



OLLI News

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
at George Mason University



Fall 2005, Issue 4

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October 10, 2005

Breaking News

Jennifer Maloney to Leave OLLI

Jennifer Maloney has announced that she will be leaving OLLI as of Oct 21. She has been with us since 1999, serving first as the part-time office assistant and as Administrator for most of the past two years. In those six years, OLLI has grown and prospered and Jennifer has been an integral part of this development. She has accepted a full-time position with GMU and we wish her well in her new endeavor.

--- Charles Duggan, OLLI President

It's been my pleasure to work for such an outstanding organization and in the process get to know so many of you! You've made my six plus years here a memorable experience in many ways. I'm grateful not only for the wonderful friendships I've made with my colleagues, but also those friendships I share with many of you. I hope you'll continue to enjoy your learning experiences, the company of your OLLI friends, and all of the other activities you seem to find time for. You are something to aspire to in my future years! I especially want to thank all the many office volunteers I've worked with through the years--you more than anyone helped keep the staff going, and the day-to-day program afloat. To borrow a line from Carol Burnett, "I'm so glad we had this time together."

--- Jennifer Maloney

[Editor's Note: Both letters were sent via email last week and are included for our non-wired members]

Tallwood House

On Wednesday, Oct 5, GMU carpenters sealed off access to the house from the wing in which our restrooms are located in response to an order from the GMU Fire Marshall. GMU intends to demolish the main part of the house eventually.

New Reston Admin Assistant

Ann Youngren, a retired interior decorator living in Reston, has been hired to finish out the term as the Lake Anne campus Administrative Assistant, replacing Mathilde Speier.

Finding Your Ancestry

Course 901, will continue on Mondays at 11:30 for an additional four weeks starting Oct 19.

Fall Special Events Openings

By Ann Hartmann, OLLI Financial Assistant

Special Event I: Three tickets are still available for the GMU Center for the Arts performance of *La Traviata* on Oct 16 at 2:00. The tickets cost \$60 each. Checks should be made out to OLLI. The description is available in the fall catalog.

Special event J: Wine, Bistro, and Song is now open to non-members. Details appear in the catalog. Checks should be made out to OLLI.

Special Event L: Tickets are still available at \$7 each for *Uncle Vanya* at GMU's Harris Theatre on Oct 22. Non-member guests are welcome.

OLLI Book Club

By Ceda McGrew, Coordinator

The OLLI Book Club will meet at Tallwood at 1:30 on Wednesday, Oct 12. All OLLI members are welcome to attend. The book for discussion is *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, a story about Viet Nam. Tim O'Brien was one of the authors who lectured during "Fall for the Book" in September, and his work will be studied in OLLI Course 402, War and Literature, with Lesley Smith of New Century College, GMU. The course begins Thursday, Oct 20.

Meet Your Directors

by Elizabeth Crawford, OLLI News Staff Writer



RoseMary Gustin, Pat Cosslett, and Eileen Duggan

RoseMary Gustin, who joined LRI in 2002, believes "you get more out of an organization if you put more into it." She also believes that the program is the "heart" of OLLI--and "without an excellent program, OLLI wouldn't exist." Calling upon her background as an analytical chemist and Quality Assurance Manager for environmental engineering firms providing technical support to federal agencies such as the EPA, DOE, and Army Corps of Engineers, RoseMary found herself the perfect job on the Program Committee. There she recruited science instructors and chaired the Science, Health, and Technology Resource Group. She was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2003 and to the Program Review Committee when it was formed in 2004. The Program Review Committee has performed a valuable service in reinvigorating the Resource Groups, little think tanks that generate ideas for many of our courses. With the resignation of Carol Ferrara, the Program Review Committee, comprised of RoseMary, Bob Bohall, and Kathryn Russell, Chair, has taken on the responsibility of organizing courses for the winter 2006 semester at Tallwood.

Pat Cosslett joined OLLI in 2003 and was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2004. A man of many talents with an Oxford education, Pat has been active on the Development Committee, which was responsible for the proposal that obtained the Osher grant, the Finance Committee, and the Long Range Planning Committee, which considers the future

of OLLI in conjunction with GMU. He organized the Distinguished Speaker Series that invited Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Gerry Connolly, to speak at OLLI. Also, Pat coordinated the volunteers who organized Carol Ferrara's very successful Farewell Luncheon. Finally, he created and maintains the OLLI class data base, which provides course and attendance statistics for the last several years. This information is invaluable for the Program Coordinators and Resource Groups as they consider the popularity of past topics to plan future courses.

Eileen Duggan joined LRI in January 2000 and has been a member of the Board of Directors since 2001. Professionally, Eileen held a number of marketing and management positions in financial corporations and was Capital Markets Director at AT&T Capital Corporation before retiring in 1998. Her background prepared her well to become Chair of OLLI's Development Committee, which sponsors Friends of OLLI Campaigns among the members and outside funding sources. Her committee's most important contribution to OLLI so far has been writing the proposals that led to the Osher grant. "The Board has taken a major leap forward," Eileen says, "with the hiring of an Executive Director to handle OLLI's increasing workload." She found the Board of Directors Retreat this summer valuable because it enabled board members to learn "how to make a smooth transition from being a managing Board to a policy-making Board." Eileen says that the Board looks forward to making OLLI "an even better place than it is today."

Reminder: Special Event G

The Poetry Reading on Oct 12 at 2:00 is open to all members. Come relax and listen to your talented classmates read their poems, and enjoy refreshments, which will be served after the program. If you would like your poetry to be included in the program, please submit your name to the OLLI Poetry Workshop through the Admin Office by Oct 10.

Teaching for Smarties

by Elizabeth Crawford, OLLI Staff Writer, and Kathryn Russell, Program Review Committee Chair

No dummies here. Lots of smarties, many of whom could share their talents as instructors at OLLI. There is a teacher in all of us. Perhaps some information on what is involved in teaching at OLLI could bring out the teacher in you.

Do instructors need a Ph.D. from Harvard? No, the only requirement is expertise in a subject acquired through education, experience, or divine intervention. What you have learned through your former career, volunteer work, reading, travel or hobbies could be of interest to the members.

How much planning is necessary? Instructors need to organize their thoughts to cover four or eight sessions, but beyond that they decide how structured or unstructured a class should be. Some instructors provide a syllabus for students; others do not.

Who determines the class format? Members seem to enjoy classes that balance lecture and discussion, but an instructor may choose to set up a class entirely as general discussion or to present somewhat formal lectures followed by a question and answer period. Other possibilities include debate or more intimate round-table discussion. The instructor also decides whether certain classes such as foreign language, book discussion, or writing should be limited in size.

Who designates place and time for a class? The instructor chooses to teach at Tallwood or Reston and discusses available time slots with the Program Coordinator. Someone who volunteers early is more likely to have a choice of times to teach.

Who writes the course description and instructor bio that appear in the catalogue? Generally the instructor writes both, but assistance is available to create a brief but compelling presentation of the course and the instructor.

What about technology? The instructor decides whether to use computer presentations, to show DVDs, or to provide a website for course materials. OLLI provides for a reasonable amount of photocopying. Also, for an instructor who wants to distribute a larger number of pages, GMU can print booklets of information for which students are charged in advance. An instructor who needs help using technology may request it from the Admin Office. However, an instructor should not feel pressured to use technology. Socrates got along well enough without it.

Finally, why teach? One might start with, "Do unto others...." If OLLI relied solely on instructors from outside the organization, there would be far fewer courses. If you have enjoyed courses taught by members, this is your chance to give back. Beyond that, instructors are no longer faces in the crowd. You will get to know increasing numbers of people, especially if you teach for more than one semester. It is fun to teach, to share your enthusiasm, especially with a good group of students. In that area, OLLI members are the best. They sit up straight, take notes, don't talk to their neighbors during class, and don't chew gum or pull the hair of the person sitting in front of them. Best of all--there are no papers to grade or tests to give. If you volunteer as an instructor, you won't make money, but you will make a difference and a lot of new friends.

(Anyone who is interested in teaching a course may contact Kathryn Russell at mkrussel@aol.com)

Bus Trip Opens to All

By Ann Hartmann, OLLI Financial Assistant

The Nov 4 bus trip to Washington, D.C., is now open to all OLLI members and their non-member guests. This trip is part of Course 311, Crucial Events in American History, but attendance at the course is not essential for your enjoyment of the field trip. The itinerary will likely include visiting an exhibit at the American History Museum and a guided tour by National Park Service Rangers of the World War II Memorial. Please note the bus will depart from Lake Anne

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at 9:00 and return to Lake Anne about 2:00. The cost is \$22 and checks may be made out to OLLI and dropped off at the office. Please call the office if you have any questions.

Barbara Achilles **Leader of the Poetry Workshop**

By Arleen Richman, OLLI News Staff Writer

“Most people think a poem is just a piece of paper, but to me it’s a work of art,” explains Barbara Achilles, leader of The Poetry Workshop since 1997. Barbara keeps all the poems reviewed – “sometimes students want to see a particular poem they wrote 7 or 8 years ago, and I have it,” she says with pride, adding that “the various renditions of the poem show the progress the poets have made in their craft.”

The Poetry Workshop reviews the form and techniques of poems and works in progress of new and established poets. Each member of the Workshop is expected to bring a new or reworked poem to the weekly workshop so that it can be critiqued. “We cannot challenge the content but can make suggestions on grammar or treatment or perhaps suggest subtracting an element,” explains Barbara. “Every member gets a chance to be heard every session. I set a timer based on the number of students present; usually 11 to 13 students attend each session.” Many of the members have been attending the workshop for 7 or 8 years and so there definitely is a social aspect of the course, “but I try to keep them focused on the poetry we are discussing,” she adds. The Workshop has published three volumes of poetry and given nine poetry readings. Eight members published 15 poems in last year’s *The Poet’s Domain*.

Barbara enrolled in LRI in 1991 and joined the Workshop because she wanted to get an opinion of the first poem she had written that had been inspired by Desert Storm. Following the advice of Evelyn Wade, the founder and mentor of the Poetry Workshop at that time, Barbara submitted the poem to a NOVA professor who was publishing an anthology of poetry by poets of the Mid-Atlantic region. “I was very lucky because

my first poem was published without a great deal of effort on my part, and then I started waking up in the middle of the night with ideas – I definitely was hooked on poetry,” recalls Barbara who served as Class Liaison for Evelyn Wade and later for Evelyn’s successor until she took over as mentor/leader of the Workshop in 1997. She recently completed a compilation of the 212 poems she has written during the period 1991- 2004, 41 of which have been published.

Barbara’s first love was music; she holds a B.A. in music from the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music. In 1986 she retired from the CIA having served for 33 years in the CIA’s Directorate of Operations. For the first 20 years of her career, she was a specialist on the People’s Republic of China; her last CIA assignment was that of Complaints System Manager for the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity. She played the organ for the CIA at Lenten church services and also founded a four part choral music group at the CIA that boasted as many as 55 members. “I was surprised by how well untrained voices can sing if you give them the right material,” she comments.

Winter and Spring Term 2006 Courses

By Kathryn Russell, Program Review Committee Chair

OLLI program planners are hard at work finishing up plans for the Winter Term 2006. We are looking for a Spanish teacher, as well as for suggestions for other potential instructors. We would love to develop “New Orleans: The City, The Storm and The Future” but need instructors with some Louisiana expertise. Please contact Kathryn Russell 703 323-0168 or kathryn russell@verizon.net if you can help or have suggestions.

Spring is just around the corner. If you would like to teach, to try your hand at developing a course, or to pass on good topics and leads that we should be aware of, please contact Kathryn Russell, Chair, Program Review Committee or Dick Chobot, Executive Director, 703 503-7866 or rchobot@gmu.edu

“Thank You” to all the OLLI members and to our instructors and planners who are committed to developing an excellent program for us in the next few months.

Learning About LLIs

By Carol Henderson, OLLI Secretary

The Mid-Atlantic Lifelong Learning Institutes Conference held September 10-13, 2005, in Asheville, N.C., provided an excellent opportunity for our new Executive Director, our president, and five Board members to learn from other LLIs and to share our own experiences. Our delegation got a chance to explore the host facility, the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement at the Reuter Center, University of North Carolina at Asheville. This is a handsome building on the UNC campus planned and funded by members and other donors.

At any one time, four or five concurrent workshops were going on; among us we were able to cover almost every topic offered. The good advice ranged from help with long-term planning to day-to-day operating tips. In the area of facilities, for instance, one could get advice on how to mount a years-long building campaign as well as tips on negotiating for space in churches or retirement communities. Similar help came from sessions on program development, planning and achieving sustainability, membership and recruitment, and research on LLIs and their members and the approaching generation of baby boomers. It was fascinating to realize how different each LLI is as it arises from and adapts to its local circumstances. The range of dues structures is amazing; one area of universal agreement was that the best recruitment tool is word of mouth.

As Dick Chobot has noted, it's clear that OLLI-GMU enjoys a well-deserved reputation among its peer organizations. Our catalogs offer more learning opportunities than most other LLIs and kept disappearing from the handout tables. This was one of the most useful aspects of the conference—the ability to pick up and examine samples of other LLI catalogs, brochures and recruitment materials. Lots of these have been

passed along to Publications Committee chair Gordon Canyock and will also be used by Membership Committee chair Debbie Halverson. Another useful and enjoyable aspect was the hallway chat with many of the 160 attendees from LLIs throughout the region and as far away as Florida, Illinois and Canada.

A panel on the LLIs funded by the Osher Foundation drew a large audience eager to hear OLLI-GMU President Charles Duggan and others in the OLLI network. The concluding speaker was the director of the Elderhostel Institute Network, under whose auspices this regional conference was scheduled. Nancy Merz Nordstrom discussed the history of the now global LLI movement and explained the services EIN provides, most of which can be reached through www.elderhostel.org/ein/intro.asp.

I was impressed by this well-organized and very useful conference. What we learned will help the ED and Board members to do a more effective job of guiding the Institute and meeting members' expectations.

Coming Events at GMU Oct 10-16

By Jan Bohall, OLLI Catalog Editor

Master of Fine Arts Concert

GMU Dance Company

October 13, 14, 15 at 8:00

Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Admission \$7 seniors

Dance Performance Studio

Performing Arts Building

For tickets call 703-218-6500.

Virginia Opera presents

La Traviata

Friday, October 14, at 8:00

Sunday, October 16, at 2:00

In Italian with English supertitles

Concert Hall, Center for the Performing Arts

\$84, \$68, \$44

For tickets, call 888-945-2468 or visit the

Box Office Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-6:00.

This opera performance is one of the OLLI

Special Events for fall

OLLI NEWS

Editor.....Gordon Canyock

Proofreader.....Karen Hamilton

Editor's Notes

Red-Dot Alert!

You may have noticed in your classes that a few members have a large red dot on their name tags, indicating a new member. OLLI is not only a place to take classes and learn; it also is a place to make new friends. So take a moment when you see a "red-dot" name tag, introduce yourself, and welcome them to the pleasures and benefits of OLLI.

Feel Left Out?

If you do not have email and want to respond to the Question of the Week, write a letter to the editor or to Miss Manners; please place a note in the OLLI News folder or the Suggestion Box, both located in the Social Room. I prefer if you sign it, but if you wish to remain anonymous, write that down too, and I will omit your name. If possible, please allow me to at least use your initials.

Question of the Week

If you were to join other OLLI members on a European travel/learning experience, which of the following destinations would you prefer?

1. Greece
2. Ireland
3. Italy
4. Spain
5. Turkey
6. Any of the above

Letters to the Editor

Focus Group

I am involved in a study analyzing proposed changes in civilian personnel policies in the federal government. I would like to organize a focus group of OLLI members who have worked with federal personnel systems and have had experience with merit pay and the traditional GS system. If you are interested, call me at 703-573-2056 or email me at gwaposr@erols.com

--- Jack Underhill, OLLI Member

Garden of Delight

I noted with some unease the letter questioning the cost of the ongoing OLLI landscaping. I

trust the intent of the letter was to note with awe, gratitude, and appreciation the wonderful work done and being done by volunteer effort. The thought and planning involved deserves the gratitude of all; the actual transformation done literally by the hard labor of so many is a testament to conviction that would make Lady Bird Johnson proud. This beautification is owed and deserves the price of enlightened maintenance. May we never lack for volunteers. May we never succumb to knowing the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

--- Manuel Pablo, OLLI Member

Changed Your Prescription?

I am collecting old eyeglasses and hearing aids to give to needy people in our area through a local civic organization. If you have any that you no longer use, but are wearable, please place them in the specially marked box that is next to the Lost and Found bin in the Social Room.

--- Bob Helland, OLLI Member

Kudo

The OLLI E-News and OLLI News gets better and better. You are changing the culture of OLLI and really developing a sense of community by keeping the members informed. The new features "Miss Manners" and "Letters to the Editor" are interesting and informative. Keep up the good work and I know it is work to put out something this good on a regular basis. Kudos to you both and to all the folks that contribute to the success of the News.

--- Bob Bohall, Former President of OLLI

Course Evaluations

In the short time I have been in OLLI, I have had some very good presenters, but there have been a couple who were not very effective at all and were a waste of my time. I wonder if there could be some system for instructor/class evaluations? I think they are needed but should certainly be anonymous. I know that these instructors are volunteers, but we still want to have good speakers, so it seems to me that evaluations are in order.

--- Anonymous

Miss Manners Speaks ...

Lecture Protocol

I agree with comments in the Sep 30 *OLLI News* that hit-or-miss questions asked during lectures are intrusive. Some are even stupid (mine are). So I am in favor of reserving questions for the last 10-15 minutes of an hour-and-a-half lecture and none before. I make exception for some classes such as Investment Forum, where give-and-take seems natural. One other suggestion: Harry Cohn, former Hollywood mogul, said that when his butt got restless he knew the movie stunk. I don't go that far with our lectures. However, 1 1/2 hours to just sit can seem long. How about a 10-minute recess after 3/4 of an hour, and then back to work?

--- Joe Fulton, Annandale

*My Dear Modest Mr. Fulton,
My classroom sources tell me that you often ask very intelligent questions, as I am sure is true of all OLLI members most of the time. Unfortunately, some members occasionally tend to make long-winded statements frequently expressing opinions based on their no-doubt extensive personal experience. Sometimes their discourses even seem to be non sequiturs, which often leads to another problem raised by readers, namely dozing off in class. It is, however, up to the instructor to establish the ground rules concerning questions. Perhaps the class liaison needs to clarify those rules with the speaker before each class session.*

As to your derriere, Mr. Fulton, once again that is a decision of the instructor, but perhaps the class liaison could be tasked to suggest a short break mid-way through the class. Even a two-minute stretch in place might be sufficient to relieve the pain and prevent our members from thinking along the lines of your Mr. Harry Cohen that the lecture was odiously odoriferous.

Cell Phone Cacophany

Please suggest a polite way to tell folks to turn off those #@!\$* cell phones when in class.

--- C.S., Devoted reader and frustrated OLLI class member, Springfield

I think Ms Manners should address the question of cell phones/watches ringing in class.

--- Anonymous, Springfield

Dear Springfield Readers,

I am reticent to sound like the proverbial broken record, but alas this is yet another chore for the already overburdened Class Liaisons. Surely a casual reminder before each class nestled in between admonitions to display name tags and remove coffee cups would suffice to eliminate this annoying problem. That, of course, assumes that our members are aware that their cell phones and wristwatch alarms are activated. By the way, I heartily recommend the use of the "vibrate" setting on cell phones. It could be so much fun.

Nail-Biting Knitters

What does MM think of students who file their nails or bring knitting to class? I for one am horrified by this behavior. Our teachers are all volunteers who have devoted much time and effort preparing for their presentations. Their only compensation is our undivided attention, and we owe them at least that.

---Anonymous, Springfield

Dear S.Z.,

I have not personally observed such egregious behavior and can only hope that it occurs very rarely. Surely our members do not need the Class Liaison to cajole them into paying rapt attention to our instructors instead of occupying their hands with activities that may be distracting and annoying to their neighbors.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

DATE	DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
OCTOBER				
12	Wed	11:30 AM	Recorder, Part II	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Book Club	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Bridge Club	TA-3
		2:00 PM	G. Poetry Reading	TA-1
14	Fri	8:30 - 5:00	H. Shenandoah Valley Museum	Bus trip
		10:00 AM	Membership Committee meeting	TA-1
		10:00 AM	Program Committee meeting	TA-2
		10:30 AM	Homer Book Club	Annex
		12:30-3:30 PM	Flu clinic for those qualified	Annex
16	Sun	2:00 PM	I. La Traviata	GMU
17	Mon	5:00 - 7:00 PM	J. Wine, Bistro and Song	Café Montmartre
18	Tue	1-3 pm	Art display work	Annex
19	Wed	11:30 AM	Recorder, Part II	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Fiction Writers	Annex
		1:30 PM	Bridge Club	TA-3
21	Fri	10:00 AM	Board meeting	TA-1
		10:30 AM	Homer Book Club	Annex
22	Sat	2:00 PM	L. Uncle Vanya	GMU
26	Wed	11:30 AM	Recorder, Part II	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Bridge Club	TA-3
		2:00 PM	M. Transportation Options	TA-1
28	Fri	10 AM - 3 PM	N. Supreme Court building	Bus trip
		10:00 AM	Classic Fiction Book Club	Reston Reg. Library
		10:30 AM	Homer Book Club	Annex
		12:00 PM	Korean Film Festival	TA-1
NOVEMBER				
2	Wed	11:30 AM	Recorder, Part II	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Special Events Committee meeting	TA-2
		1:30 PM	Fiction Writers	Annex
		1:30 PM	Bridge Club	TA-3
		2:00 PM	History Club	TA-1
4	Fri	9:00 AM	Course 311 field trip to Wash DC monuments	bus trip
		10:00 AM	Program Committee meeting	TA-2
		10:00 AM	General OLLI membership meeting	TA-1
		10:30 AM	Homer Book Club	Annex
		12:30-3:30 PM	Flu clinic for those qualified	Annex
			GMU Theater of the First Amendment	Old Town Hall