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The Social Room at Tallwood is evolving into Cafe OLLI, an informal gathering space for members to enjoy coffee and lunch with friends before, between, and after classes and clubs.

August 29, 2025

Editor of the Week: Paul Van Hemel

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Alerts & Notices

- Fall-term registration is under way and continues throughout the term.
- *Reminder:* Science, Technology, and Health Program Planning Group meeting on Tuesday, September 2, at 10:00 (one hour, Zoom only). Please join us even if you are not on the committee; the Zoom link will appear in the daily schedule email for September 2.
- The next issue of *OLLI E-News* will be published Friday, September 12; the regular deadline for submission of items is Tuesday, September 9, at 6:00.

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From the Desk of the Executive Director



By Lisa Mariam, Executive Director

What have you been up to this summer? We are looking forward to seeing you back at Tallwood and hearing stories about your summer adventures! The staff have been working on maintenance and improvements around campus, especially the social room which we've named Cafe OLLI. This is a work in progress, and we'd appreciate your feedback about how we can make it a space for you to relax and enjoy coffee and lunch with friends before, between, and after classes and clubs. Would you like comfortable chairs? Instructors are welcome to share books and resources related to classes. Clubs may exhibit artwork on a rotating basis. Please let me know your ideas at OLLIED@GMU.EDU.

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Why Should I Come to Class?

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In the last five years, Zoom has made a huge difference in all our lives and especially with our OLLI program. Before 2020, all OLLI courses were in person.

In 2021, we published an *E-News* article that enumerated all the ways that online participation in OLLI courses was desirable! Lots of members had told us initially that they hated Zoom and they never wanted to go online. Instructors said that they would not teach online. Nevertheless, due to the pandemic, we were forced to cancel all our in-person classes in 2020.

Times change and the tables have turned (unexpectedly.) Now, it seems that online access is so popular that we have a small majority of members preferring that mode of class attendance. Of course, some members are unable to travel to OLLI's sites, due to illness or distance, and Zoom is a boon to them. But we want to encourage classroom attendance to all who can manage and enjoy its benefits.

Why SHOULD I come to class? Well, for starters, there is a social aspect to OLLI that is absent in the online experience. How can we make friends or be friends when we can't even see your face? It is hard to make friends with "Laptop3" in the right-hand corner of the screen. The classroom is where we meet face to face to share our questions and views, where we might agree or disagree, where we meet with others who have similar interests. There is more to OLLI than a lecture utility. Get to know the staff, the physical layout, the coffee room. Get to know your instructors! By the way, the annuals planted in the Tallwood gardens are spectacular right now – and worth a trip to see.

Our instructors have told us that they want to see more faces: faces in the Zoom screen, but more importantly, faces in the classroom. It is disheartening to prepare for an 85-minute class (and devote many hours in preparation ahead of class) and then see fewer than 10 people in the lecture room.

An OLLI member recently reported, "In-person attendance gives you so much more opportunity to meet and interact with the other course attendees and with the instructor." We can all renew the remembered personal touch of in-person attendance, or we can develop new relationships to gain that belonging-to-OLLI vibe. Also, overcoming social isolation brings its own physical and mental rewards to us seniors.

Zoom has its benefits, but let's also recall how much fun it is to return to togetherness in the classroom. It adds a whole new dimension to OLLI membership!

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Literature, Language, Theater, and Writing Program Planning Group (LLT) Meeting

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The LLT Program Planning Group will meet Thursday, September 4, at 10:00 via Zoom to plan our program for spring 2026 term and beyond.

OLLI-Mason members are invited to attend and share ideas for literature, language, theater, and writing, possible resources, such as individuals you may know who might want to teach, or any other thoughts on this popular OLLI program area. In spring term and beyond we want to also include a program or two celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation through its history in the literary arts, theater, and related areas. Bring ideas and especially instructor resources.

The meeting Zoom link from Shannon Morrow, our lead program associate, is below. The link will also be available in the daily schedule email for September 4.

Any questions, please contact Pat Bangs at pbangs68@gmail.com. Thanks so much for all your contributions.

Topic: Literature, Languages, Theater, and Writing Program Planning Meeting

Time: September 4, 2025. 10:00 Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://gmu.zoom.us/j/95831148095>

Meeting ID: 958 3114 8095

One tap mobile:

+13017158592,,95831148095# US (Washington DC)

+12678310333,,95831148095# US (Philadelphia)

Dial by your location:

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)

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Share the Wisdom of Your Family Stories with Mason Students



By Camille Hodges, Board Member and Humanities and Social Sciences/Current Events Program Planning Group Co-Chair

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is asking OLLI members to participate by partnering with Mason students. Some OLLI members have had this experience in previous years and highly recommend this meaningful dialogue. Interactions may be done in person or virtually and usually begin in October.

Honors 240: The History of the American Family

NATURE OF THE COURSE AND ITS OBJECTIVES: The definition of family and of the responsibilities of each of its members has evolved over the years. Often economic circumstances, political views, wars and the evolving social beliefs of the society cause these changes. This course will focus on the way the American family has changed since colonial days. We will start with the Puritans and conclude with an examination of views of the family in society today. In the process we will study how the responsibilities of women, children, and men have evolved and why.

In addition, we will learn how oral history can aid in researching family history. One of the requirements will include interviewing older citizens and providing a document of the interview. They will then have it to keep and share with others if they wish.

Please contact Dr. Crew at: srcrow@gmu.edu to express your interest and get details.

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You're Invited!



By Marilyn Harriman, Diversions Chair

Quick! What are two of the most important things you can do to improve your health? Answer: According to a Centers for Disease Control 2024 study, physical exercise and socializing are key to optimal aging.

Physical exercise can prevent or delay many of the health problems that come with age. Social engagement with friends improves mental, physical, and emotional well-being and can delay cognitive decline. Lack of exercise, social isolation, and loneliness, in contrast, are linked to increased risks of chronic diseases, heart issues, and a weaker immune system.

OLLI's Diversions Team is hosting two events next week that boost our physical and emotional health. If you haven't already signed up, join your OLLI friends—exercise your body and brain and have fun doing it!

On Tuesday, September 2, from 10:00 to 1:00 at Tallwood, we'll have an end-of-summer Game Day Bash. We'll play board games for fun, favors, and prizes. There's an optional after-party at Auld Shebeen Pub in Fairfax at 1:30. Register for event 1201F via your member portal: page 26 in fall catalog—Between Term Events.

On Friday, September 5, 12- 2:30 at Tallwood, enjoy the outdoors and get some

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your picnic basket, a blanket or some lawn chairs, and share what you've been doing this summer. It's a fantastic way to end the summer: meet new people and reconnect with OLLI friends you haven't seen in a while. Register for event 1202F via your member portal.

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Wednesday Zoom Conversation Topic for September 3



By Brenda Bloch-Young and Doris Bloch, Co-Moderators

Every second Wednesday afternoon, Team Bloch hosts a social conversation with OLLI members on a selected topic. Everyone is invited to join in on Zoom at 4:00. It's a good way to meet friendly people and share others' perspectives.

The topic for Wednesday, September 3: as we are getting older, we are beginning to think about where we want to live in our old age. Do you prefer living in your house, in an apartment or in a retirement community? Will you live alone or with someone else? Discuss your preferences.

The conversation is always on a drop-in basis; no registration is needed. The link to the Zoom session is the same as the 24/7 Chat Line and is found in the daily-schedule email for the day of the meeting, near the bottom of the list. Join us and enjoy learning about the myriad of housing options that can be adopted.

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The Spanish Page Turners—New Club Tryout



By Susan Job, Program Associate

Do you love Spanish and want to practice it in a fun way? Join **The Spanish Page Turners**—a book club for intermediate-level Spanish learners! We'll dive into novels in Spanish that will not only build your vocabulary but also transport you into different cultures and perspectives. These intermediate-level books will give us the chance to follow longer story lines, connect deeply with

satisfaction of progressing through an entire work together. There will be plenty of space to chat, ask questions, share your thoughts, and even debate the choices of the characters. The goal isn't to read perfectly—it's to enjoy the language together and discover all it has to offer.

Please join us for an initial meeting on September 10 at 4:00 (via Zoom) to learn more about this club or contact Mark Ramage at markramage@cox.net.

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Tallwood Book Club



By Betty Ellerbee, Tallwood Book Club Coordinator

The Tallwood Book Club will be discussing *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin at its meeting on September 12. We will be finalizing choices for the coming months, relying on member recommendations as well as selections from the recent New York Times list of outstanding books since the year 2000. Availability at the Fairfax County Library is always a factor. We welcome new members at all times.

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Poet's Corner

Courtesy of the Poetry Workshop

Adjusting to New Heights

My new Hoka sneakers
are built for comfort
2-inch soles
absorb shock
my well-used feet
no longer want to

The extra cush comforts
squawking knots
that've breached
my left sole

Its delicate plane
was no match for

the respect of age

I've accommodated them
with high-rise sneakers
reminiscent of my platform
"Marshmallow" shoes
from the 1970's
except now
the audacious height of
these blaring white soles
feels like a megaphone
announcing

"Old lady coming through."

My husband
the optimist
says my sneakers
are all the rage
notes I'm gaining
on him in height
He doesn't need
to stoop as much to kiss
barefoot five-foot, five-inch
me

I give in to his sunshine
Me and my sneaks sidle over
Tell him

Well, I always did want to be
Five-seven

– Susan Rexroad

Editor's Note: This poem was initially to appear in the July 18, 2025, issue. An error led to the poem being published with the last five lines of the poem's text missing. The entire poem appears above. E-News regrets the error.

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at the Judean Memorial Gardens in Olney, MD. More information is available at [this link](#).

Donations may be made to the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation (NVHC) Cares fund (nvhcreston.org) or to The Mayo Clinic.

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Arts & Music at George Mason

Performances September 6 through September 14



By Shelly Gersten, OLLI E-News Staff Writer

For tickets for either Center for the Arts Concert Hall (CFA) or Hylton Center, call 1-888-945-2468. You can also buy tickets online through the event calendar (see links below) or visit the venue's box office. For more information, see the [CFA ticket page](#) or the [Hylton Center ticket purchase page](#).

Dr. Linda Apple Monson produces a periodic "Notes from the Director." This email is full of information on interesting online performances by the students and faculty of the School of Music. If you would like to receive these bulletins, just sign up at [this link](#) to stay in touch. Also, the Center for the Arts has a website, [Mason Arts at Home](#), which has a calendar of online events and access to many past performances.

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At the Fairfax Campus Venues

Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel: *Beethoven—The Young Genius*

Sun, Sep 14, 7:00

Concert Hall

Admission: \$60, \$52, \$38.

Mason Student and Faculty Performances

(see music.gmu.edu for additional student recitals)

George Mason School of Theater: *The Originals! 2025*

Fri, Sep 12, 7:30

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Admission: \$14.

At the Hylton Center (Manassas Campus)

Gian Marco en Concierto

Sat, Sep 6, 8:00

Merchant Hall

Admission: From \$89.24—See <https://www.tickeri.com/events/8459jre42wci/gianmarco-en-virginia-washington-dc-area>.

Arts Alive! 2025

Sun, Sep 14, 12:00

Hylton Performing Arts Center

Admission: Free.

For further details on any of the above events, see the [CFA event calendar](#) and the [Hylton Center event calendar](#).

Meetings & Clubs

Please note: OLLI Meetings and Clubs may currently take place in several formats: some are in person only, some are online only, and some are hybrid, meaning that they take place in person and are accessible online simultaneously. OLLI events and activities meeting online bear the identification "Z" in their course or event number (except clubs; you may need to check the [OLLI calendar](#) and daily schedule email for location and other event information). Refer to the university's [coronavirus website](#) for official university updates.

The following list covering the next two weeks is extracted for your convenience from the master online calendar maintained by the office. The list is accurate as of mid-week. *Note: All OLLI members are welcome at, and encouraged to attend, meetings of the Board of Directors, committees and resource groups, kick-off coffees, etc., **bolded below**. The OLLI office has sent (or will send) emails with links and meeting passwords to club members; you may also log in at the [member portal](#) and click on ZOOM CLASS LINKS.*

Sat Aug 30	10:30 am	Tai Chi Club – online
Mon Sep 1	9:30 am	What's in the Daily News? – online
Tue Sep 2	10:00 am	Science, Technology, Health Program Planning Group
	2:00 pm	Caregivers Support Group – online
	4:30 pm	Tai Chi Club – online

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	12:00 noon 4:00 pm	Memoir and More Writing Group Spanish Club – online	
Thu Sep 4	10:00 am 11:50 am 4:30 pm	Literature, Theater, Writing, and Languages Program Planning Group All the News – online Tai Chi Club – online	
Fri Sep 5	9:30 am 11:00 am	Crafts and Conversation Homer, etc. – online	
Sat Sep 6	10:30 am	Tai Chi Club – online	
Mon Sep 8	9:30 am 11:00 am 4:00 pm	What’s in the Daily News? – online Poetry Reading Club – online Family History/Genealogy Club – online	
Tue Sep 9	9:00 am 4:00 pm 4:30 pm	Caregivers Support Group – online Mah Jongg Club – online Tai Chi Club – online	
Wed Sep 10	9:30 am 10:30 am 12:00 pm 4:00 pm	Dabbling Artists Club Investment Forum Memoir and More Writing Group – online Spanish Club – online	
Thu Sep 11	10:00 am 11:50 am 4:30 pm	Humanities, Social Sciences/Current Events Program Planning Group All the News – online Tai Chi Club – online	
Fri Sep 12	9:30 am 9:30 am 11:00 am 2:30 pm	Photography Club Crafts and Conversation Homer, etc. – online Tallwood Book Club – online	
Sat Sep 13	10:30 am	Tai Chi Club – online	

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About OLLI E-News

OLLI E-News was created by Rod Zumbro, who served as its editor from 2005 to 2013.

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matters), OLLI-related news items, articles, and photos. Submit material to: ollienewseditor@gmail.com.
Deadline: Tuesday, 6:00, for that week's issue (Monday, 6:00, for letters to the editor); early submissions are greatly appreciated. Please limit articles to about 250 words.
Note: You can view past issues of *OLLI E-News* on the DocStore. To search the content of issues, use Search Our Site or put your search term in Google followed by "site:olli.gmu.edu/" without the quotes.

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