab on third floor of main building).
Contact: dianeciba@gmail.com

OLLI Photography Club
The Photography Club meets the last Friday of each month at 1:30pm in Room 102.
Contact: (t.padgett@hotmail.com).

OLLI Film Club
The next film club event will take place on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 @ Noon in Room 324 showing “The Lives of Others” (2006)

Bring your own lunch. Free popcorn will be provided!!

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/

OLLI Film Club
Course Proposal Deadlines

The submission deadline is Friday, April 17th, 2020 for Summer proposals (6/1 - 6/26) and Friday, May 29th, 2020 for Fall proposals (9/8 - 11/13).
Submit online:
https://olli.uconn.edu/course-proposal-form/

Questions?
Call (860) 486-4930

Find a full list of OLLI Clubs and Committees and their descriptions on Page 3 of the course catalog!
Columnist’s note: as I finish editing this on Monday night the cancellations of events are coming in fast and furious due to Covid-19 concerns. So, just check with your venue before you venture out for fun. If all is cancelled, well, as many sports fans say, “There’s always next year.” Or just postpone your St. Pat’s celebrations until things return to normal!

So, who was this Patrick dude and why do so many of us “get our Irish up” this time of the year? Well, many stories abound about Patrick, where he came from, what he did, and whether he was an actual historic person or just a mythical lad who became aggrandized over the centuries. Most historians believe that he was a real person, son of a fifth century British government official, kidnapped and sold into slavery in Ireland where he heard the voice of God. Escaping back to Britain, he dismayed his family by returning to Ireland to bring a new way of life to a people who had once enslaved him. According to his own letters, he was a flawed human (like the rest of us) who was tremendously insecure, carried a chip on his shoulder due to his lack of schooling and was prone to depression, self-pity and anger. So, whether Patrick really was the bomb in Ireland, or someone who has joined the hagiography of the saints and heroes because of a deep emotional and spiritual need of the Celtic people, we don’t really know. But at this point we can all just sit back, relax, and enjoy some of the many festivities celebrating his name and the Irish and Irish/American heritage in Connecticut!

First and foremost of course, is a visit to the Great Hunger Museum in Hamden. This lovely and unique little museum, operated under the auspices of Quinnipiac University, is home to a beautiful and poignant collection of Irish and American artwork commemorating the Irish potato famine of 1845-52. The main permanent exhibition had been traveling across the pond for the past two years and it is now back in the States. If you’ve never been there you are in for a treat. A very special new and different exhibition is artwork from a graphic novel by Boston based author John Walsh entitled “Go Home Paddy.” As the grandmother of two boys who are obsessed with this genre, I think it would be a great way to introduce middle and high schoolers to the museum via this story of a young boy who comes to the States during the famine and then time travels to the present where he encounters prejudice again, this time, his own. Educational and thought-provoking.

On screen, a unique opportunity. “I Am Patrick,” a new documentary will be shown in a limited number of movie theaters on March 17 and 18. According to the movie’s press release, it is a “feature-length docudrama that peels back centuries of legend and myth to tell the true story of Saint Patrick. Through historical re-enactments, expert interviews, and Patrick’s own writings, experience the journey from man to saint.” The Regal in Waterbury is showing it both evenings at 6:30. Advance tickets recommended. I have mine for next Tuesday - will you join me?

River Dance 25 is coming to the Toyota Oakdale Theater in Wallingford March 19 through 22. This spectacular dance group which burst onto the scene under the direction of Michael Flatley in 1994 is celebrating with a global tour starring the beautiful red-haired 22 year old Amy-Mae Dolan. Over the past 25 years three different companies have been seen live by 27.5 million people.

There are many local celebrations and parades. And, of course, what I call Patrickpalooza, the real deal in New York City, hopefully will take place that day. That’s one I really enjoy watching on TV, listening to the commentary, and taking in the entire parade in my leisure while sipping a cup of Bewley’s (or something.) So, Erin go Bragh, begorrah and top o’ the morning to you! (I once had a tour bus driver in Ireland tell our group that anyone who said “Top of the Morning” to him would not be allowed on his bus. I didn’t blame him...) Happy Saint Patrick’s Day to all of you!
UPDATE: OLLI at UConn spring 2020 schedule SUSPENDED until further notice

Dear OLLI members,

Many of you may have seen the announcement that UConn is suspending normal operations until at least April 6th: https://uconn.edu/public-notification/coronavirus

With this in mind, all OLLI activities and classes are SUSPENDED indefinitely as of Friday, March 13th.

PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CAMPUS after Thursday, March 12th until further notice.

Please know that although cancelling classes is the right thing to do, we are as disappointed as you about having to suspend operations. Please spare a thought for our instructors, who work so hard in preparing their teaching materials and supporting you.

OLLI is so important to us all, especially because of the friendships we make here. OLLI staff and volunteers are working on ways to keep that sense of connection going, even when we aren’t all together on campus. There may be creative ways we can continue learning from each other!

As always, you can contact the OLLI staff at osher@uconn.edu (please don’t call the OLLI office, as there may not be anyone there to take your call).

With thanks for your understanding,

The OLLI Executive Council, and OLLI Administration.

Wash Your Hands!
(NO, SERIOUSLY. DO IT.)

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF RESPIRATORY VIRUSES.

A MESSAGE FROM UCONN STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS