

OLLI E-News 30th Anniversary Fun Facts

OLLI will celebrate its 30th year of classes for seniors in 2021. We'll be publishing fun facts and interesting milestones about the Institute each week that OLLI E-News is published from now throughout the year.

Week 1

A survey of new members in 1992 showed that most came because they were invited by LRI members or read about LRI in the news. The one outstanding negative was the lack of space to socialize.

Week 2

Long-range planning began early in the Institute's history, when a committee was established for this purpose in September 1992. The Board approved on December 16, 1993 five standing committees (four operational and one administrative), changed part-time staffer Carol Ferrara's title from Coordinator to Administrator, and approved numerous management and implementation procedures recommended by an Ad Hoc Reorganization Committee.

Week 3

During our anniversary years we have traditionally made an additional donation to Mason. Our goal for the 30th anniversary is to raise an additional \$30,000.00. We hope you will help us achieve this goal. Remember, if every OLLI member gave "\$30.00 for the 30th" we will meet our anniversary goal.

Week 4

Fun Fact for March 25, 2016. A Japanese TV company taped at LRI in late 1994 for a documentary to be shown in Japan on activities for seniors. Later they sent a tape to LRI.

Week 5

George Mason University offered space in three rooms in the Tallwood Building at 4210 Roberts Road on October 29, 1993 with a five-year lease. At the February 24, 1994 Board meeting it was reported that the contract with Mason had been signed for the use of Tallwood. By the March 17, 1994 Board meeting, LRI had moved to Tallwood and obtained permission to use the Fairfax Swimming Pool parking lot next door to Tallwood.

Week 6

In 2001 Ray Solomon began a campus-wide landscape project for LRI's 650 members. Ray submitted his landscape plan to the Board of Directors, stating that the purpose "was to develop the LRI campus into an oasis of beauty and pleasure." In other words, it was to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. (Source, History of the Dirty Knee Club, November 2015, Valerie Braybrooke)

Week 7

By 1992 LRI had expanded to include winter and summer terms as well as spring and fall. By the annual meeting in May 1992, LRI was at 162 members. Two years later LRI membership was almost 200. It grew by about 45 members a year, beginning with approximately 100 in 1991 and now at 1228.

Week 8

In 1992, LRI was listed in the Elderhostel directory of learning in retirement institutes throughout the country. In early 1993, George Mason University's new telephone book recognized LRI for the first time.

Week 9

LRI's founders worked hard and successfully to get newspaper and TV publicity. In the January 1992 Board minutes it was reported that TV Channel 8 News would visit LRI, film an excerpt on the class on China, and broadcast it with a live 6-minute segment featuring Kathryn Brooks. TV channel 25 would produce a one-hour panel of LRI representatives discussing the Institute with a call-in segment after the presentations.

Week 10

A six-month membership fee of \$125, as well as the \$200 annual fee, began in fall 1992. Both fees were available to current and new members. After evaluation, the half-year membership fee was eliminated as of fall 1995.

Week 11

In February 1993 the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution "That...Commonwealth's institutions of higher education be encouraged to support the establishment of Learning in Retirement Institutes and organizations." The resolution was introduced by Delegate Ken Plum in the House and by co-sponsor Senator Joseph Gartlan in the Senate.

Week 12

April 8 was the opening date for LRI's first term in spring 1991, when thirteen classes and three forums (the early name for special events) were offered to 96 members who paid annual dues of \$200.

Week 13

Founding member Audrey Markham-Sullivan reminds us that having the George Mason University president's wife (Joanne Johnson) teach a class on literature led to the university giving the Institute space at Tallwood.

Week 14

The first location was Mason's Commerce II Building (staff would move into the hallway during class time) at 4085 University Drive, free of charge. Later other scattered sites in Fairfax City were offered free, including City Hall, the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program, the Gold's Gym Building, and the Juvenile Justice Courthouse of Fairfax County.

Week 15

A compilation of LRI poetry was published in March 1996; printing was subsidized by LRI; booklets were sold at \$2.50 each. Poems dated back to the first Poetry Workshop in spring 1991. Later Poets of Tallwood was published in 2008; Poets of OLLI in 2012.

Week 16

LRI held a five-year celebration party on April 13, 1996 at the Virginian Retirement Community in Fairfax.

Week 17

The open house on September 5, 1996 was held in the “most awful weather imaginable” due to Hurricane Fran. The electricity went on and off, but 100 people attended, and eleven were interested in joining LRI. (LRI news Oct 96)

Week 18

In 1996 LRI made a grant to the George Mason University Foundation in honor of Abe Spero, LRI's late legal counsel and a member of the Mason Board. Note: Chronology says two scholarships in names of K. Brooks and Abe Spero. In 1997, LRI approved a \$1,500 scholarship for Mason's New Century College in honor of Abe Spero, using funds donated to LRI.

Week 19

A five-year contract for the use of the Fairfax Swimming Pool parking lot was signed in 1996.

Week 20

LRI had been publishing both the “LRI Notices” and the “LRI Times.” Because of confusion in the names, the title for the newsletter (LRI Times) was changed to the Tallwood Times beginning in 1997.