OLLI members, to paraphrase the old Laurel and Hardy characters, we certainly have a mess here! Covid – 19 has managed to cause a major change in personal interaction over the entire world. OLLI has not been spared. The University is contemplating the necessity for online classes only during the fall semester. If that happens the structure of OLLI will certainly be different. But we will still be here in some form or other.

There is no doubt that this pandemic is a world changer. Whatever "normal" used to be it no longer is. Whenever something so dangerous that it can affect over one million people and kill 60,000 in less than two months, that is not "normal." Because so much is unknown about the characteristics of this virus, it generates well deserved fear. What it should not precipitate is panic.

Panic is an overpowering fear or anxiety that appears to be uncontrollable. The operative word here is appears. The human brain evolved when life was much simpler. As you walked through the forest some 10,000 years ago and you suddenly saw a long black object in front of you, your amygdala told you "flight or fight" before you even knew what it is. Milliseconds later the thinking part of the brain determined what it was you were seeing and determined your action. Mme. Marie Curie once said, "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." Once you have the facts you can take the rational course of action.

That is why, in this frightening case of uncertainty, people should listen to the scientists, not the politicians. Scientists have the facts, at least as much as can be found, and present them to you appealing to the rational part of your brain. Politicians, not all but some, like to prey upon your fears – the emotional part of your brain. Sometimes the rational way disrupts the normal way causing some discomfort and the lack of patience and discipline. Our political leaders want to get back to the "normal" way of life and react with the more primitive part of the brain which may be in direct contrast to the facts and lead to dire consequences.

I came across a quote from the Internet which I found quite apropos: "This too shall pass. It might pass like a kidney stone, but it will pass!"

So ends this rather unusual semester. I would like to thank the newsletter committee and all who contributed during the semester. I especially would like to thank Mary Fitzpatrick Peitler for all her columns about where to go and what to see when all this craziness is over. Thanks also to Jenna Ryan who puts us altogether for your perusal every week. I don’t know what the future holds but it will be different. Thanks to all and stay safe out there.

Bob Grady
JUST FOR LAUGHS

A Canadian Park Ranger is giving some hikers a warning about bears. "Brown bears are usually harmless. They avoid contact with humans, so we suggest you attach small bells to your backpacks and give the bears time to get out of your way. However, grizzly bears are extremely dangerous. If you see any grizzly bear droppings leave the area immediately."

"So how do we know if they're grizzly bear droppings?" asks one of the hikers.

"It's easy," replies the ranger. "They're full of small bells."

STAYING CONNECTED WITH OLLI @ HOME

- Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter (go to olli.uconn.edu and click the blue button that says "Add Me to Your Email List") to receive updates every Monday

- "Like" us on Facebook to participate in interactive posts and "Virtual OLLI Cafe." (https://www.facebook.com/olliaconnwaterbury/)

- Email yvoorg@aol.com or osher@uconn.edu with your own tips on how to stay busy during this time, photos, interesting stories or news articles, original work (paintings, drawings, writings) to be featured in our 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 presenter or staff member.
VOICES and VISIONS

Greetings OLLI’ties... I expect you have read about Voices and Visions, OLLI’s annual publication of creative works by OLLI students in the forms of poetry, prose, photography, or artwork of any type. This year was to have been our 10th Anniversary issue. However, as we all know, the quarantining of ourselves has thrown a monkey wrench into our plans. Even so, we want to ask for your submissions. We would hope to publish in the fall semester, 2020.

Some of you have already submitted your work, and we thank you. Some others of you are writing and creating and we would love to see what you have been doing. Please, wait no more! We ask you to submit your work to us online. We will review it, edit it gently, if necessary, and hope to fill our pages for next year.

You retain all rights to your work. When you submit your work to us you give us permission to use your submission. That protects you and us. Thanks for your time, talents and hope to see as many of you as possible in the Fall semester. To submit your work, you must have been a registered student in the 2019-2020 semesters. Check us out online at: lizhanahan@aol.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.
-Voices and Visions staff.

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.

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

The OLLI Walking Activity will continue at the discretion of the involved OLLI members.

CLUB CORNER

If anyone is interested in joining the Book Club via Zoom, please e-mail Nancy Via at nvia@sbcglobal.net and we will send you an invitation to our meetings.

Want to read these but can’t make it to the bookstore during quarantine? Find the e-book and audiobook versions of these books on Amazon!

-VOICES and VISIONS

Walking Activity

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CLUB CORNER

If anyone is interested in joining the Book Club via Zoom, please e-mail Nancy Via at nvia@sbcglobal.net and we will send you an invitation to our meetings.

Want to read these but can’t make it to the bookstore during quarantine? Find the e-book and audiobook versions of these books on Amazon!

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: Consider the Fork by Bee Wilson
October 19: The Pioneers by David McCullough
November 16: Appetite for America by Stephen Fried
1. I think that I shall never see an organism as vital as a tree. Without these woody, perennial members of the plant kingdom, we might still be squirming around the seafloor.

2. About 400 million years ago, early trees transformed terrestrial environments by reducing atmospheric carbon. The result: more hospitable ecosystems for marine animals experimenting with the landlubber life.

3. Researchers described one such inviting habitat in December in Current Biology: The find, the earliest forest in the fossil record, is roughly 385 million years old. The site included primitive, fernlike cladoxylopsids as well as species once thought to have evolved millions of years later.

4. Some of these more advanced varieties also had extensive root systems spreading out more than 30 feet across, suggesting trees got bigger earlier than previously documented.

5. Today’s biggest of the big are California’s towering redwoods; the tallest is about 380 feet. But don’t sell Australia’s Eucalyptus regnans short. Also known as the mountain ash, one specimen in 1881 measured 374 feet.

6. The calculation, done by a professional surveyor, is considered credible — though they cut the tree down to verify it.

7. The tallest living mountain ash, found in Tasmania, is about 330 feet tall. A 2019 forest fire damaged the mighty tree, known as Centurion, but it survived. More than a dozen other giants on the Australian island were not so lucky.

8. Climate change is fueling extreme fire events, threatening trees of all sizes. At the same time, trees are key assets in the fight to save the planet. American forests, for example, offset up to 20 percent of our annual carbon emissions, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

9. So, are more trees the answer to our current crisis? Maybe. In July, a study in Science declared “global tree restoration as our most effective climate change solution to date.”

10. The authors identified an additional 2.2 billion acres of land worldwide — an area about the size of the entire U.S., including Alaska — that could be turned into forest without infringing on current urban or agricultural areas.