

# ePistle

Working for Excellence the Teacher Resource Initiative(WE-TRI)

Volume 1, Issue 4

October 2018

## Editor's Comments

Jim Dunphy



Sorry for the absence of an ePistle in September. I was out of town for most of the month, so the October edition is, I guess, thus early and late!

First, a change to the masthead. One thing I learned from my almost 35 years in the Army is everything can be turned into an acronym. Since we already have named the operation the Teacher Resource Initiative, I have added a Working for Excellence in front of it – and voila – we have WE TRI, which in addition to being cute captures the idea of what we are trying to do.

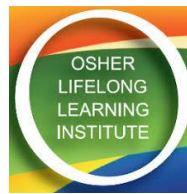
As you know, the idea of WE TRI is to have different resources available to instructors. In that regard, I am pleased to note that **Doris Bloch** has

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## OLLI Teacher Welcome Event



### First Teacher Welcome event Report

Thursday, September 6 marked a new event in OLLI history – the first Teacher Welcome Event. Almost 30 instructors packed TA1 in Tallwood (although they didn't eat as much pizza as I would have thought they would!)

I would like to particularly thank Bill Taylor, who represented OLLI leadership and expressed their appreciation for all that we instructors do. Maximum gratitude is due to Alice Clark who provided an admin briefing, which sparked a spirited discussion on such diverse topics as Mason library privileges, different ways of providing materials to students, copyright issues and planning requirements for trips. Many of those issues are discussed in this edition of the ePistle.

Also presented was an update on the current status of the Initiative, particularly the ePistle, one on one training, formal classes, and Doris Bloch's noted work on the teacher manual, along with a discussion of other resources. Hopefully the instructors came away with a better understanding of what WE TRI is attempting to accomplish and the means for doing so. I hope to hear from the participants as to even more ideas as how the advance the Initiative's goals.

completed her yeoman work on the revised Teachers Guide. It is available at online documents at the website.

Of course, the big event in the last month was the first of what we hope will annual Teacher Welcomes at Tallwood (along with Spring welcomes at Reston/Loudon). We had almost 30 folks show up for the Tallwood event, and more about it on the front page.

As usual this month, I am pleased to provide some thoughts from other instructors. The newsletter is dependent on such contributions – believe me you would not want to read 4 pages of only my ramblings. I am hoping that we will get even more in the future so we can continue to provide the ePistle on a regular basis. So keep those emails coming!

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### **Alice and Jen's Corner**

Thanks to all who were able to attend the teacher training session in Fairfax, September 6. Many asked for clarification on library privileges for OLLI instructors at George Mason University. Both OLLI member-instructors and OLLI non-member instructors enjoy the same library privileges as follows:

- **Take out up to ten books at one time.**
- **Books may be withdrawn for a three week period with one renewal.**
- **Request books from other University campuses (except from Arlington Law Library)**
- **Current OLLI instructors and speakers may also borrow audiovisual materials (videos, DVDs) from the Johnson Center Media library for one week.**

OLLI member instructors and non-member instructors differ only in when they can execute their library privileges.

OLLI member instructors can utilize Mason Library privileges at any time, as long as they have an annual membership in good standing and have a Mason G Number. A Mason G Number costs nothing and yields an array of Mason benefits above and beyond the library privileges. See the member handbook at: [http://olli.gmu.edu/wp-](http://olli.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MemberhandbkJan2016.pdf)

[content/uploads/2016/04/MemberhandbkJan2016.pdf](http://olli.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MemberhandbkJan2016.pdf)

It's easy to apply for a G Number. Just click the following link, fill out the G Number application and submit it to the OLLI office:

[http://olli.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GNumber\\_PhotoIDApplication05142013.pdf](http://olli.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GNumber_PhotoIDApplication05142013.pdf)

The G Number approval process will take about two weeks. The exact timing depends on George Mason University as they process all G Number requests.

Non-member instructors (and member instructors who choose not to get a G Number) can utilize library privileges about one month before the start of term in which they are teaching, once OLLI reports their names to Mason Library administrators. OLLI cannot report instructor names much earlier than this because of the timing and way we enter instructors into our databases.

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### **Be a clock watcher**

As you know, each OLLI class is scheduled for 85 minutes. It is important that instructors heed this timeframe.

First, it has been my experience that students will often stay after class to discuss or to ask questions. With the limited time before the next class will start, this may interfere with that instructor's ability to set up the classroom and ensure the technology is ready to go.

Second, many times students have a mental on/off switch that gets switched off at the scheduled end of the class. I am sure you have seen students close notebooks and start to put on their coats as 1105 or 115 approaches.

One way to make sure you are on schedule is to number power point slides. In a recent class, I had 106 slides, and as I looked at the clock, with 15 minutes left, I was only at slide 70, which meant I had to stop meandering to get through the remaining 35+ slides (which I did and finished with 23 seconds to spare!

Please send in your thoughts as to how you manage your time in your classes.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE OLLI CAMPUSES

TIME JANUARY 22

Winter semester starts

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE OLLI

TIME FEBRUARY 8

Summer 2019 Course Proposals Due

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE RESTON

TIME MARCH 19

Spring Teacher Welcome

### SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE OLLI

TIME APRIL 12

FALL 2019 COURSE PROPOSALS DUE

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### Power Point and videos

In the last edition of the ePistle, Martha Powers kindly shared her method of imbedding videos in powerpoint (I still toggle between power point and videos – gotta get hip one of these days!)

In response to that article, Instructor Greg Clava posed the following two questions:  
 (1) Is there a limit to the number of downloads you can use in a Powerpoint presentation,  
 (2) will the downloads transfer to a flashdrive so that I can just bring the flashdrive on the day of the presentation or will I need to bring my laptop.

Both Martha and Jennifer McMahon of OLLI staff provided thoughts. They noted that thumb drives have a limited capacity, and that videos, taking up a lot of room, may overwhelm a thumb drive.

Martha also noted there definitely is a point where the file will be too big for PowerPoint to manage it properly. Also, even if you only want to use part of a clip, you have to download the whole clip

So the message is that this method has limitations, and continually check while you are working on your slides.

And for you instructors in Reston and Loudoun, we will be bringing a similar event. On March 19, we will be having a similar event in Reston – details to follow! Of course, all Reston and Loudoun instructors are welcome at the September Fairfax event, just like Fairfax instructors are welcome at the March Reston event. More information will be forthcoming!

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### Evaluation thoughts

Received a very interesting email from Linda Bender regarding course evaluations. She noted that she found the form especially useful for feedback on how the topic works for the group, and that it gave her ideas for other things to teach and what should be included in those classes. She requested that the form be available in both word and pdf so she could enter the specific class name on the form.

Pleased to say that this has been done. The form is available either at the docstore link, or, from the main menu, if you go to instructor resources (along with many other useful things!)

I also was involved in a discussion with program planning chairs, which reemphasized the role of the evaluations. They are solely for the use of the instructor – neither OLLI staff nor the program planning chairs have access to them. Thus, instructors can glean what went well and what didn't go as well in preparing future classes.

Students will sometimes let you know their reaction to a class – rapt attention vs. dozing off. But using evaluation forms provides an additional basis for gauging how effective your class is.

PS – Linda also asked for clarification on handouts and dates course proposals. Fodder for upcoming articles, but generally speaking, handouts should be at the office (at Reston or Loudoun if you are teaching there) at least two weeks prior to the class start date – and the earlier the better.

Also, we will continue to provide the course proposal dates in the ePistle, and provided information about the calendar of events in getting classes ready to go.

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## Communicating with Students

If you collect past editions of the ePistle, you would have noted that in the previous edition, there was a column entitled “Communicating with Students” in this exact place.

Well, here we go again. I wanted to follow up on some information from the August edition.

First, since that time, we have crowned a new Duchess of the Docstore, Ernestine Meyer. If you go to the DOCSTORE link on the OLLI website, information about how to get documents to her is at the top of the linked page.

Also, since many instructors (including moi) use graphics from the internet in their presentations, the question of copyright came up. We understand from OLLI staff that as a Mason entity, instructors are allowed a fair use exception to the copyright laws as long as the materials are being used for educational purposes. So don't plan on gathering up all your power point slides and selling them in a coffee table book!

## THOUGHTS

**MANY OF THE IDEAS AND REPORTS IN THIS ISSUE COME FROM OTHER OLLI INSTRUCTORS.**

**THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR IN THE INITIATIVE. WE ARE LOOKING TO DRAW FROM THE WIDEST POSSIBLE ARRAY OF EXPERIENCES TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTORS WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF SUGGESTIONS. AS ALWAYS, SOME WILL WORK WITH CERTAIN INSTRUCTORS AND SOME WILL NOT – AS WAS MOST FAMOUSLY SAID, “TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE”**

**SO THINK ABOUT ONE OF YOUR MOST SUCCESSFUL TECHNIQUES OR CONVERSELY SOMETHING YOU USED OR SAW THAT DID NOT WORK AS WELL. SEND ALL TO THE EDITOR AT [DUNPHYJJ@AOL.COM](mailto:DUNPHYJJ@AOL.COM) AND WE WILL MAKE SURE TO SHARE IT WITH OTHER INSTRUCTORS.**

**EXCELSIOR!**

## Closing Thoughts

The first step in teaching is figuring out what your subject will be. Many is the time I have heard a song on the radio while driving or have read an interesting book, and thought to myself “Well, there's an OLLI class.”

Recently, I came across two potential sources for OLLI classes. (and by the way, the most important lesson I learned in my Masters in Education program at Mason was that you should have no qualms about using stuff from other instructors – and vice versa!)

Executive Director Jennifer Disano passed along a link to a very useful Mason website: <https://gmtv.gmu.edu/> Mason has a lot of featured programs via their television station and they might serve as fodder for OLLI event ideas.

Last month, while I was in Vancouver, I picked up a brochure from the Simon Fraser University 55+ program. But for the commuting distance, I would certainly sign up for some of the classes!. The website is at <https://www.sfu.ca/continuing-studies/programs-and-courses/area-of-study/liberal-arts/courses-and-events/adults-55-plus.html> (or google Simon Fraser university 55+) Perhaps someone will be inspired to bring one of these topics to VA!

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