

# THE OLLI INSIDER

MAY 2023 ISSUE

*News for the members of OLLI at The University of Alabama in Huntsville*



## CREATING, EXPLORING, APPRECIATING

*Clockwise from top left: New member interest group for artists; trail biking; Library Director David Moore gives a tour; garden class; Marilyn Szecholda (left) receives Volunteer of the Year award from Irene Garoppo; tai chi MIG.*



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## THANK GOODNESS FOR SMARTER PEOPLE



*Bill Gates, Pope Francis and a Boy Scout were the sole passengers in an airplane that developed engine trouble and was going to crash. But the three of them had only two parachutes.*

*"I'm the smartest person in the world," Gates declared. "The world needs me." He strapped up and jumped out.*

*The pope then turned to the Boy Scout.*

*"Son," he said, "I am an old man and have lived a full life. You are young. Your life is ahead of you. Take the other parachute and save your life."*

*"Your Holiness," the scout replied, "thank you, but not so fast! We still have two parachutes. The smartest person in the world just jumped out of this plane wearing my backpack."*

I've seen versions of this joke with other characters. The "smartest person" could be Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton. (I've never seen it told on Wernher von Braun, though. Does anybody poke fun at *his* intelligence?)

Smart people have enough humility to seek out smarter people. And we should associate with not only intellectuals, but also those who possess the experience, common sense, emotional insight, information and education to help us reach sound decisions — especially those whose expertise differs from ours.

One of my journalistic heroes was Ralph McGill, celebrated editor and columnist for The Atlanta Constitution. After he died, I got a job with the same newspaper and saw his memo on the bulletin board, thanking some less-famous editor for catching an error in McGill's writing. My own writing has benefited from editing by colleagues, my wife and our children — people who know when I'm wrong and are willing to tell me.

Through OLLI courses, programs, tours, lounge talk and friendships, I have learned much about the wildlife refuge located within a half-mile of my house. I have learned how to shoot better photos, how to sleep better, how to live and die well, what to see and do in Huntsville. I have learned that mah-jongg is a table game, not an exercise routine.

This topic came to mind after I saw a quote from Andy Rooney, the amiable sage of TV's "60 Minutes." He said, "I have learned that the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am." I'm glad to be surrounded by all you smarter people.

Smart people get smarter  
by being together.

(Art generated by DALL-E)



**Inside The Insider:** This is the season of leadership change. Glen Adams profiles David Moore, director of the Salmon Library, which has taken over administration of OLLI from the College of Professional Studies. Meanwhile, David Styers introduces the four board members you elected recently from nine stellar candidates, and Jill Stewart and John Mason say goodbye as board president and vice president for curriculum, respectively. The board will elect Jill's and John's successors this month.

Thanks to all those who offer their services, including the new Volunteer of the Year, Marilyn Szecholda. Irene Garappo profiles her.

OLLI members express appreciation for Tennant Lee, an OLLI teacher of military history, who died last month. John Mason's military history column describes Hamburger Hill, a battle that helped exhaust Americans' patience with the Vietnam War.

Clay Williams writes about courses you can take during the summer. Chris Stuhlinger and Michelle Laverty outline summer events.

Leah Black highlights the DVD lending library (newly organized by Rick Heeth), as well as the five member interest groups. We have photos from all five. We also have the winning photos in the annual contest.

Betty Koval writes about future travel possibilities, and Nancy Darnall reflects on the benefits of travel with a group. Nancy also describes plans for our OLLI's 30th-anniversary celebration, starting Aug. 3.

**One more thing:** *The Insider* does not publish in June and July. Follow the weekly *eNews*, and consider contributing articles, photos or ideas for the August *Insider*. The deadline is July 17, and the address is [OLLINewsletter@UAH.edu](mailto:OLLINewsletter@UAH.edu).

**Steve Stewart**  
*Public Relations Committee Chair*



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

## SEASONS CHANGE, AND THE TORCH IS PASSED



Seasons are changing for OLLI at UAH. Our 2023 spring term, which began in the depths of winter, is coming to a close, and summer plans are on the horizon.

You have just elected some exceptional new board members, who are beginning their season of service to the organization this month. And in a couple weeks the

Board of Directors will elect their executive team — and my season as president of OLLI will conclude.

In contrast to other elections we hear about these days, the outcome of this election will be a peaceful transfer of a *privilege*. For the past two years, it has been my honor to serve and represent the members of OLLI at UAH in our community and in the national community of Osher Institutes. It has been quite a ride, though.

When David Styers passed the virtual OLLI gavel to me in May 2021, we were still staring at each other exclusively on Zoom screens, where every class, bonus, activity and committee meeting had been convening for almost 15 months. We were only beginning to discuss the possibility of returning to campus later that summer. My tenure began with much uncertainty in the COVID era.

Those first months back on campus were cautious, making adjustments with the rise and fall of Covid numbers in the area, trying to accommodate the comfort zones of our members, and exploring innovative ways to attract and engage new members to build back better.

Thanks to the creative and dedicated efforts of our members, volunteer leaders and UAH staff, progress and growth have been steady and new experiences and opportunities are happening all the time.

Just this year, we have moved to a new organizational “home” at UAH under the oversight of the Salmon Library, we have partnered with a local senior living community to provide some classes there, and we are planning our 30th-anniversary celebration.

The heart of all that is good in OLLI is the commitment and active involvement of our members. We were proud to see *nine* members willing to be candidates this year for the four open board positions.

My message to those “runners-up” and every OLLI member is this: Please join any of our committees or volunteer

opportunities where you may have an interest. You *do not* have to be a board member to serve on committees. Most importantly, you meet more people, and they get to know you, which can make a difference when board elections come around again.

I have an ulterior motive for stressing that message. As immediate past president, it will be my job to oversee our Nominations Task Force for board elections next year. We will again have at least four openings at that time as some current members complete their terms. So be advised, we will be looking for you!

When I first joined OLLI, I was quite content with the simple benefits of my chosen courses. Then one day, I was asked to be a facilitator for a class and suddenly discovered I was more engaged when speaking for the program and was prompted to participate in more OLLI activities.

My relationships with other members expanded, I found other ways to serve, and my OLLI membership became even more rewarding and valued in this season of life. It’s my hope that you have a similar experience.

Be sure to mark your calendar to save the date of Aug. 3 for our big 30th anniversary/Alabama OLLI Day event. And I hope to see you in our summer classes and field trips. So this is not really “farewell” but “see you soon.” Thank you for all you do for OLLI.

And with that, peace out!

**Jill Stewart**  
**President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors**

Jill Stewart enjoys her stroll with the UAH mascot, Charger Blue. (Photo by Fathia Hardy)



# EVENTS COMMITTEE

## IS IT A HIKE OR A NATURE WALK?



Steve Jones and I (Chris) have co-led several nature excursions/ventures on foot and bicycle for OLLI members over the past two years. Member participation has been increasing, so it's great to see the desire for outdoor activities and interest in our nature-related interpretive comments.

Our excursions have varied in distance and difficulty, ranging from easy walks on level trails to more-difficult hikes with changes in elevation and rougher terrain sections.

We have heard a variety of comments about our excursions. Some members prefer hikes with fewer interpretive stops; others like the easier walks with more interpretation. And we have also enjoyed several bike rides on greenways and Rails to Trails.

Steve and I are focused on nature, as will be all of the ventures we lead. We are less interested in rushing *through* the woods, and much more interested in walking *in* the forest, enjoying and learning from what lies hidden in plain sight.

John Muir suggested the term “saunter” to describe the style of venture that Steve and I prefer. We like to discover and respect what nature offers along the way.

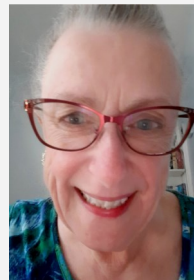
Accordingly, we will use the following descriptive terms to characterize our future excursions, and still offer opportunities to satisfy as many members as possible:

1. **Nature walks** (saunters) — more-leisurely walks with frequent interpretive stops; terrain is easy or moderate; distance 2-4 miles (this will be our preferred excursion type)
2. **Hikes** — more-physical walks with fewer interpretive stops; terrain is moderate to more difficult; distance 2-6 miles
3. **Bike rides** — riding with occasional interpretive stops; paved greenways or crushed-stone trails; distance 5-15 miles
4. **Hybrids** of a walk and bike ride (a new option) — we will meet at the trailhead, and some members can walk while others ride their bikes (such as the Richard Martin Trail, greenways, and Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge)

We have scheduled several events for this summer, including a nature walk/bike ride in early June at the Indian Creek Greenway in Madison (see event details below).

### Recap of recent events

- **Hubert Family Tulip Farm** — OLLI members walked amongst rows of about 200,000 colorful tulips after an informative



introduction and overview of the farm by owner Seth Hubert. Several members picked bouquets of tulips to take home. (Many thanks to Val Seaquist for arranging this March 31 visit.)

- **Bike Ride on the Richard Martin Trail** — Riders enjoyed a 12-mile round-trip excursion April 1 through the woods on this former railroad right-of-way. Scenery

included a hardwood swamp, farms, and the Sulphur Creek Trestle Civil War battle site on the way to a rest stop in Elkmont.

- **OLLI Day at Charger Park** — A warm, sunny afternoon welcomed members to watch three UAH Charger sports teams compete at Charger Park on April 15. The men's baseball team split a doubleheader versus Valdosta State, winning the first game 4-3 and losing the second game 14-15. The women's softball team retained their first-place conference ranking with two wins (2-1 and 8-0) over Valdosta State. The women's lacrosse team lost to Flagler 12-15.
- **Tour of the UAH Salmon Library and Archives** — A large group of OLLI members discovered all the services of UAH's Salmon Library during a fascinating tour led April 21 by Library Director David Moore and three staff members. The library is much more than a place to check out books. The group learned about computer stations available to students and OLLI members, a multimedia lab, a Makerspace lab outfitted with 3D printers and a large-format poster printer, student study areas, and the archives, where documents and artifacts depicting Huntsville's and UAH's history are stored.

**Coming summer events** (all events require pre-registration and a waiver/release form)

- Saturday, June 3 — **Indian Creek Greenway nature walk (and bike ride)**, Madison, 10 a.m. to noon. [forms.gle/ByoGm6SeB9xdz27i9](https://forms.gle/ByoGm6SeB9xdz27i9). Meet at the Indian Creek Greenway trailhead parking lot, located on Old Madison Pike between Jan Davis Drive/Diamond Drive and Slaughter Road. The greenway extends about 2 miles along Indian Creek with a short side link to Creekwood Park (restroom facilities). Enjoy nature narratives along this easy paved trail. Optional: Bring your bike if you prefer to ride the greenway.
- Friday, June 16 — **Von Braun Astronomical Society tour** (Monte Sano State Park), 10:30 a.m. to noon. [forms.gle/yqHdm8cGPnT5hxSB6](https://forms.gle/yqHdm8cGPnT5hxSB6). Meet at 10:15 a.m. at the VBAS facility in Monte Sano State Park, located just past the campground entrance. Join us for a fascinating tour.

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# EVENTS COMMITTEE

## IS IT A HIKE OR A NATURE WALK?, CONT.

Participate in a brief planetarium show, see a demonstration of the solar observatory, and tour the observatory with its 21-inch reflecting telescope. Learn about the formation and development of the almost 70-year-old nonprofit organization. Pay park entrance fee (\$5, \$2 for age 62+) and VBAS program fee (\$5-8 cash at door; amount depends on attendance — to be announced).

- Friday, June 30 — **Alabama A&M University campus tour** (Huntsville), 10 to 11:30 a.m. [forms.gle/zJZWMe6bHAYrdGT6](https://forms.gle/zJZWMe6bHAYrdGT6). Meeting location at AAMU to be announced. Learn about the history and facilities of Alabama A&M University during this campus tour (AAMU van or bus). Included will be significant buildings and landmarks. This historically Black university was founded in 1875. Hear about the university's programs in academics, research and service.
- Friday, July 28 — **Von Braun Center "backstage" tour** (Huntsville), 3 to 4:30 p.m. [forms.gle/TLxbFj1LkBv1wKv87](https://forms.gle/TLxbFj1LkBv1wKv87). Meet by the box office near the Concert Hall entrance. Pay for nearby parking. See the areas you don't see and the areas that make what you do see possible. This tour will include areas behind the Arena, Concert Hall, Mars Music Hall and Playhouse. It will be at least one hour of walking approximately a half-mile and standing on concrete.

- Thursday, Aug. 3 — **Biergarten at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center** (Huntsville), 5-7 p.m. (coordinated with Dining Out member interest group). [forms.gle/tQ4yLq5zAeWWsYhv5](https://forms.gle/tQ4yLq5zAeWWsYhv5). Join us at the Davidson Center for Space Exploration for Huntsville's favorite German Biergarten. This evening in the Saturn V Hall features a festive atmosphere, authentic German cuisine, drinks and live music. This is a family-friendly event. The Dining Out MIG/OLLI at UAH will have at least three tables reserved, and other seating is available. \$25 Autobahn Pass includes entry, one nonalcoholic beverage, one entree, two sides and a dessert. Tickets can be bought online or at the door ([Biergarten — U.S. Space and Rocket Center](https://forms.gle/tQ4yLq5zAeWWsYhv5)). Alcoholic beverages are separate, and costs vary. Individual food and beverage items are also available, and prices vary.

See you at the events!

**Chris Stuhlinger**

*Events Committee Chair*

**Michelle Laverty**

*Events Committee Member*



Coming events (clockwise from top left): Von Braun Center "backstage" tour, July 28; Biergarten at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Aug. 3; Alabama A&M University campus tour, June 30; Indian Creek Greenway nature walk and bike ride, June 3; Von Braun Astronomical Society tour, June 16. (Photos by Chris Stuhlinger)



## HUBERT FAMILY TULIP FARM TOUR, MARCH 31



(Photos by Marsha Langlois, Helen Crawford, Linda McAllister, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)



## BIKE RIDE ON RICHARD MARTIN TRAIL, APRIL 1



(Photos by Helen Crawford, Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger)



## GARDEN TOUR GOES TO BLOSSOMWOOD

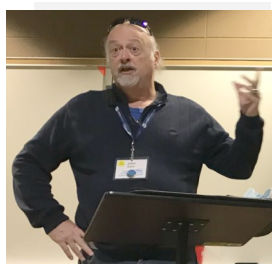
The spring garden tour class visited Herb and Terry Lewis in Huntsville's Blossomwood neighborhood April 12. The course, taught by Alicia Beam, includes tours of six local gardens with historic backgrounds, vintage garden rooms, entertainment areas, and award-winning plant collections.



(Photos by Marsha Langlois and Linda McAllister)



## THANKS, BUT OUR STORY DOESN'T END HERE



This month's column will be my last as head of the OLLI at UAH Curriculum Committee. As I sit down to write it, I'm reminded of a song performed by Ronnie Milsap in 1974. Don't know why that happens; it's just the way my brain works. Anyway, I'll

paraphrase the first verse of that song here because I think it's kind of appropriate:

*This could be our last good chat together.*

*I won't likely write these words again.*

*So let's just enjoy it till it's over or forever.*

*Please don't tell me how the story ends.*

We've been through a lot together in the last three years, you and I. Seems like just yesterday when I took over the reins, only to have COVID then knock me — all of us, really — straight off the horse. And just like that, our vibrant community tried to go dark. We didn't let it, though. We survived. No. We thrived.

The program that came out on the other side of the pandemic may evolve to be even better than the one we once knew. We have new friends, new technologies, new opportunities, and, perhaps best of all, the joy of being back together again.

Add all that to what is, IMHO, a world-class offering of courses and opportunities, and we may be on the verge of a wonderful new time of fellowship and learning. It hasn't been easy, but as I've looked around in the classrooms, in the lounge and elsewhere these last few weeks, I see that camaraderie — the sheer enjoyment of learning and of sharing — returning. It makes me proud to have had even the tiniest part in that restoration.

But try as I might, I simply can't justify taking that credit. Why? Because I've been fortunate to have been surrounded with absolutely the best and brightest group of people one could ever hope to work with. They did all the hard work while I just stood by and watched.

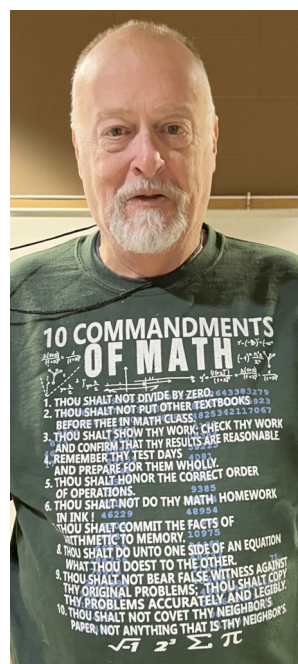
So let me take a moment to thank them — *you* — for all that's been accomplished. I won't try to name them every one, because I would be bound to forget someone — and to me, that would be unforgivable.

So let me start by thanking every one of the curriculum discipline chairs with whom I've had the pleasure of being associated. These folks do incredible things for our OLLI, and do it mostly from behind the scenes. Without them and their tireless efforts, we wouldn't be nearly the organization we are. I can't say it enough: You guys are the very *best*!

And thank you, too, to the rest of the Curriculum Committee! You have been there sharing your great ideas and helping the rest of us keep in touch with our membership's desires in terms of classes. You, too, have been unsung, but I know that we couldn't have made it without you.

And to the other members of the Board of Directors, thanks — for keeping me straight (well, most of the time!) and for keeping us all headed in the right direction. Your leadership gets the credit for pulling us through the bad times and for leading us forward into the good. As new members accede, our direction will be again in good hands.

One group doesn't always get the recognition they deserve: the staff that until recently was part of the College of Professional Studies and is now part of Salmon Library. The program directors always seem to do more than they should be capable of.



John Mason at  
Teacher Appreciation  
Day, Nov. 16, 2022.  
(Photo by Steve  
Stewart)

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# CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

## THANKS, BUT OUR STORY DOESN'T END HERE, CONT.

Clay, Alice, Fathia, Ale and Alicia, thank you all. And thanks to your staff of marketers, registrars and all the others who bend over backward every day to make our program successful. Now, while I certainly don't fit into this category, we OLLI members can be a cranky group sometimes. Thankfully, you always seem to ignore that and keep our best interests at heart. Good on ya!

And last, but not least, thanks to all our members, because you're the reason we all do what we do. Keep coming back, keep telling us what you want to see, and keep demanding that we improve. And join in, too. Your ideas and participation are always welcome!

I also have one last ask. During my tenure, all of you have never given me anything less than your utmost support. There will be a new team coming soon. I can promise you that they won't miss a beat in continuing the long line of excellence

personified by the OLLI at UAH curriculum team. And I ask you to give them the same wonderful support you always gave me. But I know you will.

Thank you all!

As I come to a close, I'll return to the verse with which I began. *I have enjoyed this journey!* Every single day!

And so, as we approach a new beginning, I want us all to continue to look ahead. It's true: I don't want to know how the story ends. Because I fervently hope it never does.

And with that, I'll bid you adieu.

**John Mason**  
**Vice President of Curriculum**  
**OLLI at UAH Board of Directors**



## DINING OUT AT SALT FACTORY PUB, APRIL 13

The Dining Out member interest group met April 13 at Salt Factory Pub, located in the Mid-City district.  
(Photos by Jill Stewart)



## 'HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME'



Many of you surely remember this musical hit from Sly and the Family Stone. Lyrics discuss the end of spring and the beginning of summer: "That's when I have most of my fun back."

With spring semester nearing its end, we hope our OLLI summer offerings help you experience the most fun over the next few months.

This summer features a variety of courses to broaden your horizons. To meet the needs of our traveling and busy clientele, our courses are shorter, consisting of only one, two or four sessions. And with no registration fee, they are more economical to take.

As has become the norm, we offer courses both in person and online. We are especially excited to feature courses at various off-site locations so our members can get a feel of all that the Rocket City offers.

Topics include history, art, gardening, dance, personal safety, health care and wine tasting. A few favorites are repeated, but the vast majority of our courses are being featured for the first time.

For instance, we are offering "Using AI [artificial intelligence] to Improve Your Life," "Cigar Box Guitars 101," "The Beatles Conquer America," "Family and Home Security," and "Introduction to Makerspaces." These courses are just a sampling of what we have to offer this summer.

Members can also register for three one-day trips throughout Alabama. UAH vans will travel to Moundville, Birmingham and Scottsboro. Seating is limited, so don't hesitate to reserve your spot. Explore Alabama and leave the driving to us!



(Art generated by DALL-E)

Summer session starts June 1 and runs through the first week of August. Get further details online at the OLLI website ([uah.edu/library/olli](http://uah.edu/library/olli)) or with our weekly eNews email that goes out every Friday afternoon. Registration is underway, so don't miss out.

And with this being the last *Insider* for a few months, I want to remind everyone that Aug. 3 is the date for our commemoration of 30 years as a lifelong learning organization, as well as OLLI Day, when we celebrate our Shares program with Auburn University and The University of Alabama. Be on the lookout this summer for more details and how you can purchase tickets.

We hope everyone has a safe and spectacular summer. And remember, "Never Stop Learning"!

**Clay Williams**  
**OLLI at UAH Program Manager**



# COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Time to register for Summer 2023 courses! No tuition fee for summer, so you only pay the per-course fee.  
You can register for courses at [Osher.uah.edu/OLLI Registration](https://osher.uah.edu/OLLI/Registration).



## **EIGHT THINGS TO KNOW FROM A NURSE**

**6/8 – 6/15 • Th • 10:30 – Noon • 2 sessions • In Person • J. Ellinger • \$30**

Hear from a Registered Nurse the eight things about your health that the average patient doesn't know. Topics include medications, health insurance processes, common diseases and their preventions. Fun and lively discussion will give you confidence and an understanding of the medical world.



## **THE BEATLES CONQUER AMERICA**

**6/13 • Tu • 1:15 – 2:45 pm • 1 session • Live Virtual • D. Lilly • \$25**

The Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964 marked a profound world-wide change in pop music and youth culture. This multi-media presentation will explore how the Beatles infiltrated America's consciousness in late 1963, followed by the remarkable British Music Invasion of 1964-65. Rock music would never be the same.



## **CREATING NATURALLY DYED TEXTILES WITH FLOWERS**

**6/14 • W • 10:30 – Noon • 1 session • In Person-Off Campus • N. McCrary • \$25**

Visit 1818 Farms, in Mooresville, Alabama, and see a demonstration on how beautiful textiles can be created using farm-grown dye flowers. Learn the steps necessary to create unique bundle dye pieces. Participants can assist designing and bundle dying during this hands-on workshop. Pieces will be available for purchase the day of the workshop.



## **TOUR ANTEBELLUM HOMES IN TWICKENHAM**

**7/10 – 7/31 • Tu • 8:30 – 10:00 am • 4 sessions • In Person-Off Campus • D. Swain • \$50**

Discover over 30 of Huntsville's most fascinating antebellum homes and structures with four distinct walking tours of the Twickenham Historic District in downtown Huntsville. These tours will show you some of the oldest buildings in Alabama, and you will hear the stories of the people and structures that helped shape the state's history.



# TRAVEL COMMITTEE

## NOW PLANNING TRIPS. WHAT'S YOUR IDEA?



I can hardly believe it is the end of the OLLI spring term! It really has flown by.

I appreciate all the planning and work done by so many to make OLLI classes so successful. The breakfasts were a special treat, as were the outstanding bonuses and snacks, plus the excellent events.

Another term of the Board of Directors is almost over with four new fine members elected. All nine candidates would have made excellent choices, so keep them in mind for next year. Thanks to all who voted and helped in the election process.

It takes many bodies to keep OLLI at UAH running smoothly, and none more important than our OLLI staff. Let's face it, everyone: Without their help, we would never have made it through the COVID period as smoothly as we did.

Now, on to travel topics. The trips to Philadelphia and the Canadian Maritimes have been opened to non-OLLI at UAH participants. I was told both would fill quickly, so if you have not registered to travel with either group, you may be out of luck. There will be a waiting list; however, it may be long.

My best piece of advice to you is that if you are looking at an OLLI-related trip, event or class — even a bonus in some cases — sign up *early* and do not delay. You may find there is no room at the inn, so to speak.

We do have travel ideas that the committee is researching and will offer soon. Some of the ideas for 2024-25 (no dates confirmed) are:

1. 80th anniversary of Normandy
2. Monuments of World War I European tour
3. Iceland
4. Ireland
5. Asia
6. Pacific Northwest — Lewis and Clark tour

Our travel is limited by our term schedules. By this I mean that we try not to schedule trips that conflict with our term dates.



OLLI's Travel Committee is considering new travel destinations for 2024-25, following this tour of Alaska in August 2022 and trips to Philadelphia and Canada coming up in 2023.

(Photo by Chris Stuhlinger)

We are also looking into possibly doing some one-, two- or three-night trips within a short (three- to four-hour) drive from Huntsville.

If you have a suggestion or would like to lead a trip of any type, please feel free to drop your ideas by the OLLI staff office or the volunteer office with your name and contact information. Please address this material to the travel chair.

Thank you all for traveling along with OLLI at UAH, and we look forward to many more adventures. Nancy Darnall is going to supplement this column this month with the pros of traveling with a group of like-minded people.

Remember: All who wander are not lost!

**Betty Koval**  
**Travel Committee Chair**



## IS GROUP TRAVEL FOR YOU?

Independent travel is exciting. You are the master of your fate, to paraphrase “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley (1849-1903).

You choose your destination, your mode of travel, the accommodations, the experiences, and, well, every single detail of your adventure.

You make your plane reservations, reserve your hotel or Airbnb, rent the car, or arrange the cruise. You decide the restaurants, the museums, the balloon rides and the zip lines. You figure out your travel insurance, if needed. You research the wineries, the craft breweries, the horseback rides, or the boat into the swamp.

You deal with the frustration that the tickets for El Alhambra or the U.S. Holocaust Museum or Sagrada Familia require a six- to 18-month lead time. You discover that the bridge to your prime destination is out, and the detour is four hours out of your way.

Of course, you may also discover the Turkish festival of coffees or the best view of a lunar eclipse. That lady who gave you directions to the Book of Kells at Trinity College in Dublin may suggest the perfect restaurant or souvenir shop. Or invite you to her home or pub.

By no means is travel “one size fits all.”

Great joys arise from all sorts of travel; however, many of us are at a place where we don’t want the details, the headaches, the research, and all the other work of planning a trip. This is a time when group travel with reputable companies simplifies the navigation to our destination.

Sometimes, the companies offer itineraries that we might never have considered or that are more appealing once the tedium of planning is offloaded to professionals whose goals are to create a great experience for the travelers.

I have done many kinds of travel: solo, couple, friends, small groups, larger groups, and part of a group that I meet after embarkation. There are merits to all. I admit I no longer am interested in planning a big trip on my own (this includes Bob’s input). Why the change?

We are older now; at the end of a flight or drive, I no longer want the lines at the rental car counter, the unfamiliar walk or ride to the hotel, or confirmation of reservations for museums, gardens, etc. I want someone who does this professionally to assemble the options, package them, and deliver.



When we have traveled with OLLI, we learned more about the people we thought we knew and met or became more familiar with strangers and acquaintances. We shared the destination. We talked about our commonalities and our differences. We tried new activities. We commiserated over life events, past and current.

The joy of sharing art with Debbie West or music with Linda McAllister or a battlefield with John Mason changes the experience. I name these individuals, but any fellow traveler can enhance your experience.

Intrepid travelers may opt for a local play in the local language or encourage lunch with unfamiliar foods. You bring your own view and hear what others think. We have had individuals join our groups as family members of the travel group or even those who filled the extra spots and joined our OLLI to travel with us again. Often, they have been from other states.

These days, travel has some obstacles. It is mandatory that any traveler bring along the proper documents, any medications and health equipment, and an invisible cloak of flexibility. Flights get canceled, traffic jams are unpredictable, businesses change their schedules, health requirements fluctuate. None of this is limited to group travel. We are all subject to this, regardless of our plans. It is great to have a team of professionals to solve the issues.

The primary criteria for group travel with OLLI are OLLI membership and the willingness and flexibility to make the trip. While our trips are rarely physically demanding, they may require the ability to walk in cities, walk over uneven terrain, and enter/disembark from various modes of transportation. It varies with the trip.

(continued on the next page)

# TRAVEL COMMITTEE

## IS GROUP TRAVEL FOR YOU? CONT.

The group experience leaders (or whatever the travel company calls them) make sure that the trip goes as smoothly as we anticipated or work to make the inevitable glitch a highlight of the trip. Frankly, the best stories are about the surprises. A level road offers little excitement.

We have had leaders who had options for “downtime,” who arranged to visit a secret garden or museum, or who contacted a fishing boat for an expedition on a Norwegian fjord. They discovered with us restaurants, shops, and new paths to travel. And, occasionally, they played catch-up when some plan changed and a new tack was required. Some daily activities may be called for rain. Or cyclones. Or the revised train schedule.

At our OLLI program, we have gone to England, Alaska (twice), Spain, Memphis, and the Southwest’s National Parks (in two segments). We took a day for Muscle Shoals, Birmingham and the Alabama Wine Trail. These are the destinations I remember from my time in the program. Other members have done other trips.

Currently, trips are planned to Philadelphia and the Canadian Maritimes. The Travel Committee discussion includes possible future destinations such the Pacific Northwest, Chautauqua in New York, Ireland, Cleveland, Asia and the French battle-grounds.

If you have a destination that you want OLLI to pursue, bring it up. Ideas are critical to a healthy travel program.

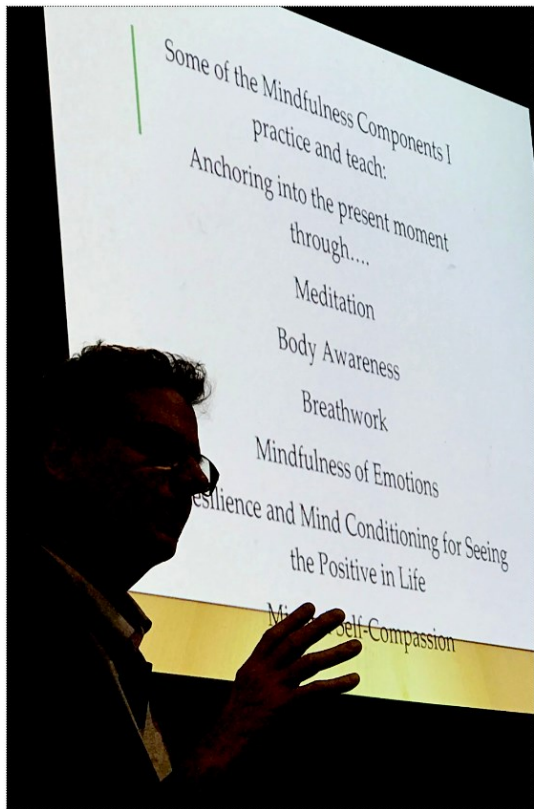
See you on the road.

Don’t forget that our “armchair travelers” who are unable to join us on the trip often enjoy the destination with an OLLI bonus presentation after the trip is completed.

*By Nancy Darnall*

## USING MINDFULNESS TO REDUCE STRESS

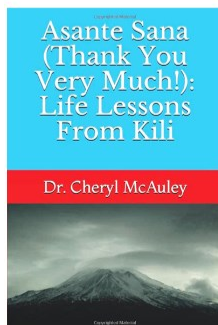
Tom Fandre, an OLLI teacher and practitioner of mindfulness, presented a bonus April 14 about mindful stress reduction. Attendees learned about formal and informal meditation, therapeutic breathing, gentle stretching and gladdening the mind.





## ADVENTURES, COMPASSION ON KILIMANJARO

Dr. Cheryl McAuley and her husband, John, climbed Africa's largest mountain, Kilimanjaro. In a bonus presentation March 31, she described the hike and its connection with Compassion International, an American child sponsorship and Christian humanitarian aid organization. She is a retired Army veteran whose books include "Asante Sana (Thank You Very Much!): Life Lessons from Kili."



(Photos shot or provided by Cheryl McAuley and Steve Stewart)





David Moore with his family. Wife Dedra is on the left. Children are Parker and Hayley. The dog is Taco, rescued about 10 years ago from an animal pound.



## SALMON LIBRARY DIRECTOR NOW LEADS OLLI

David Moore is the director of UAH's Salmon Library. Thanks to the recent UAH reorganization, OLLI became part of the library system and David became the overall leader of OLLI. To help members better know David, he is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

David grew up in Tuscaloosa, where his father worked at The Tuscaloosa News and his mother worked for the phone company. As a boy, his chief interests were reading and writing, which led to a B.A. in history at The University of Alabama. His first job after graduation was at UA's Gorgas Library.

"After working there a couple of years," David said, "I realized this is what I want to do, so I enrolled in the Master of Library and Information Science program. I earned my degree in 1996."

David married his wife, Dedra, who was pursuing an aerospace engineering degree, in 1995. After they finished their studies, they decided to move: "We wanted to leave Tuscaloosa, but not move too far away. So we decided on Huntsville. That way, Dedra could pursue her engineering career here and I could look for library-related work."

David began his UAH career in 1997 as a reference librarian. He worked his way up the library ladder until in 2010 he was named the interim library director and then in 2013 got the job permanently.

What has he liked about managing the UAH library?

"What I have enjoyed the most," said David, "is our ever-improving ability to provide the right resources and reference assistance to our students. I like to think we are having a positive impact on their education and future."

"The library has changed immensely to keep up with the times. As technology changes, so must the library change. We look for new ways to bring value to the educational activities on campus, for example through the use of specialty labs like our Makerspace lab [a place to collaborate and create physical projects using three-dimensional printers and other equipment], or through making available electronic resources like e-books and educational videos."

"The recent advent of artificial intelligence technology like ChatGPT promises to fundamentally change how information is discovered and created, putting a burden on libraries to change with it."

David has been impressed with OLLI.

"I have found that OLLI is a group that is fun to be with," he said. "It is great to see so many diverse educational interests and hobbies among its members. It is great to see everyone loving and enjoying life so much, whether we are in an OLLI meeting or at one of the OLLI social events."

David sees his new role with OLLI mainly as assisting OLLI Program Director Clay Williams with the transition of OLLI to the library.

(continued on the next page)



# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

## MARILYNN SZECHOLDA IS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



### *Congratulations!*

Earlier this year, we asked members to think about the various volunteers and to nominate someone they felt was worthy of the Volunteer of the Year (VoY) honor. We had several nominations and had a very hard decision to make — all were worthy. Thanks to all who thought

this through and submitted a nomination.

Even though all were outstanding, we had to narrow it down to one. I'm proud to announce that Marilyn Szecholda has been named the 2023 OLLI Volunteer of the Year.

Marilynn has been involved with every aspect of the organization for several years. Marilyn became involved in OLLI before it was OLLI, starting art classes at the forerunner to OLLI, the Academy for Lifetime Learning. I know you all have seen her but may not have put a name to the face. She's been taking classes at OLLI for a long time.

Marilynn is the chair of the Social Committee, whose responsibilities include planning the annual dinner, the holiday party, and everyone's favorite, the weekly breakfasts. Remember the Souper Bowl? That was Marilyn's committee.

Marilynn also helps fellow OLLI member Leah Black with the Friday bonus snacks. Her committee is responsible for any other special events OLLI has throughout the year.

Marilynn has always been interested in helping people, especially those with handicaps. For years she was a special education teacher, and she still teaches art during the day at 8th Street Community, a group home for special-needs adults.

Some of the aspects of OLLI she enjoys are meeting open-minded people, participating in memorable classes, learning

new things, and travel. She's taken several of the OLLI trips, which she sees as memorable experiences. For her, OLLI is just a comfortable space.

She's an OLLI Board of Directors member, is on several committees, facilitates classes, and jumps in to help whenever she sees a need. When you see her around OLLI activities, be sure to congratulate her for this honor.

Thanks, Marilyn, for all you do; and again, *congratulations!*

**Irene Garoppo**

**Volunteer Support Committee Chair**



Marilyn Szecholda serves ice cream on May 20, 2022, during "A Romantic Reading with Sprinkles on Top" — Shakespearean readings followed by refreshments. Marilyn chairs OLLI's Social Committee. (Photo by Steve Stewart)

## SALMON LIBRARY DIRECTOR NOW LEADS OLLI, CONT.

"This means paying attention to details like procedures on getting things done and how these procedures will change and brainstorming solutions with Clay to make important tasks continue to work, but now in a new way. I am available to offer advice and assistance wherever possible.

"Going forward, I want to work with Clay to ensure that OLLI is as successful as it can be and that it's known in the Huntsville community as a wonderful opportunity for people to expand their knowledge and horizons and to just have fun."

David and Dedra, who is an Army engineer at Redstone Arsenal, have two children. Daughter Hayley is a freshman at UAH majoring in kinesiology and training to become a physical therapist. Son Parker is a senior at Madison Academy and plans to go to UAH and possibly major in computer engineering.

"Both have excelled in sports," said David, "unlike their parents. Hayley is a competitive swimmer, and Parker has excelled in soccer and is now competing in cross-country running and track."

Thanks, David, for all you do for OLLI.

**By Glen Adams**



## SALMON LIBRARY & ARCHIVES TOUR, APRIL 21

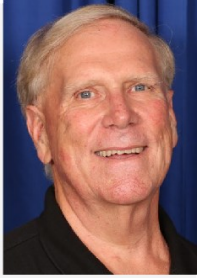


(Photos by Patrice Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)



# NOMINATING COMMITTEE

## OLLI RENEWAL



The election for your new OLLI board members is complete, and you have selected four fantastic members. The new board members are Bob Darnall, Bob Carroll, Nancy Noever and Renate Kump.

**Bob Darnall** has served on the board previously as president, vice president of finance, and chair of the Events Committee, to name a few positions. In addition, you likely know Bob as an instructor. He has taught classes in bridge and puzzle solving. Bob's experience will be a great benefit to our hard-working board.

**Bob Carroll** is a retired educator and joined OLLI because of his recognition of the importance of lifelong learning. In Bob's last years of working, his focus was on curriculum design and development for a new high school. Bob would like to bring that expertise to OLLI by serving on the Curriculum Committee. In addition, he has served as an instructor at OLLI in the past and plans to continue that in the future.

**Nancy Noever** brings to OLLI a love of learning. She dove into our program after moving here from the West Coast and enjoyed the connections she developed through the double transition of relocation and the pandemic. She brings to the board a knowledge of film and production that she plans to apply to our program to help it excel.

**Renate Kump** has been a member of OLLI for five-plus years. During that time, she has supported our program as a facilitator and volunteer for our many classes and activities. She would like to step up her support of OLLI by joining the board. In that move, she brings not only her OLLI experience, but also her experience as a docent at the Botanical Garden.

These are your new board members. Please take the time to congratulate them on their selection and offer them your

support during their terms. This board works for you but cannot be successful without your support and embrace.

With the election of new members, we also have four individuals rotating from the board. These are Janet Reville, Hilda Lee, Barbara Johnson and Rexanne Warfel.

Janet is the current vice president of finance but has also served as fund development chair, Nominating Task Force chair and a member of many other committees. She lives and breathes OLLI and is one of our best champions for promoting OLLI and linking it to the greater UAH community. Her service will be missed on the board, but she will remain active with committee work.

Hilda has served as an instructor in addition to her board duties. She is also an author and retired dentist. Her support to the Finance and Curriculum committees will be greatly missed, but we expect to still see her leading and attending classes.

Barbara has served most recently on the Fund Development Committee as its chair. In addition, she has used her background to teach many classes on topics related to nutrition and healthy eating. I am sure each of you has benefited from her classes at OLLI.

Rexanne is a past Volunteer of the Year, which should indicate to you her support of OLLI. In addition, she has taught many classes demonstrating her culinary skills. I am sure each of you have enjoyed her snacks in the lounge. She will be missed on the board but will still be active in our OLLI.

Please take a moment to congratulate each of these members who are rotating from the board for their service. They deserve your gratitude and thanks.

**David Styers**  
*Immediate Past President*  
*OLLI at UAH Board of Directors*



**Bob Carroll**



**Bob Darnall**



**Renate Kump**



**Nancy Noever**



# MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

## 2023 WINNING PHOTOS: 'LIGHT AND SHADOW'

Twenty-one eligible photographs depicting the topic "Light and Shadow" were entered in this year's OLLI photo competition. The winners will be displayed on the wall outside the OLLI volunteer office, 151 Wilson Hall. Harriett Somerville coordinated the contest.



**First place:** Sue Farbman, "Flight, Light, and Shadow," National Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, Florida, July 26, 2022



**Second place:** Nancy Darnall, "Dinner Time," Svolvær, Norway, May 23, 2022



**Third place:** Robert Reville, "Pillars of Light (and Shadow)," Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan, March 13, 2023

**Honorable mention:**  
Jill Stewart, "Morning in Millennium Park," Chicago, Sept. 23, 2022





# MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

## SCRATCH AN ITCH TO LEARN: USE DVD LIBRARY



I hope that everyone has enjoyed the OLLI classes, bonus lectures, and events and found them informative, stimulating, and even fun. Perhaps they have created an itch to learn more about a topic, or maybe you desire to follow up on an area of interest to you.

Well, the OLLI DVD library is now reorganized and ready to use. There are hundreds of DVDs, mostly Great Courses, in a great variety of topics available for members to check out and enjoy at home. Rick Heeth has done a hero's job getting this collection ready for your use.

The DVD library is located in the OLLI volunteer office, 151 Wilson Hall. There is a notebook with a directory on top of the cabinet. The DVDs are organized by course numbers and/or topics. You will also find directions for checking out the DVDs. A black box on the same cabinet holds a card for each DVD, where members can record their names and other information. Please read and follow the instructions. The office volunteer can help if one is present. When returning a DVD, please place it in the tray on the cabinet, and someone will refile it later.

This is a very special resource for OLLI members who may enjoy the chance to keep learning between class terms.

Member Services has enjoyed offering tasty snacks before and/or after the bonus sessions and has been delighted to see members having great chats with friends and welcoming new members, too. We will continue to do this again when the class term begins in the fall.

The OLLI member interest groups (MIGs) will continue to meet over the summer.

The new Art Studio Camp MIG got off to a great start, and any member who enjoys art projects is welcome to come on the first and third Fridays of the month from 2 to 4 p.m. in 152 Wilson Hall.

I would like to thank the MIG leaders for overseeing their groups and welcoming members to join in the fun. For information, you can email [olli.info@uah.edu](mailto:olli.info@uah.edu) or contact one of these leaders:

- Art Studio Camp: Debbie Applegate
- Dining Out: Sandra Dabrowski
- Let's Play Bridge: Bob Darnall
- Mah-Jongg: Barbara Hitchings
- Tai Chi: Philip Graham and Candi Holcomb

Thanks to those who submitted photos to the photo contest. Remember that the new topic for photos will be announced soon.

**Leah Black**  
**Member Services Committee Chair**



Rick Heeth has organized hundreds of DVDs, mostly from the Great Courses series, that are available for members to borrow in the OLLI volunteer office.  
(Photo by Steve Stewart)



# MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

## ART STUDIO CAMP MEMBER INTEREST GROUP



(Photos by Steve Stewart)



# MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

## TAI CHI MEMBER INTEREST GROUP



(Photos by Steve Stewart)



## MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS



### BRIDGE (LEFT) AND MAH-JONGG MIGS



(Photos by Steve Stewart)



## DID YOU KNOW ...?

### AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY

#### May: "The Mountain of the Crouching Beast" bares its teeth

Dong Ap Bia is a looming, solitary massif, rising from the floor of the western A Shau Valley in Thura Thien-Hue Province of what once was the Republic of South Vietnam. The mountain is a rugged, uninviting wilderness blanketed in double- and triple-canopy jungle, dense thickets of bamboo, and waist-high elephant grass towering some 937 meters above the surrounding valley floor.

The local Montagnard tribesmen call it "the mountain of the crouching beast." And for seven days in May 1969, it proved to be every inch of that beast to those who tried to tame it.

Operation Apache Snow was the second part of a three-phase campaign intended to destroy infiltration routes from Laos into South Vietnam used by the People's Army of Viet Nam (PAVN). In 1969, the PAVN had come to the A Shau Valley intending to stay, overrunning a Special Forces Camp there to stake their claim of ownership. Lt. Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, commander of U.S. XXIV Corps, amassed the equivalent of two divisions to go in and take it back. The PAVN responded by moving their 6th, 9th and 29th Regiments into the area as reinforcements.

Col. Joseph Conmy, commanding the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, called the operation a reconnaissance in force (a tactic used specifically to probe an enemy's combat ability). He would put five of his battalions into the valley by helicopter on May 10, 1969, to search for PAVN troops and supplies.

The overall plan of attack called for both Marines and 3/5th Cavalry units to scout



Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division climb Hamburger Hill after the battle in May 1969.  
(Photo from U.S. Army Military History Institute)

toward the Laotian border, while the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units cut the highway through the base of the valley. It was to be a trap that destroyed the PAVN in their own operating areas and blocked any escape into Laos.

If a battalion made heavy contact with the PAVN, Conmy would reinforce it by helicopter with one of the other units. In theory, the 101st could reposition its forces quickly enough to keep the PAVN from massing against any one unit, and a U.S. battalion discovering a PAVN unit would fix it in place until a reinforcing battalion could lift in to cut off its retreat and destroy it.

To paraphrase Mike Tyson, "Everyone has a theory until they get punched in the mouth." Too bad Mike wasn't on the brigade staff.

The operation went smoothly the first day, and captured documents indicated that the PAVN 29th Regiment was now somewhere in the valley. Past experience in many of the larger encounters with the

PAVN indicated they would resist violently for a short time and then withdraw before the Americans brought overwhelming firepower to bear against them. So Lt. Col. Weldon Honeycutt, commanding the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, decided his battalion had sufficient capability to carry out a reconnaissance on Hill 937 (aka Dong Ap Bia) without needing any further reinforcement. And off he went.

The 3rd/187th conducted multi-company assaults beginning on May 14, incurring little more than heavy casualties for their troubles. The difficult terrain and well-organized PAVN forces continually disrupted the tempo of the U.S. tactical operations — the terrain because of steep gradients and dense vegetation, and the PAVN, who, masked by the jungle, were able to maneuver virtually unmolested around the entire battlefield.

Reporters began to cover the battle, and the term "Hamburger Hill" — likely referring to the troops there being ground to hamburger — became widely used. In the course of only two days, the 3/187th's losses were severe: approximately 320 killed or wounded. At full strength, which the battalion surely wasn't at this point, it numbered somewhere around 1,000 men. Two of its four company commanders and eight of 12 platoon leaders had become casualties.

Three fresh battalions were brought up on May 19, and the 3rd Brigade launched its four-battalion attack at 10 a.m. on May 20, preceded by two hours of close air support and 90 minutes of artillery preparatory fires. By noon, elements of the 3/187th had reached the crest; Hill 937 was secured by 5 p.m.

(continued on the next page)

# THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY

## DID YOU KNOW ...?

### AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY, CONT.

But it was only a pyrrhic victory; the hill itself had no real military significance aside from the presence of the PAVN occupying it. Maj. Gen. John M. Wright, who had replaced Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais as commander of the 101st Airborne Division in May, abandoned it on June 5 as the operations in the valley were deemed concluded.

A spokesman for the division said that the U.S. troops "have completed their search of the mountain and are now continuing their reconnaissance-in-force mission throughout the A Shau Valley." Zais would comment: "This is not a war of hills. That hill had no military value whatsoever." But it did to the mommas and daddies and wives and children and brothers and sisters back at home. And that's the rest of this story.

The North Vietnamese reoccupied the hill a month after it was abandoned.

The debate over Hamburger Hill reached the United States Congress after Life magazine's June 27 issue published the photographs of 242 Americans killed in one week in Vietnam, turning this into a watershed event of negative public opinion toward the Vietnam War. While only five of the 242 featured photos were of those killed in this battle, these photos altered the American perception of the war forever. Those optics certainly weren't improved by the fact that the Ohio National Guard had killed four peaceful antiwar protesters at Kent State University only a week earlier.

And the result of this nearly perfect storm was that Gen. Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, was ordered to avoid any and all such battles in the future.

Because of Hamburger Hill, and other battles and euphemisms like "body

count," Americans concluded that this excursion abroad no longer served any useful purpose. As a result, U.S. emphasis soon pivoted to "Vietnamization" — turning the war over to the South Vietnamese forces rather than engaging in direct combat operations. America had reached the beginning of the end. That time.

Although six more years and another 15,000 American deaths (and who knows how many Vietnamese?) would occur before the war officially ended in 1975, the Battle of Hamburger Hill very likely signaled that it was over. Having bared its teeth on American television and on her sons, the crouching beast was demanding peace.

*By John Mason*

## OLLI DAY AT CHARGER PARK, APRIL 15



(Photos by Chris Stuhlinger)



## 30TH-ANNIVERSARY EVENTS TO START AUG. 3



In August, our Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH kicks off its 30th year. Several events are planned through 2023-24 as we focus on our program.

OLLI Alabama Day, a statewide observance of the three OLLI programs in Alabama, convenes at UAH on Thursday, Aug. 3. Our OLLI and representatives from Auburn University and The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa will join us for a daylong event.

Homer Hickam, author of “Rocket Boys” and most recently “Don’t Blow Yourself Up,” will be our keynote speaker; afterward, he will autograph books. We will have lunch, a rocket demonstration, birthday cake and time to visit, and then reconvene at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center’s Davidson Center for their Biergarten.

Other planned activities include “Inside OLLI,” a members-only event in January to share information. We rely on our UAH staff and the many volunteers who make our OLLI so successful and fun. Come see what our committees and Board of Directors do, how we mesh with the university, our relationship with the Salmon Library, and where you might find a new role in OLLI.

There will be a super-bonus in the fall featuring the James Webb Space Telescope, an art gathering in the spring, and a special annual meeting next summer. T-shirts and OLLI mementos will be offered as well.

Watch your *eNews* and *The Insider* for details.

**Nancy B. Darnall**

**Save the date!**



**Thursday, August 3, 2023**  
**30th anniversary of OLLI at UAH**

Lunch at 11:30 a.m. in the Conference Training Center on campus will kick off a year of events.

**Speaker:**

**Homer Hickam**

Author of 18 books, including:

- *Rocket Boys* (aka *October Sky*)
- Most recently, *Don’t Blow Yourself Up: The Further Adventures and Travails of the Rocket Boy of October Sky*



**Other August 3 highlights include:**

- Hosting OLLI Day with our friends from OLLIs at The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa) and Auburn University
- Birthday cake
- A rocket demonstration by the UAH Propulsion Research Center
- Feasting together at the Biergarten at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center

*The Academy of Lifetime Learning, formed in 1993, became the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH in 2006.*



## OLLI AT UAH'S ANNUAL DINNER, APRIL 27



(Photos by Philip Flowers)



## TENNENT LEE, MILITARY HISTORY TEACHER



Lucien Tennent Lee III, an OLLI member and popular military history teacher, died on March 19, his 86th birthday.

Tennent was born in Wetumpka and grew up in Tuscaloosa. He earned business and law degrees from The University of Alabama and clerked for an Alabama Supreme Court justice. He became a captain in the U.S. Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps, stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts.

He began his law practice in Huntsville in 1963. When he retired in 2006, he was a shareholder in Wilmer & Lee P.A. He chaired the Alabama Bar Association's Board of Bar Examiners, served on a committee that wrote the Alabama Rules of Evidence, and lectured at continuing legal education seminars.

He was one of Alabama's pioneer civil mediators and was an incorporating director of Attorneys Insurance Mutual of the South.

Tennent loved music, played the trombone and served as president of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, as well as in similar roles with the Arts Council and the Huntsville Museum of Art. He was chairman of the Alabama State Council on the Arts. He was a Presbyterian leader and Bible teacher.

In retirement, he became a well-read military historian and taught courses on military history and geopolitics for both OLLI and LearningQUEST. Topics of his OLLI classes from 2014 to 2023 included the Battle of the Bulge, the Axis on the ropes, D-Day, spooks and snoops, the road to Pearl Harbor, the Battle for North Africa, World War I and the Battle of Gettysburg.

His daughter, Kimberly Burkett Knight, said the family urged him to take a break from teaching because of health. But he wouldn't.

"He wasn't doing well at all, and Mom [Diane] and I kept saying, 'It's OK if you take a break.' But he was just so dedicated to his courses and teaching his history courses on World War II and the battles and the history of them. It was something he was passionate about."

She added, "I hope that everyone who took his classes took away something and learned something and someone will find the same passion that he had and will carry on the teaching of World War II."

*By Steve Stewart*

## OLLI MEMBERS REMEMBER TENNENT LEE

The joy of knowing Tennent Lee is how he inspired others to follow interests they were passionate about. Undoubtedly, he was an accomplished and well-respected jurist, but Tennent followed his passions for World War II history and the U.S. Navy. He collected facts as well as historical events. Through an uncanny capability to weave incredible stories about everyday heroes around the circumstances that they faced, he transported his students to another time and place. Truly, Tennent was an instructor who established standards of excellence and self-giving.

*—Phil Graham*

I took several of his classes and always found them interesting and informative. I liked them so much that I even took a few twice. I always learned a lot. I liked his style of teaching. He freely admitted that he was not a professional historian, just a fan of history who had done a lot of research, including several trips to the places where events took place. I enjoyed his courses because he was very good at organizing and presenting.

*—Rick Heeth*

(continued on the next page)

## OLLI MEMBERS REMEMBER TENNENT LEE, CONT.

There seems to be a person who enters one's life with a profound aura about them that tells you immediately they are top-notch individuals and you need to learn more about them. For me, that individual was Tennent Lee.

When I first joined OLLI some 15 years ago, I signed up for Tennent's class on naval history. My first Tennent class was in the business building just to the east of Wilson Hall. Two or more of the classrooms were small auditoriums that would seat 40 to 50 with the instructor's platform front and center but looking upward to the rising seating. The classroom was full! Standing room only! Tennent had his naval "dog and pony show," and all the students were engrossed in his lecture. I soon learned Tennent was a lawyer and well-versed in public speaking. His public demeanor, coupled with his knowledge of naval history, packed in the students. I took at least a dozen classes with Tennent. His classes were par excellent.

Tennent was a follower of Alfred Thayer Mahan, a U.S. naval officer and historian. I do not recall a lecture when Tennent did not quote Mahan. Even in his Army history classes, he managed to mention Mahan. Maybe he did that to push my button? On one of my many genealogy research trips, I found an old edition (1920?) of Mahan's naval history and prediction book and presented the book to Tennent after one of his classes. Mahan had signed the book! Whoever had previously owned the book had written all through it. Tennent did not care! Every class Tennent taught after receiving the book, he displayed the book as naval gospel. Tennent had not been in the Navy, but he was a believer in naval power.

He was a superb amateur war historian. If you wanted a seat in one of his classes, you signed up the day the catalog came out. Hesitation meant you went on the waiting list to get a seat.

—Cliff Lanham

How does one say goodbye to a friend? By the time I came to know Tennent, he was already an OLLI curriculum legend. His classes were well-known to be thoroughly researched (often by trips he had taken to the sites!), well-prepared, and delivered with an ease and comfort that turned them into intellectual gifts for all. And always interesting, whether one was taking them for the first time or the third. I was lucky enough to have been able to take them.

But where I fully came to understand the true character of the man was when I had the chance to team-teach a couple of courses with him. We spent hours talking about the subjects and trying to decide how best to present all that data in a way that could be enjoyed and understood by all. I say "we talked." Truth be told, I mostly listened. And took lots of notes. Tennent had the uncanny ability to go from topic to topic, sharing

anecdotes and facts about this battle or that person seemingly off the top of his head. His depth of knowledge was incredible.

Beyond that, though, he was a consummate gentleman. One was always at ease in his presence, and he, I am convinced, was more concerned that any guest feeling welcome took priority over whatever might have been on the agenda. That's a rare commodity. Once that was assured, the fun part — the conversations — could begin. I will always regret not being able to join in those conversations again.

So, Tennent, I bid you farewell. It speaks well of a man that he is remembered as a scholar, a brilliant attorney, a loving family man, a teacher without peer, and a beloved member of our OLLI family. I'll certainly remember you in all those roles. But most of all, I'll remember you as my friend.

—John Mason

Tennent Lee was a brilliant teacher of military history. His classes on WWII, Battle of the Bulge, Asiatic Pacific Theater, and codebreakers, to name a few, were presented with so much meticulous detail and research. He instilled a lifelong learning in me for WWII history. My father served in Burma and India during WWII, so I am forever grateful to Tennent for sharing his love of military history with the OLLI community. He will be missed!

—Terese Penix

I was a latecomer to his courses, as I wasn't a member of OLLI prior to 2015, but he had already been an instructor for a good while before then. Many of the OLLI members who had an interest in history had taken Tennent's courses earlier. At the completion of each of Tennent's courses that I was enrolled in, he never failed to thank the students for tuning in/attending, adding that he was so grateful to be able to contribute. In addition, he told me that preparing for his courses was what he thought it took to keep his mind sharp.

I took one of his courses twice ("Spooks and Snoops") — about the role of spy craft and deception during WWII, particularly just before D-Day. I was surprised how much difference there was between one and the other presentation. Tennent said that, yes, he was always working on the material and rearranging it — adding and modifying. To him, it was a labor of love. He also kept up with other viewpoints and would re-present a course if he thought bad or misleading information was being spread around (for example, his course on Pearl Harbor).

I could always count on Tennent wanting to present something, so far as his health would let him. He was the most consistent presenter we had in the history area — at least over the last five or six years when I was the discipline chair. And he had a wealth of information he had gathered over the years.

—Birgit Pschera



## OLLI OFFERS AUGUST 'TEMPTATIONS' TICKETS

OLLI at UAH has a block of tickets for the Sunday matinee of "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations" at 1 p.m. on Aug. 6.

Tickets for the musical are in Orchestra 2 at the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall at the Von Braun Center and cost \$70 each, a group rate reduced from the usual \$77.

These tickets are available only by phoning Pennie Wood at 256-551-2378, said Nancy Darnall, who is the OLLI point of contact.

Details about a reception for OLLI attendees will follow in the *eNews* this summer.

The Temptations climbed from the streets of Detroit to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame during the 1960s and 1970s. With signature dance moves and harmonies, they had 42 Top Ten Hits, with 14 reaching No. 1.

The musical includes how they met as well as personal and political conflicts when the United States fell into civil unrest. It is billed as a story of brotherhood, family, loyalty and betrayal that includes the group's hits, such as "My Girl," "Just My Imagination," "Get Ready" and "Papa Was a Rolling Stone."

**By Steve Stewart**

A publicity photo of the original Temptations, circa 1961–1963. Clockwise from top right: Otis Williams, Paul Williams, Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks and Elbridge "Al" Bryant.

