

INSIDER

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



NEW PROGRAM MANAGER ON THE JOB

Clay Williams becomes the OLLI at UAH program manager March 1. Read about him inside, along with other articles and photos. Topics include creatures that swim and fly; games, socializing, hiking and travel; and a Revolutionary War general who may have been a woman.



CALENDAR

MARCH - EARLY APRIL 2022

Sign up for each event by clicking "Online/In Person." All bonuses/events with online option are through Zoom video conferencing. You will receive an email with the Zoom meeting invitation one business day prior. There is a limited capacity for in-person events.

Mar 4 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online/In-Person
Bonus: Exploring Beautiful Borneo

A land of orangutans, monkeys, crocodiles, and vividly colored birds, Borneo is one of the last remaining tropical jungles in Southeast Asia. But this paradise is disappearing fast as agriculture clears and burns the forests. Join an avid traveler for a trip to Borneo. Discover remote rivers and hike through the lush, wildlife-rich jungle - and also climb Mt. Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Malaysia.

Presented by Tom Ress, World Traveler and Prolific Writer

Mar 11 | Fri | 10:30 am | In-Person
Event: Teacher Appreciation

Join us in Wilson Hall to thank our OLLI instructors. Enjoy the festivities, have a snack, reconnect with OLLI members and enjoy the entertainment.

Presented by the OLLI Social and Curriculum Committees

Mar 12 | Sat | 10:00 am | In-Person
Event: Hike at Monte Sano State Park

Hike a mostly level two-mile loop to Fire Tower and back. Bring water, snacks, and wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Pay fee at park entrance (\$5: \$2 for age 62+).

Park at Main Hiker's Trailhead Parking Lot.

Pre-registration and waiver required.

Hike led by Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger

Mar 18 | Fri | 1:15 pm | In-Person

Event: Encounters: Dean Mitchell Docent Led Tour

Join us at the Huntsville Museum of Art for this docent led tour of the engaging works of master watercolorist Dean Mitchell. The exhibit encompasses portraits, landscapes and still lifes in the time-honored realist tradition. The tour starts at 1:30 and will be free for museum members; non-museum members will pay \$8 with the OLLI group discount.

RSVP by Thursday, March 10th.

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Mar 25 | Fri | 11:00 am | In-Person

Event: Popcorn and a Movie - The Princess Bride

While homesick in bed, a young boy's grandfather reads him the story of a farm boy-turned-pirate who encounters numerous obstacles, enemies and allies in his quest to be reunited with his true love. Savor the taste of popcorn while watching The Princess Bride with OLLI friends.

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 1 | Fri | 7:00 pm | In-Person

Event: OLLI Day at Huntsville Havoc

Join us at the VBC Propst Arena to cheer on the Huntsville Havoc hockey team OLLI style. Join us for the last regular season home game. Group tickets are \$14 each.

Register by March 4th.

Group tickets available online: [Osher.uah.edu/OLLItickets](https://osher.uah.edu/OLLItickets)

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 2 | Sat | 1:00 pm | In-Person

Event: OLLI Day with Charger Athletics

Don't miss this opportunity to cheer on the UAH Chargers softball, baseball, and lacrosse teams at UAH Charger Park. OLLI members admission is free by showing your member badge at the sign-in table at the entrance of the charger park.

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 5 | Tue | 10:30 am | In-Person

Event: National Weather Service Facility Tour

Have you ever wondered how we forecast the weather?

Well, look no further. Join us on a tour of the National Weather Service's Huntsville location, 320 Sparkman Drive. Tour is free for OLLI members. Meet in the lobby of the facility wearing your OLLI Badge.

Pre-registration required.

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 7 | Th | 10:30 am | In-Person

Event: Baron Critical Weather Intelligence Facility Tour

Baron provides critical weather intelligence to businesses, government agencies, and consumers. During this tour discover how Baron delivers life-saving meteorological tools for extreme weather conditions. Tour is free for OLLI members. Meet in the lobby of the facility at 4930 Research Dr. NW wearing your OLLI Badge.

Pre-registration required.

Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 8 | Fri | 9:00 am & 10:0 am | In-Person

Event: Instructor and Facilitator Training

Instructors and facilitators will learn more about our AV equipment and any updates in policies and procedures.

Presented by the UAH OLLI Support Staff and Curriculum Committee

FROM THE EDITOR

THE JOY OF FORGETTING WHAT DAY IT IS



Glen Adams, my *Insider* colleague, introduced me to the syndicated “Pickles” comic strip by sharing this episode.

Cartoonist Brian Crane (who gave us permission to reprint) tells about the bald-headed character on the website picklescomic.com. Earl Pickles is “a

retiree with way too much time on his hands.”

The description continues: “His main hobbies are teaching his grandson important things, like that the best way to find something you lost is to buy another, and driving his wife Opal crazy. He is a couch potato, curmudgeon and all around geezer-in-residence. On the outside he seems a bit gruff, but deep inside he’s a real grouch.”

The other man is Clyde, “Earl’s buddy and fellow park bench philosopher. Together they tell it like it is, or at least how they think it ought to be.”

Most of us retirees can probably find common ground with Earl and Clyde. I understand why Earl lost track of the day. I have done that, too. Some weekdays feel like Saturday.

Let’s not say that forgetting the day shows the mind is fading; let’s call it a luxury that comes with retirement. But I don’t want to completely lose track of the days or to live without any schedule or responsibility.

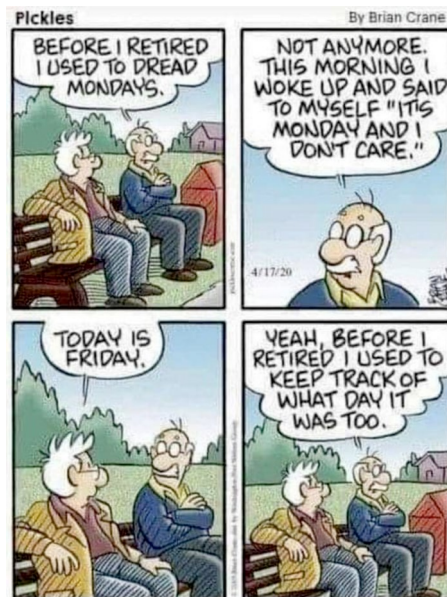
So, soon after retiring, I went looking for classes to take (without taking on too much work) and found OLLI.

I still want to enjoy extra Saturdays. But family, friends, classes, meetings, travel and events also bring joy and give me the chance to learn and contribute. Most of us want and need to be in sync with other people.

We have big news in this *Insider*: Clay Williams is the new OLLI at UAH program manager. Clay comes from Mississippi, where he worked with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Welcome, Clay, and we look forward to making OLLI history with you. Fathia Hardy tells us more about Clay in her column.

Jill Stewart’s daughter gave her a book that inspired thoughts on lifelong learning — specifically, the joy of learning *to do* things and not just learning *about* things. See Jill’s column.

David Styers reminds us that voting will start in the second week of March to elect five members of the OLLI Board of Directors — but you can volunteer for committee work whether or not you are a board member.



In John Mason’s second monthly column on military history, read about Casimir Pulaski, a Revolutionary War general from Poland who fought for the United States. Was Pulaski a he or a she? Why should it matter? John’s curriculum column explains how you can learn to research genealogy. Cliff Lanham also provides genealogy tips.

Glen Adams’ profile for March (which is Women’s History Month) is about Rexanne Warfel, a coal miner’s daughter, nurse, board member and volunteer, specifically a previous Volunteer of the Year.

Chris Stuhlinger’s report tells about more than a half-dozen events planned in the next few weeks — indoor and outdoor, from nature to science to art.

Leah Black writes about the quickening pace of social activity in our lounge in Wilson Hall, as well as the April 1 deadline to enter the annual Photo Contest.

Teacher Appreciation Day will be March 11, as Marilyn Szecholda notes in her column.

Betty Koval writes about the value of travel in making new friends and two trips being considered for 2023.

Look for event photos of yourself and your friends — and of some amazing creatures and features of land, air and sea. Subjects include hiking, the state’s new cyber high school, underwater photography, mah-jongg and bingo.

Steve Stewart
Chair, Public Relations Committee

FROM THE PRESIDENT

NOT A ‘HOW TO’ BUT A ‘WHY TO’



Apparently, my daughter believed there was more I should know about lifelong learning when she gave me a new book for my birthday.

The book was “Beginners: The Joy and Transformative Power of Lifelong Learning” by best-selling author Tom Vanderbilt, published

in early 2021. It is quite a thoughtful and entertaining read. But, more than that, it has prompted me to consider my future selection of OLLI courses from a slightly different perspective.

Tom Vanderbilt, as an older first-time father who is acutely aware that he is losing brain neurons at a faster rate, watches his young daughter and her persistent desire, effort and joy in learning how to do new things. He began to ponder why so many of us stop learning new skills as adults. Do we think only children are wired to learn new skills? Are we afraid to embarrass ourselves if we can’t completely master a skill?

Vanderbilt set out on a yearlong quest to be a “beginner” at five skills, chosen for their difficulty to master but also for the pure joy of learning them. His selected challenges were chess, juggling, surfing, drawing, and singing in a choir. Along the way, he explores the art and science of lifelong learning through his experiences.

Though he achieves varying degrees of competence at each task, Vanderbilt’s personal journey brings him to some epiphanies about the possibilities out there for all of us when we are willing to be beginners.

I must admit that I have been more eager and comfortable in learning *about* things than in learning *to do* things. Maybe I find it easier to be a passive learner. Perhaps, as I’ve gotten older, the idea of “performance” is more intimidating.

Upon reflection, I am able to list a few skills I did learn in my post-college adulthood. I achieved some rudimentary competency in ASL (American Sign Language). I learned to play handbells in a choir. I learned and became certified in infant massage techniques well enough to instruct young mothers I worked with. But all those achievements happened some years ago. What have I learned to *do* lately?

OLLI is an ideal place to be a beginner. Though I will always gravitate toward topics that I want to learn about, I aim to choose at least one course per term that requires more performative effort on my part.

Currently, I am taking “Intro to Tai Chi.” The sequence of movements requires totally different brainpower than my other courses.

Last term, I took “Shakespeare for Lovers and Haters,” which concluded with a performance for a live audience — definitely outside my comfort zone! I also commit to look more closely at the various hobby, foreign language, art and writing courses that will actually prompt me to demonstrate what I am learning.

Tom Vanderbilt’s book brought me echoes of Robert Persig’s “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance” — a big influence in my 20s. Now at this stage of life, Vanderbilt’s words are resonating with me:

“Learning new skills changes the way you think, or the way you see the world. Learning to sing changes the way you hear music, while learning to draw is a striking tutorial on the human visual system ... You learn to surf and suddenly you find yourself interested in tide tables and storm systems and the hydrodynamics of waves. Your world got bigger because you did.”

We are long past our 20s. But even now, here in OLLI we can “begin.”

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

HOW TO FIND OUT WHERE YOU CAME FROM



One of the existential questions facing humankind is simply a desire to learn about ourselves: “Where did I come from?” Do you want to find out? Then maybe your first step is no further away than signing up for an OLLI class!

As much as I’d like to take full credit for this article, I can’t. I had help. I asked Cliff Lanham (who has taught our OLLI genealogy courses now for several years) for information about the subject in general, his teaching philosophy, and the importance it can have in our lives. As it turns out, being a genealogist myself, I thoroughly agree with him.

I suspect many of you know that OLLI presents a *basic* class in genealogy about once every 12 to 18 months. In 2020, an *intermediate* class was offered with resounding results.

Cliff has taken all the necessary classes to be a certified genealogist, but has not yet completed his research dissertation. But he does keep abreast of the current genealogy certification classes given by the national and state organizations.

(By the way: Cliff has published three books on *Lanham* genealogy. Cliff’s co-instructor for the past year has been Philip Graham, also deeply involved in genealogy certification. Philip also teaches military topics for OLLI.)

So why should you want to take a genealogy class? This has been the lead question of many students over the past few years. Most OLLI students want to know more about their ancestry so that this ancestry can be passed on to the next generation.

As Cliff has stated to his students: “Genealogy can be like Genesis in the Bible for you. Are you interested in who begot whom, or would it be more interesting to research your heritage, coupled with historical stories concerning your ancestors?”

And this is the key to what makes studying our past so much fun: Why not research both our lineage and those historical stories at the same time?

The OLLI Basic Genealogy class will start with the student identifying his or her goals in ancestral research. You will learn research methods, recording methods, and collection of “original” documents and citational data to prove your ancestral lineage. Students will learn to find, collect and safeguard original documents.

Items found on Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org can be used as “guides” for the research, but original documents *must be* collected for proof and source data. Use of the census reports, both federal and state, is a basic starting point for learning. (Original documents are crucial because there is no shortage of “Joe Smiths” out there, and it is very easy to pick the wrong one if you don’t take adequate time to do the research.)

By the way: The 1950 U.S. census will be released this April (2022). Many of you reading this article will be able to find your name and parents’ names in this 1950 census for the first time.

All classes provide current genealogy website sources coupled with correct citation data and national genealogical standards to prove and support the students’ research. It is highly recommended that each student obtain a copy of “The Researcher’s Guide to American Genealogy” by Val D. Greenwood.

The genealogy class and the OLLI course Writing Your Life Story have common goals of connecting ancestry lineage and historical stories to add flavor and spice to the individual’s historical and genealogy research. You are writing your life’s story while doing your research.

The internet is adding millions of lines of digital data every six months. Sites such as MyHeritage now have special subprograms where you can place multiple family names, and sometimes you can retrieve not only linkages of lineage, but stories concerning individuals that have been digitized. You may also find DNA connections.

Your story of life connected to your family lineage can be researched and developed by taking one or more genealogy classes and writing your life’s story to pass on to the next generation. We have them in the catalog; all you have to do is sign up!

I myself have written a five-generation history of my family, though I have records going back to 15th century Ireland. And based on the work that I have done, I can promise you that once you get started researching your ancestors, you may well find it impossible to stop. So be on the lookout in the course guide for the next class. I’ll be waiting to hear whether it becomes your favorite pastime.

And with that, I’ll bid you adieu. Till next time ...

John Mason
VP of Curriculum, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

GENEALOGY TIDBITS



By Cliff Lanham
Genealogy Instructor

- ROOTSTECH 2022 will be virtual and *free* for 2022. Go to rootstech.org and sign up now.
- Want to know more about DNA? Sign up with Dr. Blaine Bettinger, renowned genealogy lecturer, for “A Day of DNA: Furthering Your Genealogy with The Latest Tools” on March 7. Go to algensoc.org, which is the Alabama Genealogical Society.
- Do you want some advanced genealogy training this summer? You can sign up at the University of Georgia’s Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR) on July 24-29. Go to ighr.gagensociety.org.
- The 1950 federal census will be released in April. Many OLLI students will be able to see their names and parents’ names and family data for the first time.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

TIME FOR YOUR CIVIC/OLLI DUTY: VOTE!



Potential new board members are recruited, identified and vetted by your nominating task force. The nominating task force members this year are Steve Jones, Rexanne Warfel, Jerry Pang, Fathia Hardy and David Styers.

I am pleased to announce that the nominating task force has gone to work

and recruited candidates for the Board of Directors election. We have a great group of nominees for your consideration.

Now, it is time for you to perform your civic duty for OLLI and vote for your new board members. Voting will begin the second week of March and continue for three weeks, as outlined in our bylaws. We will vote by electronic ballot.

We are electing five members this year, which will maintain our board membership at 18 members. As I noted in my previous article, this is about one-third of the board being newly elected this year. This gives us fresh thoughts and ideas on the board, but only if you exercise your vote to confirm these individuals. Please vote!

Why is it important to elect our new board members each year? Our OLLI is unique in Alabama in that we have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit as a part of OLLI at UAH. This requires us to have a board to oversee the operations and finances of the organization. We operate as a part of UAH.

Your board is a significant asset to the university for the support of OLLI. They are the muscle that helps support our UAH staff in the day-to-day planning and operations of your lifelong learning experience. Our governance is by committees, and each of the board members whom you elect will serve on at least two of the standing committees.

By the way, you do not have to be a board member to serve on the majority of our committees. Personally, prior to my election to the board I served on the publicity and finance committees. If you would like to serve on a committee but aren’t quite ready to seek board membership, let one of the board members know and we will get you connected.

Once you elect your new board members, they will begin a three-year period of service starting at the May board meeting. They are required to go to work immediately, electing their executive officers at that May board meeting.

The board will then meet in July between the spring and summer terms for orientation and training. At that meeting, your board will begin the planning for the next year’s work. The board’s planning cycle is typically one term in advance for most of the committees.

As you can see, the process begins with your vote. Please complete your ballot.

David Styers
Immediate Past President
OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

COURSE SPOTLIGHT



Osher
Lifelong Learning
Institute at UAH

SPRING 2022
Course Guide

Grow with OLLI!
Connect with fellow adults, age 50
and up through various in-person
and virtual activities.

Save 20%
When you register for 4
or more courses at once.

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OLLI Spring 2022 term registration is now available. Click on the image above to view a listing of the courses available.

WELCOME TO CLAY WILLIAMS, OLLI'S NEW PROGRAM MANAGER



The wait is over; OLLI's new program manager officially starts March 1.

Please join me in welcoming Clay Williams to our OLLI at UAH family. Clay is excited and eager to meet all of you over the next several weeks.

Clay has made presentations to various groups such as libraries, civic organizations and academic conferences. He has also taught a course on Mississippi history and adult education courses at Millsaps College. He and Mike Bunn maintain a blog at thehistoriansmanifesto.wordpress.com about the place of history in society. The blog contains book reviews on various subjects.

He is married and has moved to Huntsville from Brandon, Mississippi. He and his wife, Kym, have one child, Sarah, born on Halloween 2002.

Fathia Hardy
Director of Outreach and Support Services
UAH College of Professional Studies

Who is Clay Williams?

Clay graduated from Mississippi State University with a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in history and public policy administration. For the last 20-plus years, he has been employed with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, serving in several roles, including director of exhibits at the Old Capitol Museum of Mississippi History, project liaison for the Old Capitol restoration, and director of the Old Capitol Museum.

Since October 2014, he has served as a sites administrator. He oversees operations for six museum sites (Eudora Welty House and Garden, the Manship House Museum, the Old Capitol Museum, Winterville Mounds, Historic Jefferson College, and the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians.)

Not only is Clay a skilled professional, but also a published author. He has provided content several times in such venues as the "Journal of Mississippi History," "The Mississippi Encyclopedia" and "Mississippi History Now." His first book, "Battle for the Southern Frontier, the Creek War and the War of 1812," co-authored with Mike Bunn, was published in July 2008 from The History Press.

He is currently under contract to co-write a volume with the Heritage of Mississippi Series on frontier Mississippi (1800-1840).



Clay Williams

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

JOIN THE FUN AT TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY



At the halfway point of our winter term, I'm thinking how fortunate we are to be involved in OLLI and be able to meet in person again.

After the bonus on Feb. 4, we gathered in the lounge, enjoyed snacks and chatted with fellow members.

As classes wind down, we have a special event to look forward to. Mark your calendars for Teacher Appreciation Day on March 11. Members will thank our instructors, who make OLLI a truly remarkable organization. We keep on learning new things and making new friends.

There will be a performance by Luana's Wahines. Some of the dancers — the Wahines — you will see on March 11 studied with Luana for a number of years and have been performing for over 25 years.

Luana was a wonderful lady who traveled to Hawaii to bring back the beautiful dances of the islands. Many of the dancers are OLLI members who want to share their love of Hawaiian music and dancing.

So be sure to join the festivities, have a snack and reconnect with OLLI members. See you at 10:30 a.m. on March 11 for this special event.

Marilyn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair



Luana's Wahines will perform at Teacher Appreciation Day in Wilson Hall on March 11.

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

SNACKS AND SOCIALIZING IN THE OLLI LOUNGE



The member services committee is really excited to be providing snacks before the bonus events again.

Members are showing up in person more and more to attend the bonus offerings and are enjoying sharing snacks and chats with friends in the OLLI lounge before the presentation.

We are still being mindful of safety precautions while eating and socializing.

Remember that the deadline for entries to the OLLI Photo Contest for 2022 is April 1, but there is still time to get entries in. There have been more lovely sunny days to get out and snap some photos about many things that are

unique to Huntsville and many things that show how Huntsville has grown and changed.

Please be aware that the email address for submitting photos has changed. So if you have already submitted photos, please resubmit them to the new address, OLLIPhotoContest@uah.edu.

We are so glad to see the new Mah-Jongg Member Interest Group has been meeting in the OLLI lounge. The MIGs are a great way to continue to enjoy and learn more about a topic or activity you learned in a class.

Leah Black
Member Services Committee Chair



The Member Interest Group for mah-jongg enjoys a session in the OLLI lounge in January. (Photo by Amber Capello)

Discover the **Rocket City** 2022 Photo Contest

- Photos must be taken April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022
- Photographer must be a current OLLI member
- Gentle photo editing permitted but keep the original photo
- Submit named photo in a standard digital .jpg format
Recommend at least 2 MP final pixel size

Submit entries to: OLLIPhotoContest@uah.edu

Include when/where the photo was taken, your name, phone number, and email. Osher.uah.edu/OLLIPhotoContest



TRAVEL COMMITTEE

TRAVEL CEMENTS OLLI MEMBERS' FRIENDSHIPS



Welcome to *spring*! Now to wander and observe!

I do not know about most of you, and I am usually upbeat most of the time, but this cold weather is making me a bit cranky and I am longing for warm weather even more. And, if I *never* hear the words *COVID, pandemic* or *mask mandate* again, I will be perfectly

happy.

Just saying this makes me want to talk positive about the possibility of traveling again.

I previously wrote about the two most-asked-about trip possibilities for 2023: (1) a river cruise in Croatia and (2) a tour of Acadia National Park and into northeastern Canada. I have asked for information to present to the travel committee but have yet to receive said information. I guess I need to step up my game and get that information in here. *But* we also need OLLI travelers to go along with us.

I must tell you we have lots of laughs, and Bill and I have found you really do get to know your fellow OLLI members so much better. We have some of the most interesting people, and you may never know it until you make that first step and ask about their likes, hobbies and work backgrounds. You may find many similarities with that new OLLI friend.

Many people say OLLI has been a lifesaver for them; for Bill and me, it truly has. Retirement wasn't fun for me until we started taking OLLI classes, and then, after that first trip — *wow!* I will not go into detail, but it has become our social and learning place to be with all the opportunities to socialize with people we otherwise would not have met.

Zooming has kept us in touch, also. It is just plain uplifting to see others smiling. Keep in touch with each other, and you are the winner.

Now for an update about the **Alaska adventure tour** in August 2022. Only six spaces remained at the newsletter deadline, but there could be even fewer by the time you read this. Chris Stuhlinger has gone above and beyond to make this tour a wonderful experience.

Join us for the 12-day tour, Aug. 12-23, 2022, of south-central Alaska, organized by the University of Alaska – Fairbanks Summer sessions. For more details, contact Chris at cstuhlinger@gmail.com or me at bbkoyal13@gmail.com.

Happy traveling, whatever you choose to do this year. I hope to see some of you along the way.

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair

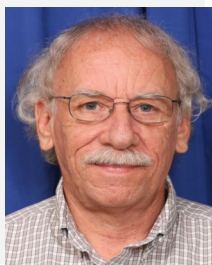


See the next page for information on a March 12 hike in Monte Sano State Park, which includes the fire tower trail (top center); the fire tower, which is scheduled for removal and relocation; and the O'Shaughnessy lily pond (bottom). (Photos by Chris Stuhlinger)



EVENTS COMMITTEE

NATURE, MUSEUM, MOVIE, SPORTS, WEATHER



The OLLI events calendar lists quite a few events scheduled for the coming months.

Recently, OLLI members enjoyed a morning of bird spotting at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. See the information below for events coming up in March and early April. Check

the OLLI website, the spring course catalog, and the weekly *eNews* for additional events and information.

REVIEW — Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge bird-spotting and hike (Friday, Feb. 4, 2022)

About 13 OLLI members braved the brisk temperatures to learn about Wheeler NWR, observe hundreds of cranes, and walk across the boardwalk through the bald cypress swamp.

Although many of the gray sandhill cranes had already departed on their flight north, hundreds were still feeding in the fields. The group even saw five rare and endangered whooping cranes, which are white and larger than the sandhill cranes. Quite a few ducks were also seen swimming and feeding near the observation building.

Upcoming Events

1. Hike at Monte Sano State Park, Saturday, March 12, 10 a.m. to noon

Meet at the main hiking trails parking lot (hiker's trailhead, Nolen Avenue between the lodge and cabins). See the map at tinyurl.com/monte-sano.

Join Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger for an easy 2- to 2.5-mile loop to the fire tower (fire tower trail with interpretive stops) and back (gravel road, at your own pace) on these mostly level trails. Learn a brief history of Monte Sano and the state park.

Stops will include the site of the 1890 O'Shaughnessy lily pond and home site. The fire tower, first erected as a wooden tower in the 1940s, is scheduled for removal and relocation offsite in February or early March, so it might be gone by the day of our hike.

Wear appropriate clothing for the weather (hike will be canceled if there is inclement weather); parts of the trail may be muddy. Pay fee at park entrance (\$5, or \$2 for age 62 and up). Bring water and snacks.

Sign up for this hike and complete the online release/waiver form at the following link: tinyurl.com/3-12-22-hike

2. Huntsville Museum of Art, Friday, March 18, 1:15-2:30 p.m., 300 Church St. S.

Meet in the museum lobby at 1:15 to purchase tickets and be in the OLLI group photo.

Join us for an OLLI-only 60-minute docent-led tour of the "Encounters: Dean Mitchell" exhibition. It is free for museum members, \$8 for nonmembers with the OLLI group discount. Purchase your ticket at the door; the tour begins promptly at 1:30 (requires pre-registration by March 10).

This event may be canceled due to COVID restrictions in effect during the scheduled date.

Sign up for this event at the following link: tinyurl.com/dean-mitchell

About the Exhibit — The engaging works of master watercolorist Dean Mitchell encompass portraits, landscapes and still lifes in the time-honored realist tradition. Mitchell has received more than 500 national and international awards. His works can be found in public collections across the country, including the Library of Congress in Washington.

See hsvmuseum.org/encounters-dean-mitchell for further information regarding the artist and this acclaimed exhibit.

Parking — The museum (300 Church St. S.) has an adjacent parking lot. Metered parking can be found on Church Street, Williams Street and Fountain Row. Additional parking is in the garage under the BB&T bank building.

Museum dining — Pane e Vino is a casual, family-friendly pizzeria located downstairs in the museum. Enjoy a delicious meal before or after visiting the galleries in their newly renovated dining area. www.paneevinopizzeria.com

3. Popcorn and a Movie: "The Princess Bride," Friday, March 25, 11 a.m., Wilson Hall 152, UAH campus

This information comes from Michelle Laverty, a member of the events committee:

Westley and Princess Buttercup turn 35 this year! Who knew Westley could predict the future? When the giant Fezzik asks why Westley wears a mask, he replies: "It's just that masks are terribly comfortable — I think everyone will be wearing them in the future."

(continued on the next page)

EVENTS COMMITTEE

NATURE, MUSEUM, MOVIE, SPORTS, WEATHER (CONT.)

Named in numerous “Top (...) movies of all times” lists, this film was directed by Rob Reiner with an ensemble cast. “The Princess Bride” tells the story of a farmhand named Westley, accompanied by companions befriended along the way, who must rescue his true love, Princess Buttercup, from the odious Prince Humperdinck.

The film preserves the novel’s metafictional narrative style by presenting the story as a book being read by a grandfather to his sick grandson. The OLLI weekly *eNews* will provide details on how we are turning this celebratory milestone viewing into an audience-participation event.

4. Ice hockey: Huntsville Havoc vs. Fayetteville, Friday, April 1, 7 p.m., Von Braun Center, Propst Arena

This is the Havoc’s last regular-season home game series. Havoc games are always family-friendly, so bring your family and friends!

The discount ticket cost is \$14 for all ages, but we need a minimum of 10 people for the group rate. Parking costs \$5 (city garage) or \$10 (VBC, handicapped).

You must pre-register and pre-pay for your ticket by March

4. Sign up and pay for this event at the following link:
www.uah.edu/cps/olli/purchase-tickets

5. UAH Chargers baseball, softball and lacrosse, Saturday, April 2; baseball and softball begin at 1 p.m., and lacrosse begins at 3 p.m.; Charger Park, UAH campus

Here’s your chance to cheer on three UAH Chargers teams (baseball and softball vs. Mississippi College; lacrosse vs. Shorter) in one afternoon. OLLI members may attend the games for free (thanks to Janet Reville for arranging this), but you must sign in at the OLLI table at the gate and display your OLLI name badge. No pre-registration is required.

6. National Weather Service tour, Tuesday, April 5, 10:30-11:30 a.m., 320 Sparkman Drive NW

Meet in the NWS lobby for a free tour of this federal weather forecast service facility, and learn how local and area weather forecasts are prepared, along with other services. This event may be canceled due to COVID restrictions in effect during the scheduled date.

Sign up for this event at the following link: tinyurl.com/weather-service

7. Baron critical weather intelligence facility tour, Thursday, April 7, 10:30-11:30 a.m., 4930 Research Drive NW

Meet in the Baron lobby for a free tour of this private weather forecast service facility. Baron provides critical weather intelligence to businesses, government agencies and consumers. This includes weather radar and storm tracking. This event may be canceled due to COVID restrictions in effect during the scheduled date.

Sign up for this event at the following link: tinyurl.com/baron-hsv

Coming soon: Details for Saturday, April 9 — hike at Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve.

If you have questions about a scheduled event or suggestions for a new event, or would like to join the events committee, please contact Chris Stuhlinger (cstuhlinger@gmail.com).

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

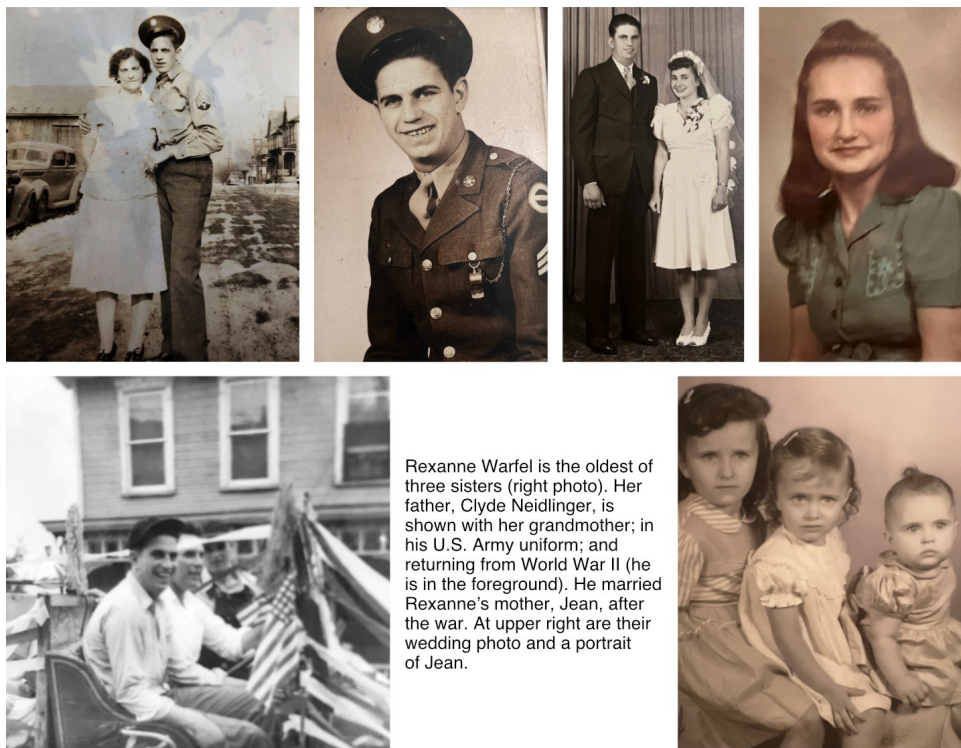
HIKING WHEELER WILDLIFE REFUGE ON FEB. 4



*Photos by Glen Adams,
Edward Bernstein,
Marsha Langlois
and Steve Stewart*



PEOPLE OF OLLI



Rexanne Warfel is the oldest of three sisters (right photo). Her father, Clyde Neidlinger, is shown with her grandmother; in his U.S. Army uniform; and returning from World War II (he is in the foreground). He married Rexanne's mother, Jean, after the war. At upper right are their wedding photo and a portrait of Jean.

MINER'S DAUGHTER, NURSE AND VOLUNTEER



Rexanne Warfel, this month's *OLLI Insider* profile, is an honest-to-goodness coal miner's daughter.

She was born and raised in Tower City, Pennsylvania, where anthracite coal is mined. Her dad, Clyde Neidlinger, joined the Army at 16 and served during World War II. When he

returned home in 1946, he married Rexanne's mother, Jean. They would have three children, with Rexanne being the oldest.

"Dad worked in the mines and then later drove a coal truck to the coal breakers (processing plants)," said Rexanne. "He was involved with coal mining 18 years and then went to work for TRW. My mother was a housewife until I was 10, but then had to get a job. She was a seamstress in one of the many factories we had in town.

"We were poor, but never knew it! What you don't have, you don't miss. Dad always said, 'You have all you need: a roof over your head, clothes on your back and food on the table.'"

"We had a two-story, two-bedroom, no-bathroom house with a coal stove to keep warm. We had a wringer washer with outside air for drying. Air was free!

"Everyone in towns had basically the same lifestyle. We entertained each other playing cards, games and sports."

Her father one day brought home something that would set her apart from the other girls in Tower City.

"My dad came home excited," said Rexanne. "He said, 'Look what I bought you from someone who is not interested anymore: an accordion.' I took lessons for 10 years and was often asked to play at public events. I enjoyed music and still do."

Rexanne married, and she and her husband would eventually have four children: two sons and two daughters. While raising a family, she went to night school and earned a nursing degree. Thus began a 30-year nursing career, mostly on the medical-surgery floor. (She returned briefly to nursing during the pandemic to help with the severe staffing shortages.)

(continued on the next page)

PEOPLE OF OLLI

MINER'S DAUGHTER, NURSE AND VOLUNTEER (CONT.)

Her husband was transferred to Redstone Arsenal in 1993 (they would later divorce after 25 years of marriage). Rexanne immediately got a job at Huntsville Hospital, and would work there and at other hospitals, rehabilitation facilities and retirement homes until she retired in 2015.

And that's when she found OLLI: "I was surfing on the internet one day, looking for fun things, and I spotted OLLI. It offered courses with no homework or grades! How fun is that! I went to UAH and received a warm, friendly welcome. I began taking classes and loved it."

Loving it is an understatement. Not only has Rexanne taken classes; she has served on the OLLI Board of Directors, the administration and finance committee, the new-members committee, the travel committee and the social committee. She has taught cooking and nutrition

classes. And most importantly for many OLLI members, she provides the excellent snacks on bonus Fridays. She deservedly was named 2020 Volunteer of the Year.

When Rexanne is not busy with OLLI business, she enjoys cooking, crafts and cake decorating.

Her son Corbin is a federal analyst in San Diego. Daughter Corinne is a senior cyber security analyst, and other daughter Chelsey is a medical receptionist. Both live locally. Son Garth has passed away.

Thanks, Rexanne, for the many, many things you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams

OLLI LIFE



NEW CYBER HIGH SCHOOL

The new Alabama School of Cyber Technology & Engineering, a statewide high school, is temporarily operating on the Oakwood University campus. But its permanent campus is under construction within blocks west of UAH at Bradford and Wynn drives NW. Aaron Brazelton, director of admissions and advancement, brought some of the school's students to an OLLI bonus session Feb. 11. They spoke about the school, its curriculum and its students. (Photos by Glen Adams and Steve Stewart)



THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY



Casimir Pulaski
(Image from Wikipedia Commons)



Pulaski is buried at this monument in Savannah, Georgia.
(Photo by Matthew Flaten, usemycamera.net; used by permission)

DID YOU KNOW...? AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY

This is the second in a series of articles, each giving a highlight of the month from military history.

March: Recognizing diversity in a Revolutionary War hero

When the American Revolutionary War began on April 19, 1775, the colonial revolutionaries did not have a standing army; rather, the 13 colonies relied upon their state militias composed of part-time citizen-soldiers for local defense.

Considering that they were preparing to go to war against arguably the best-trained, best-equipped and best-led army in the world, their situation was, to say the least, critical. To put it bluntly, they lacked equipment, supplies, training and, perhaps most importantly, leadership. In fact, during the early stages of the revolution, the Continental Army had a reputation for being disorganized, undisciplined and poorly drilled.

The Continental Congress voted for independence from Great Britain on July 2, 1776, and two days later, a declaration written largely by Thomas Jefferson outlining the reasons for that vote was published.

George Washington received notice of the publication of the declaration two days later, along with his appointment as general in chief of the new country's armies, which had been established on June 14, 1775, and were then primarily located in New York.

On Sept. 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a new name for what had been called the "United Colonies." The moniker "United States of America" has remained since then as a symbol of freedom and independence. While these pronouncements helped formalize the new country, they did little — if anything — to improve its army.

Thankfully, the new ideas of "social contracts" formulated by philosophers such as John Locke had influenced not only men like Thomas Jefferson, but also many noblemen and men of privilege then living in Europe. These individuals, some with a military pedigree, were excited and energized at the possibilities for humankind that the new United States offered to the world. Many of them wanted to be part of the historical moment.

(continued on the next page)

THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY

DID YOU KNOW...?

AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY (CONT.)

Six who did were Baron von Steuben, credited with training the army; the Marquis de Lafayette; Polish military officer Tadeusz Kościuszko, one of the Continental Army's most brilliant combat engineers; Spaniard Bernardo de Gálvez, governor of the Spanish province of Louisiana, who allowed munitions, medicine and other vital supplies to be shipped up the Mississippi River and, once Spain entered the war in 1779, launched a bold offensive operation against British-controlled West Florida; the Bavarian-born Baron Johann de Kalb, commander of a division during the dreary winter at Valley Forge, working closely with Lafayette and Gen. George Washington; and finally, the focus of this column, Polish-born Casimir Pulaski, who spent his brief life fighting as a revolutionary on two separate continents.

Pulaski distinguished himself throughout the revolution, most notably by saving the life of George Washington in 1777's Battle of Brandywine by finding an escape route through which Washington and his soldiers were able to retreat. Pulaski became a general in the Continental Army, and he and his friend Michael Kovats created the Pulaski Cavalry Legion and went on to reform the American cavalry as a whole.

At the Battle of Savannah, while leading a cavalry charge against British forces, Pulaski was fatally wounded by grapeshot and died shortly thereafter. And it is Pulaski, born either March 4 or March 6, 1745, in Poland, about whom the rest of this story is written.

Pulaski had died in battle in 1779, and in 1853 remains found on a bluff above Augustine Creek on Greenwich Plantation near Savannah, South Carolina, were believed to be the general's. These bones were subsequently reinterred at the Casimir Pulaski Monument in Savannah, Georgia.

The skeletal remains were exhumed in 1996 and examined for a forensic study. The eight-year examination, including DNA analysis, ended inconclusively, although the skeleton was consistent with Pulaski's age and occupation. A healed wound on the skull's forehead was consistent with historical records of an injury Pulaski sustained in battle, as was a bone defect on the left cheekbone, believed to have been caused by a benign tumor.

In 2005, the remains were reinterred in a public ceremony with full military honors, including Pulaski's induction into the Georgia Military Hall of Fame. A study funded by the

Smithsonian Institution, the results of which were released in 2019, concluded from the mitochondrial DNA of his grandniece, known injuries, and physical characteristics, that the skeleton was likely Pulaski's.

But then experts made a startling discovery: Some features of the skeleton were female. This led to the hypothesis that Pulaski may have been female or, perhaps more likely, intersex. (Intersex people are individuals born with any of several sex characteristics, including chromosome patterns, gonads or genitals that, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "do not fit typical binary notions of male or female bodies.")

This analysis was based on the skeleton's female pelvis, facial structure and jaw angle, in combination with the fact that Pulaski identified as male and was identified by everyone who knew him, or of him, in his lifetime as male.

So, one might glean from all of this that one of early America's earliest military heroes might have been female or, at the very least, someone who doesn't fit our typical binary notion of male or female. Yet neither he nor anyone else in the Continental Army cared. All they saw was a fearless and indomitable leader of cavalry, and a leader of a caliber they could little do without. Pulaski was, and is, an American hero who was instrumental in helping the young country achieve its independence.

So in a time when legislatures still froth over who can marry whom, or who can use which restroom, or whom we are allowed to talk about in classrooms, or even who is eligible to have a wedding cake — never mind whether men and women are and should be considered inherently equal — let us think back to one of our founding heroes.

If not for his/her actions, the Revolutionary War could well have turned out differently. In fighting for our independence, gender or sexual identity certainly didn't matter to him/her. And whether his/her sexuality was known to his compatriots, it didn't matter to them, either. So why should it matter to us?

(Details of this incredible story were recently described in "The General Was Female?," an episode in the series "America's Hidden Stories" that premiered April 8, 2021, on the Smithsonian Channel.)

By John Mason



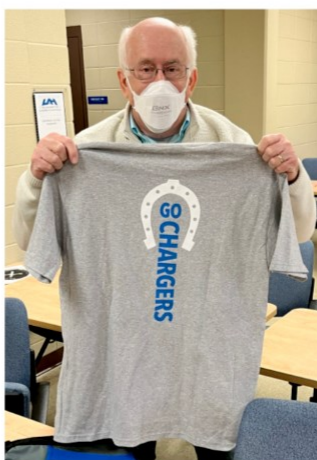
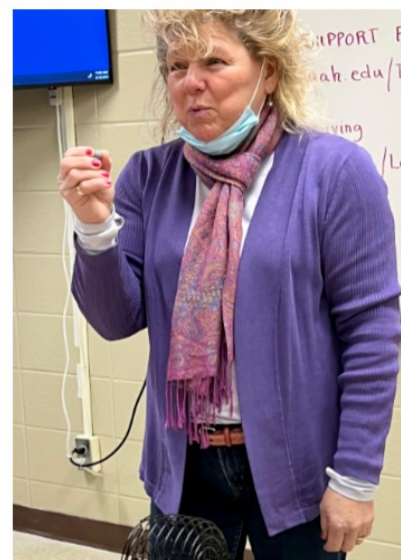
SEEING UNDER THE SEA



Lila Harris, a published underwater photographer, shared magical, mysterious and surprising sea life during an OLLI bonus session Jan. 28. The photos above are her originals. The owner of Aquatic Soul Photography, she recently moved back to Huntsville, where she was born. She has traveled to dive locations including Bali, Raja Ampat, Papua New Guinea, Komodo Island, Palau, Fiji, Australia and Iceland.



FUN BY THE NUMBERS: PLAYING BINGO FEB. 18



(Photos by Fathia Hardy and Steve Stewart)

THE LAST WORD

UAH SPRING BREAK

March 14 - 18, 2022

**UAH and OLLI Offices are
CLOSED.**