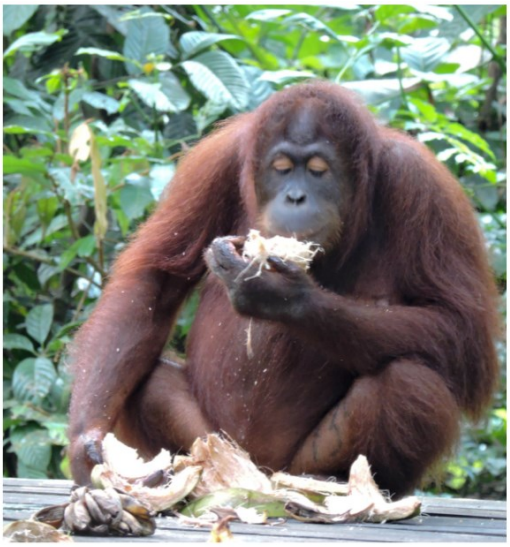
THE OLLI INSIDER

APRIL 2022 ISSUE

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH

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



OH, THE PLACES WE GO!

Wilson Hall Room 111, Huntsville, AL 35899 | 256.824.6183 | OLLI.info@uah.edu | Osher.uah.edu

CALENDAR

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.

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. General admission tickets can be purchased at the arena or in advance from the Havoc box office.
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

Apr 9 | Sat | 10:00 am | In-Person
Event: Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve
Hike Terry Trail with Big Tree Tour signage. Directions and more information on Page 10 of the newsletter.
Pre-registration and waiver required.
Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 15 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online/In-Person
Bonus: Adventures in Glacier Bay, Alaska
Climb aboard the 1929 Motor Vessel the "David B." to explore the waters in Glacier Bay, Alaska. Barbara Staggs will share her adventures of spending a week with five other photographers on the restored 64 ft. boat with its original diesel engine while viewing glaciers calving and creatures such as whales, seals, and sea lions.
Presented by Barbara Staggs, Photographer and Traveler

Apr 21| Th| 5:00 pm | In-Person
MIG Event: Dine Out MIG Meet-Up: Wahlburgers
Dine Out MIG is BACK! Join us for the return back to dining out with OLLI friends. Pre-registration is required.
Presented by the Dine Out MIG, Sandra Debrowski coordinating.

Apr 22 | Fri | 1:00 pm | In-Person
Event: Manna House Plant, Lacey's Spring
Celebrate Earth Day by visiting the Manna House's Fields of Green with fellow OLLI members. This is a 15,000 sq/ft indoor hydroponic garden producing fresh, crisp, flavorful lettuce. During this 20-minute guided tour, gain an understanding of the hydroponic process.
Pre-registration is required by noon on Friday, April 15th.
Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

Apr 29 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online/In-Person
Bonus: Only Hope: My Mother and the Holocaust Brought to Light
Open to the Public!
Before she passed away in 1974, Felicia Bornstein Lubliner wrote about her internment in Polish slums and two concentration camps, Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen. Her powerful stories have been published by her son, Irv Lubliner. He will share excerpts from "Only Hope: A Survivor's Stories of the Holocaust," shedding light on his mother's experiences and indomitable spirit, as well as his own experience as a child of Holocaust survivors and his process in bringing the book to fruition.
Presented by Irv Lubliner, Published Author

Apr 30 | Sat | 10:00 am | In-Person
Event: Bike Ride at Aldridge Greenway
BYOB - "Bring your own Bike" on this approximately eight mile ride from Mountain Gap Rd. to Ditto Landing and back. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and wear appropriate clothing for the weather.
Meet at Parking Lot off Mountain Gap Rd.
Pre-registration and waiver required.
Presented by the OLLI Events Committee

WHAT'S A POLITE WORD FOR 'EUPHEMISM'?

After I shot a photo of OLLI members with the UAH Pep Band between basketball games, a young woman (presumably a student) approached me.

"Uh-oh!" I thought. "I guess I failed to get bureaucratic approval before shooting that picture."

That wasn't it. She actually wanted to ask who we were and whether she could post on Instagram a picture of us that she had taken. Relieved, I told her this would be fine. It would be good publicity for OLLI.

That is when I really may have gone wrong. I explained to her that OLLI is "college classes for old people with no grades and no homework." I quickly added, "You don't need to quote me on that." Then I gave her a business card describing OLLI more benignly and perhaps more truthfully.

You may quibble with my description of OLLI classes (we do sometimes have homework, but no one can make us do it). But I recognized my worst error when I downloaded a new publication from the American Psychological Association titled "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Inclusive Language Guidelines."

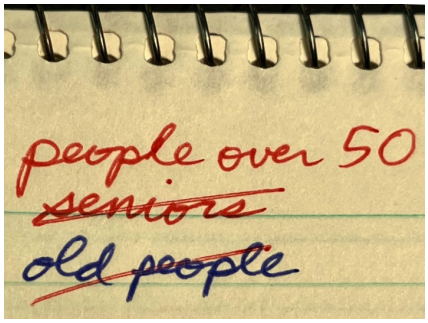
APA publishes a widely used style guide for academic writing and is not to be confused with The Associated Press (AP), which puts out its own style guide for journalists, or with the late, great A&P, which sold groceries.

I agree with what APA is trying to do. I believe in equity, diversity and inclusion and realize we all need help to know which of our words may be offensive, even if unintentionally.

I doubt that APA would find "old people" an acceptable description of our demographic, but it does give the green light to "older people," "older adults," "persons 65 years and older" and "the older population." (OLLI starts at age 50; we have no APA guidance for that.)

APA frowns on calling us "the elderly," "elderly people," "the aged," "aging dependents," and, surprisingly, "seniors" or "senior citizens." I remember when "seniors" came into vogue, but I never liked it because it was not descriptive enough. Were we talking about high school seniors, college seniors, or senior adults?

Such ambiguity is one of my two major complaints with some terms that are touted as neutral or inclusive.



Sometimes we even pile on more words to achieve greater vagueness — much like Russia saying that the incursion into Ukraine isn't a "war" but a "special military operation."

A good term for us is "people over 50" — just as precise and unopinionated as APA's similar phrase but two words shorter.

My other occasional complaint is grammatical. Only recently have I grudgingly accepted "they" and its variants as singular, gender-neutral pronouns, as in "every OLLI student should consider doing their homework." "They" has been plural for most of my life.

It is difficult to navigate the expectations of good taste and the language czars. But if we speak succinctly and specifically, people are more likely to take note, as did the UAH student. "The 'no homework' part sounds good," she said.

In this *Insider*, Jill Stewart notes that travel is not just fun; we learn from it and gain perspective on the world. Betty Koval relates travel to the '60s rock song "Born to Be Wild."

John Mason, as curriculum vice president, explains a change to semesters from quarters. In his monthly column on military history, John tells about the Confederate general who became famous for the ill-fated Pickett's Charge during the Battle of Gettysburg.

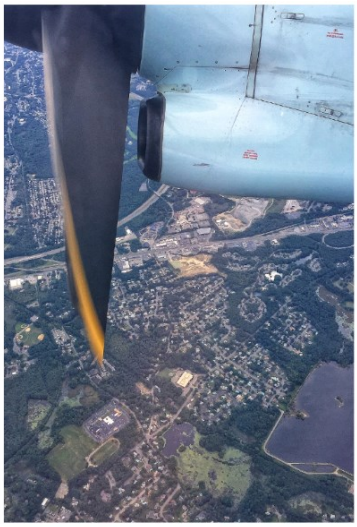
Glen Adams writes about Richard Brooks, an OLLI board member and teacher, who took lifelong learning so seriously that he earned a doctorate at 72. David Styers reveals how learning how to do genealogical research helped him identify mistakes in his family's lore.

Chris Stuhlinger details upcoming events planned by his committee, and we have pictures from recent events.

Clay Williams, our new OLLI program manager, brings welcome news about UAH relaxing rules for face masks as the COVID danger lessens.

Steve Stewart
Chair, Public Relations Committee

ARE WE THERE YET?



A village seen from the ruins of Warkworth Castle in Northumbria, England; views from a flight from Boston to Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Photos by Jill Stewart)

"Are we there yet?" — that familiar refrain from the back seat on family road trips. Travel, both near and far, has been one of the many things we have missed since March 2020. Are you ready to go somewhere? Anywhere?

Many may think it is delusional to promote the value of travel in our lives at a time when gas is over $4 per gallon, numerous international destinations are experiencing unspeakable crises of one sort or another, and we are learning that the virus that kept us all in our homes for so long may indeed become seasonal but will never be fully eradicated. With all that in mind — just maybe — this is really the right time to find ways to explore our world again.

Travel experiences have been a key component of lifelong learning for OLLI members. From bonus programs to courses to group tours and field trips, our members have shared the vistas, curiosities and insights discovered when they have ventured beyond the familiarity of north Alabama.

Right now I am vicariously enjoying travel with OLLI members Bob and Nancy Darnall as they journal experiences on their *second* world cruise. In summer 2020, Chris Stuhlinger taught an excellent virtual course about the many charms of Alaska. In August, he will personally lead a group of OLLI members to explore that state together.

Our new OLLI Program Manager Clay Williams, along with Fathia Hardy, is arranging some field trips to special destinations in Alabama and nearby states as part of the summer 2022 schedule. With the help of our travel committee, we are finally beginning to envision future opportunities for travel domestically and internationally *for* our members and *led* by members.

Why do we need to see and understand more of our state, our country and our world at a time like this? Basically, everyone on earth has shared the experience of the pandemic and its consequences for the past two years. The forced isolations have exacerbated fear and distrust across the globe.

Traveling again may be one opportunity to break down barriers to our greater understanding. Yes, we travel for fun and excitement. But travel also brings us face to face with reality. It's not a virtual experience. It forces us to be flexible and open to experiences outside our usual routines and interactions.

Travel can be a powerful teacher. We get the opportunity to appreciate the history, art and culture of different places and people. From that we gain context for what has influenced current events and challenges. We find that we may be different from those in other places but we are also fundamentally the same.

(continued on the next page)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ARE WE THERE YET? (CONT)

Mark Twain, a well-known traveler, famously wrote, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.”

The contemporary travel writer Rick Steves has recommended that when we travel we should make a broader perspective our favorite souvenir. An expanded global viewpoint gives us connections that make us wiser and shapes who we are.

Steves also acknowledges that we can’t all travel physically, but anyone can live with a traveler’s mindset.

It is a choice that can make our lives richer. I celebrate the fact that OLLI values travel opportunities — both physical and virtual — in the programming we offer as an important aspect of the joy of learning.

My hope is that all of us will reach out for whichever travel option we are most ready to grasp. It can be even better when we share it with our OLLI friends. Are *you* there yet?

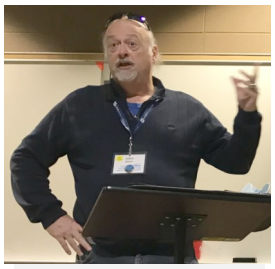
Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

PROMOTING OLLI TO HUNTSVILLE LEADERS

OLLI networked with potential members, board members and teachers — as well as with other nonprofit organizations — during Leaders on Board, held Feb. 23 at the Westin Huntsville for alumni of Leadership Greater Huntsville. Steve Stewart, OLLI public relations committee chair, and Jill Stewart, president of the Board of Directors, are facing forward in the left photo. Also participating was Fathia Hardy, director of outreach and support services for UAH’s College of Professional Studies. She is on the right in the righthand photo. (Photos by Fathia Hardy and Steve Stewart)

OLLI TO MOVE FROM QUARTERS TO SEMESTERS



Change is coming to OLLI!

OK, take a second and catch your breath. Go ahead. I'll wait.

Feeling better now? Good! So let's talk about it.

Believe me, I understand that we as people just don't like change. That's all right. But it's good to keep in mind that not all change is bad. Or hard.

Now, changing over to the metric system, well, that would be hard. But the change we're implementing isn't anywhere near to that kind of difficulty. This is more like changing your shirt. And we can *all* do that without missing a beat, can't we? So let me explain.

What we're changing is the structure of our terms. In the past, OLLI at UAH has operated on what is known as the quarter system — you know, a system where the academic year is divided into four terms, each lasting around eight to 10 weeks, and usually looking something like this: fall quarter, late September to December; winter quarter, early January to late March/early April; spring quarter, early or mid-April to early June; and summer quarter, late June or early July to late August.

Did you know that as long ago as 2012, only 14.7% of American colleges and universities still used the quarter system? Today, that number has shrunk even further to somewhere between 5% and 10%. Doesn't that make you wonder why?

Well, at least academically speaking, the main reason is that by going to a semester system, where semesters last longer than quarters, instructors have the time, usually, to be able to go more in-depth with the material they wish to present. (Universities generally schedule two 15-week semesters, usually termed fall and spring, typically looking like this: fall semester, September to late December; spring semester, late January to late May; and summer semester, June to August.)

I'm sure all of you have taken classes that sometimes felt rushed because the instructor had so much material to be squeezed into a short time frame that they simply couldn't cover it all. *And*, in those courses that are built on memory, be it muscle memory or brain memory (think languages, yoga, tai chi, etc.), four to six weeks is simply not enough time to train those neurons how to do by rote those new skills you're trying to develop. This change is designed to help remedy those kinds of problems.

So, beginning with this year's fall term, OLLI at UAH will be transitioning over to that semester look. And here's what it will look like, along with a few key dates for you all to keep in mind (or in my case, put on my calendar!):

Fall 2022 will be a 10-week offering beginning Sept. 12 and running through Nov. 18. Effectively, this will add two weeks to the fall terms we've all been used to. So to take advantage of that, we will also be extending the maximum number of classes that can be offered in any course — at the instructor's discretion — to eight. Some key dates to remember: Our fall open house will be held Aug. 5; fall break will be Oct. 3-7; and the UAH Thanksgiving break, Nov. 21-25. In truth, there's just not a whole lot of difference (or change) in the fall from what we've been used to. It'll be a good way to ease into the new system.

The more significant change will be in the spring term, which will begin on Jan. 30, 2023, and will effectively combine what we've come to know as the winter and spring terms into one. Here's the big change: Spring will now last for 13 weeks, ending May 5. That will seem like a long time. But our class structure really won't change.

For now, the maximum number of classes in any course will still be eight. The difference is that the beginning and end dates for those classes may now be spread out, hopefully allowing us to expand the total number of offerings.

Key dates to remember are spring open house, Jan. 6, 2023; Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Jan. 16; and spring break, March 13-17. As more of the details are ironed out, we will publicize them in all our online and print offerings, so please stay tuned.

As Clay Williams notes in his article, UAH has relaxed its mask mandate. But we recognize that for individual reasons, not everyone may yet be comfortable attending classes in person and *not* wearing a mask. That is certainly your right and privilege. The main thing is to just register and come back to class! We have missed you.

See? I told you it wasn't going to be hard. Your curriculum team, along with the Board of Directors and the College of Professional Studies staff, is working tirelessly to make the transition seamless. And when that happens, I believe you'll come to appreciate the benefits available.

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

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

COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Spring 2022 will soon be underway, and with less travel restrictions, what better time to learn a foreign language so you can be better prepared to see the world? Term tuition is $20 plus the per-course fee. You can register for courses at Osher.uah.edu/OLLIRegistration.

CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH

4/11 – 5/16 • M • 10:30 am – noon • 6 sessions • Live Virtual • T. Prescott • $35

Develop oral communication and pronunciation fluency with dialogues on specific topics and basic phrases and expressions. Conversations will be based on daily life issues using the news, magazines, arts, etc., as source material. Members will have the opportunity to present topics for discussion each session.

GERMAN STORIES FOR INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED READERS

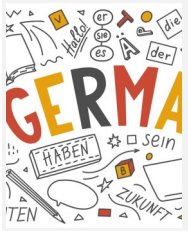
4/12 – 5/17 • Tu • 8:30 – 10:00 am • 6 sessions • In Person • L. Medenbach • $35

Explore Zurich, Switzerland, with Dino and his girlfriend, Elisabeth, using the textbook *Zurück in Zürich* as a guide. Learn about the fresh mountain air, the beauty of Lake Zurich, Dino grappling with the Swiss dialect, local customs, and surprises. Join us as we dive into this entertaining story while expanding our knowledge of the German language.

SPANISH FOR BEGINNERS

4/12 – 5/3 • Tu • 10:30 am – noon • 4 sessions • Live Virtual • Y. Nuckels • $25

Have fun learning one of the most used languages globally! Emphasis will be on vocabulary and phrases used in everyday life while traveling to a Spanish-speaking country or at home, enriching the knowledge of speaking Spanish. Grammar is covered to facilitate understanding and use of the vocabulary and phrases given.



GERMAN FOR TRAVELERS

4/12 - 5/17 • Tu • 1:15 – 2:45 pm • 6 sessions • In Person • C. French • $35

Have you ever wanted to travel to German-speaking Europe and speak the language? Enhance your basic German communication skills by learning how to ask for directions, order food, find places, and introduce yourself in German-speaking countries. Have a look inside their customs, culture, and traditions to have a good experience when you visit.

Save 20%

When you register for 4 or more term courses at once.

NEW NEWS ON MASKS!

Effective immediately, masking will no longer be mandatory indoors on the UAH campus, except:

- Masks are required in all clinical areas in Wilson Hall, as posted on signage.
- Individuals are still required to wear a mask in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance, including:
    - Following an isolation period after a positive test (i.e., wear a mask for five days when around people following the five-day isolation period — a minimum 10 days of total masking)
    - After an unvaccinated person's close-contact exposure to a COVID-positive individual (i.e., wear a mask for five days following the five-day quarantine period after exposure — 10 days total if no symptoms develop)

This change in COVID protocols comes after a significant drop in the number of positive cases on campus and in our community, changes in guidance from the CDC, and soliciting feedback from various faculty, staff and student groups.

UAH students, faculty and staff should continue to comply with the COVID-19 safety precautions detailed on the UAH COVID-19 Campus Guidelines website. This includes staying home whenever you are sick and following the guidance on reporting symptoms and exposures and testing.

Vaccines remain key to combating COVID-19. UAH continues to strongly encourage our campus community to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The protection afforded by the vaccine has been essential in keeping positive case numbers low.

UAH currently has free COVID-19 vaccines and boosters available. Appointments can be made by calling 256.824.2400.

UAH will continue to monitor the available COVID-19 data. We will keep everyone informed if any changes occur.

Clay Williams
OLLI Program Manager

WE ARE TRAVELERS — 'BORN TO BE WILD'

Welcome to spring — *finally*! I am quite sure each of you is as ready as I am for more outdoor wandering and exploring.

I received a book titled "Alabama Road Trips: 52 Ideas to Get Away," published by Advance Local and the Alabama Media Group in cooperation with the Alabama Tourism Department. Lee Sentell, director of the department, wrote the foreword. He is a former editor at The Decatur Daily and was the founding director of the Decatur Tourism Bureau.

Bill and I are planning day trips to explore the four regions of Alabama. There are 52 ideas for what to see, where to eat and where to stay. It has been interesting just to read about the small towns with so much history.

You can order the book on Amazon Smile and have proceeds generated to OLLI at UAH if you like.

There are many travel aids and apps to use. These song lyrics come to mind:

Get your motor runnin'
Head out on the highway
Looking for adventure
In whatever comes our way

We are *that* generation — "Born to Be Wild." Not sure how many of us can still go wild, but you get the jest! I have this as a ringtone. It still makes me smile!

I have been so glad to see Chris Stuhlinger, who is our events chair, and Steve Jones arrange for such nice treks in the great outdoors. I also read every one of the Steve Jones Great Blue Heron Facebook and email updates on his personal outdoor treks.

Isn't it simply great to have OLLI members who are willing to plan events and share them with us? We are truly a *wonderful* and diverse group of people. Being able to learn from each other is another bonus of the friendships we make at OLLI at UAH.

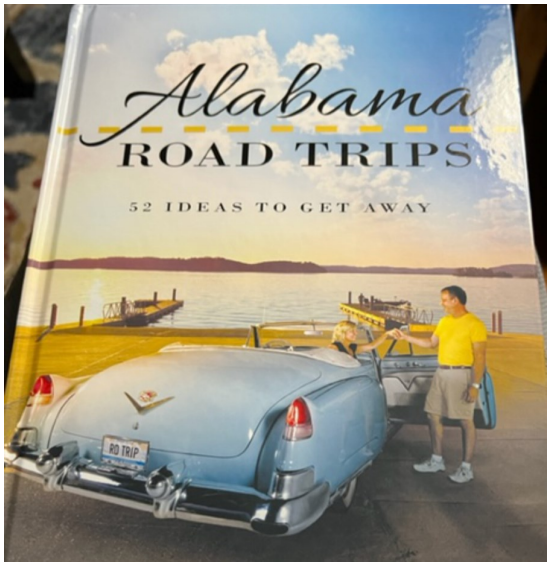
I now have information from two travel companies on the Croatia river cruise, but due to the recent events in Europe I have received a few texts and emails suggesting we concentrate on the trip suggested to the Northeastern U.S., to Acadia National Park and into northeastern Canada for August 2023. I am now seeking trip information.

There were only two spaces left at this writing for the Alaska 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 bbkoval13@gmail.com.

Ask about a waiting list if the trip is full because anything can happen.

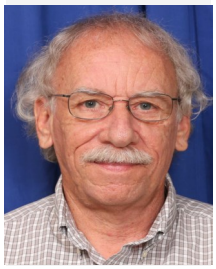
Happy traveling, and whatever you choose to do this year, I hope we see you along the way.

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair



Alabama travel book gives us dozens of ideas on things to see.

APRIL EVENTS INCLUDE SPORTS, HIKING, BIKING, WEATHER FORECASTING, INDOOR GARDENING



The temperatures are warming up, and it's time to get out and be active again! Join us for the events listed below.

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

Many thanks to committee member Michelle Laverty for organizing several events. If you have questions about a scheduled or new event, or would like to join the events committee, please contact Chris Stuhlinger (cstuhlinger@gmail.com).

Some events could be canceled because of bad weather or COVID restrictions.

Upcoming events

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

Cheer on three UAH Chargers teams (baseball and softball vs. Mississippi College; lacrosse vs. Shorter) in one afternoon. OLLI members may attend 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.

2. 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 forecast facility, and learn how local and area forecasts are prepared, along with other services. Sign up at tinyurl.com/nws-olli-tour.

3. Baron Critical Weather Intelligence 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 forecast facility. Baron provides critical weather intelligence to businesses, government agencies and consumers. This includes weather radar and storm tracking. Sign up at tinyurl.com/baron-olli-tour.

4. Hike at Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve, Saturday, April 9, 10 a.m., at parking lot (U.S. 72 east at bend in road, about 1.5 miles northeast of I-565 terminus; there is no crossover from the eastbound lanes of U.S. 72, so you must approach in westbound lanes from Moores Mill Road)

This preserve (landtrustnal.org/properties/chapman-mountain-preserve) is a project of the Land Trust of North Alabama (landtrustnal.org).

Hike Terry Trail (about 1 mile, interpretive stops) with Big Tree Tour signage. Return on other 0.7-mile trails at your own pace (moderate elevation changes). Bring water and snacks; wear weather-appropriate clothing. Parts of the trail may be uneven or muddy. Sign up at tinyurl.com/chapman-hike.

5. Manna House's Hydroponic Garden, Friday, April 22, 1 p.m., 747 NE Fields Road, Lacey's Spring (drive U.S. 231 south [Memorial Parkway] toward Ditto Landing; cross Tennessee River bridge; after another 1.3 miles [at Dollar General store], turn right onto Fields Road; drive 0.3 miles; Hydroponic Garden will be on the left [dark gray building with red trim])

In observance of Earth Day, join us for this 20-minute guided tour. The 15,000-square-foot indoor Hydroponic Garden (mannahousehydroponicgarden.comfields-of-green) produces fresh lettuce for the community. Hydroponic gardening uses 90% less water than traditional growing. Tour participants will receive free lettuce samples. Sign up by noon April 15 at tinyurl.com/manna-olli.

6. Bike ride, Aldridge Creek Greenway (south Huntsville), Saturday, April 30, 10 a.m., at Ken Johnson Park (parking lot off Mountain Gap Road at Bailey Cove Road, behind Publix); BYOB — bring your own bikes
Ride from Mountain Gap Road to Ditto Landing (about 4 miles each way, asphalt/concrete), plus optional 1 mile along Tennessee River. Bring water, snacks/lunch, and sun protection. Sign up at tinyurl.com/bike-olli. The website is traillink.com/trail/aldridge-creek-greenway.

Coming soon

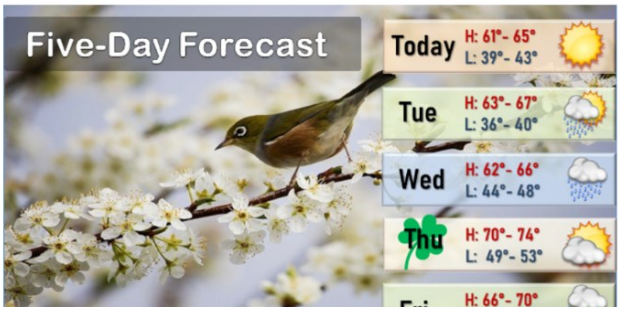
Mark your calendars for these May events:

- Friday, May 13, **trivia game**, 11 a.m., in person (Wilson Hall) and virtual (Zoom)
- Saturday, May 14, **hike at Green Mountain Nature Preserve**, 10 a.m. (meet at hikers' parking lot)

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Upcoming event locations include, clockwise from upper left: Aldridge Creek Greenway, Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve, Manna House's Hydroponic Garden, the National Weather Service and Baron's Critical Weather Intelligence, and Charger Park. (Photos by Chris Stuhlinger or from hosts)



MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

DINE OUT MIG MEET-UP: WAHLBURGERS

Dine Out MIG is BACK! Join us for the return back to dining out with OLLI friends. Thursday, April 21 at 5 pm, the Dine Out MIG will meet at Wahlburgers. It is located at Mid City on University Drive. You can sign up online. For questions contact Sandra Debrowski at Dabros1@comcast.net.

NEVER STOP LEARNING: A DOCTORATE AT 72

Richard Brooks

A family Christmas gathering in 2018. The family picture includes Daniel and Davis Carter with their two young girls, Richard and Susan Brooks, and Erie and Gray Meyer-Brooks before their son was born.

Richard and Susan about 45 years ago at their engagement celebration.

OLLI's motto is "Never Stop Learning." The subject of this month's *Insider* profile, Richard Brooks, takes that motto to the next level. At the age of 72, he recently completed a doctorate (more about that later).

Richard grew up in Sheffield, Alabama, to, as he says, "honest, hard-working parents who encouraged me to work hard and stay employed from the age of 10 on." After graduating from high school in 1968, Richard began a winding path.

"In the next seven years, I was in and out of colleges, the military service, working on riverboats on the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers, and tarring roofs in Miami. I found living in a commune distasteful and so headed to California, where a religious experience redirected me to complete college, attend seminary and enter Christian ministry.

"It took 10 years in ministry for me to realize that religious institutions were too confining. Thus began 20 years of pastoring small churches while I also started a commercial real estate finance business and an innovative internet home mortgage company in Birmingham."

After Richard retired in his early 50s, he produced a documentary about his father, which Richard called "Walter Henry Brooks, 13th Army Air Corps" (available on YouTube) and wrote a book, "Inherit the Wealth: Reflections on Living Well" (available from Amazon) about life's virtues.

Richard re-entered the ministry, focusing on interfaith tolerance and social justice. He retired again at age 65.

It was then that Richard set his sights on a doctorate.

"I completed my doctorate (a Doctor of Divinity degree in theology) following four years of study on a topic I had spent 15 years exploring," he said. "The subject of my thesis and of my continued efforts is the release of $50 million to $100 million in equity from church property to use in missions to the poor and homeless.

"A second cherished pursuit is studying and teaching religious tolerance through OLLI, which I was introduced to by OLLI's Linda McAllister."

During the spring term, Richard will be teaching "Common Themes in Religious Diversity," which explores the world's religions.

As the poem Richard wrote to his wife, Susan, on their recent 45th anniversary attests, family is important to him (the poem accompanies this article).

(continued on next page)

NEVER STOP LEARNING: A DOCTORATE AT 72 (CONT)

"My wife was the guiding light in raising our two wonderful children, Davis and Gray," said Richard.

"Our daughter is an educator like her mother and is married with two daughters. She lives in Blossomwood, just a stone's throw from the 160 acres deeded to my ancestor by President James Madison in 1815.

"My son and his wife have one child, my only grandson. They moved to D.C. with the team that staffed Barack Obama's first presidential election. They served in his administration and continue to work there on progressive causes."

As a cancer survivor, Richard has a succinct motto: "Follow your passions. Do that which you would do if you had only a year to live."

Thanks, Richard, for all you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams

SHE AND ME: A SMALL TREE FORCED ME TO MY KNEE

I told her it might be, that one day she would marry me.
Then came a sunny afternoon, we strolled into an Atlanta showroom.

She wanted to buy a tree, and I thought she could not possibly see.
There was no room in an apartment for me, as well as that tree.

It was then she made it clear, it was the tree she preferred to be near.
Expressed in a persuasive way, I knew a change was needed for me to stay.

It has since been a long time, counting thirty-six years plus nine,
Since I got down on one knee, and begged her please, please marry me and not the tree!

We laugh about it now, but can still recall how
I bought a tree to gain a wife, who is still the love of my life.

By Richard Brooks

KNOWING THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR ROOTS

I grew up a very lucky person.

I knew both of my maternal great-grandfathers and one of my maternal great-grandmothers. My maternal grandfather and grandmother were great storytellers, so I gained a significant appreciation of my heritage of that side of the family that had lived in Northeast Arkansas since it was a wooded wilderness, for the most part.

On the paternal side of the family, I knew only my grandmother, as all others had passed. I knew that my paternal grandfather had died when my dad was 12 of a heart attack. Luckily, my father had twin older brothers who were great storytellers and gave me an appreciation of my roots.

I found out that the Styers family was of German, Irish and Native American heritage, and I was taken to the grave of my Cherokee ancestor in Halls, Tennessee.

The Styers family in the United States originated with five brothers who came to the U.S. from Steyr, Austria. This was reaffirmed by a gentleman named “Styers” in a conversation during a meeting of ASTM International, which publishes standards for products made of steel, copper and other metals. My daughter was told a similar story, but by two brothers with a Styer family in Birmingham.

Then, I took Cliff Lanham’s and Phil Graham’s genealogy classes. When I began to research my family history, I found that a lot of the history I had been told was family lore and not accurate.

First, I found that the Styers and Wiles family names both originated in England. I found that my maternal great-grandfather was from Northeast Arkansas, as was his father. My great-great-grandfather was Cpl. Lafayette Wiles in the Army of Arkansas during the Civil War.

My Great-great-grandmother Wiles was Emma Semmes, a widow whom my great-great-grandfather married. She was the second of his five wives. I found that my great-grandmother Thomas was a McCoy, and her roots were in the Kentucky/West Virginia area of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, though there is no evidence she was involved.

Great-grandfather Thomas’ roots were in Illinois, where his father served in the Illinois Regulars during the Civil War. I have verified other people’s work that traces my Grandmother Styers’ family, the Bectons and Haliburtons, back to England.

Finally, I chased the Styers family roots and was totally shocked what I found.

First, my Grandfather Styers died of pneumonia, not a heart attack. He was a carpenter by trade. His father, George Styers, was born during the Civil War in West Tennessee and is buried in Halls. His father, William P. Styers, was born in West Alabama near Tuscaloosa and moved to Oxford, Mississippi, and then to Halls. His father, John Styers, was married in 1798 in what is now Madison County, Alabama. It appears that his father was a Henry Styers, though I am still researching that data.

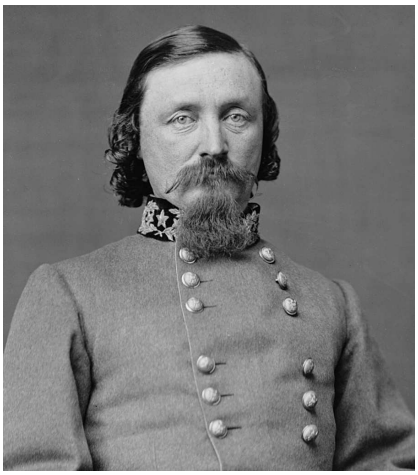
From all this, it appears that my family is primarily English, not German and Irish. I have roots in Alabama that I never knew existed that date to well before we were a state. I have now taken a DNA test that confirms I am mostly English with a small amount of Northern European.

The Native American heritage turns out to be another family myth, as my DNA is less than 2% Native American, which is the background a lot of us have. I also found out that most of the Styers family DNA is clustered in coastal North Carolina, indicating that area is likely the location my ancestors entered the country.

Mostly, I owe Cliff and Phil a thank-you. Without their coaching and instruction, I would have given my daughters the same false history and family lore. Thanks to them, I know more of the real story of where I came from.

David Styers
Immediate Past President
OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

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



George Pickett

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

April: From the Angle to a shad bake

George Edward Pickett was ecstatic when he received his orders on the morning of July 3, 1863. His division, which had missed the fighting at Chancellorsville in May and had been far to the rear during the first two days at Gettysburg, was about to lead the decisive charge on the third day of fighting around that small Pennsylvania town.

When given permission to attack, Pickett was remembered saying, "Up, men, and to your posts! Don't forget today that you are from Old Virginia." His three brigades that had made the northward trek from "Old Virginia" now marched defiantly toward the Union positions on Cemetery Ridge and would suffer tremendously in doing so.

All three brigade commanders were hit — two would die, and the third would never hold active field command again. Also, among the mortally wounded was the great-uncle of future general George Patton.

Casualties as a whole approached 50% for his division (some 2,655 out of his division and another 2,700 from J. Johnston Pettigrew's division out of an estimated total of between 12,000 and 13,000 men participating). Pickett's division virtually ceased to exist. Yet in spite of the debacle, he had gained immortal fame!

George Pickett will always be remembered in American history for making that ill-fated charge targeting "the Angle," an L-shaped corner of a stone wall. But fate had never really been on his side. To see what I mean, let's look at the rest of the story.

As a member of the famous West Point Class of 1846 that bore such graduates as George McClellan and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, Pickett was ranked dead last — 59th. Some said he was so dead last he could not even see the 58th-ranking cadet. So yes, George Pickett started his military career as "the Goat" — a nickname that definitely does *not* mean "greatest of all time"!

After serving in Mexico (and with some distinction, to be truthful), Pickett made his way to San Juan Island — a small island in the far American Northwest that, in 1859, constituted the border between the U.S. and Canada and thus Great Britain. Now, there was some ambiguity as to exactly where the border was at that time.

On June 15, an American farmer living on the island killed a pig that was rooting in his garden. That porker belonged to an employee of the British Hudson Bay Co. who took umbrage to the vicious assault.

Well, this argument over a few potatoes escalated to become an international incident that came to be known as "the Pig War." And our George was right there in the middle of the action, determined, as he said, to "make a Bunker Hill of it" when his 68-man garrison faced off against a more powerful British force, marching in to save the Empire's bacon, as it were.

(continued on the next page)

DID YOU KNOW…?
AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY (CONT.)

Luckily, President James Buchanan quickly dispatched Gen. Winfield Scott to the scene, and a negotiated settlement was able to solve the situation without any further ham-handed interference. (No, I don't know if they had a barbecue to celebrate afterward, but I do love a good pun!)

Not too long after this ignoble incident, Pickett resigned his commission in the U.S. Army on June 25, 1861, to enlist in the Confederate army, where he would ultimately rise to the grade of major general. He would serve in Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia until 1863 and again after the Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864.

On May 4, 1864, U.S. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered the Army of the Potomac into Virginia for what would be the last time, telling its Gen. George Meade that "wherever Lee goes, there you will go also." This simple order set the stage for George Pickett's last entry on the résumé of his immortality.

By this time, Pickett commanded one of the largest Southern divisions still in the defenses around Richmond and Petersburg, and his orders were to guard the important crossroads of Five Forks, named for the roads that converged there. This position included the terminus of the Southside Railroad, the last remaining lifeline for the besieged Confederates, and so its defense was critical if the South was to continue any struggle. The Union, naturally, undertook to wrest this important position from the Confederates. On April 1, 1865, they made their move.

Yet, when the Union attack commenced, Pickett, accompanied by the vast majority of his fellow officers, was 2 miles to the rear enjoying a shad bake. Lacking any semblance of command, his division routed, and with the enemy taking control of Five Forks, Lee had no choice but to evacuate Richmond and Petersburg. The end of the war came shortly thereafter.

Although the relationship between Pickett and Lee was strained dating back to Gettysburg, this incident effectively ended George's military career. But he would be forever hailed as a hero by those creating the myth of the Lost Cause — including, and perhaps led by, his third wife, Sallie.

Col. John Mosby, the well-known Confederate partisan ranger and the man who allegedly invited George to that shad bake in the first place, accompanied Pickett on a visit to Lee in Richmond after the war. During that encounter, according to Mosby, Lee treated Pickett testily, probably thinking back on what his shirking of duty for that shad bake back in April 1865 had cost. After the two officers had begged their leave and were out of earshot, Pickett had the following to say:

"That man destroyed my division."

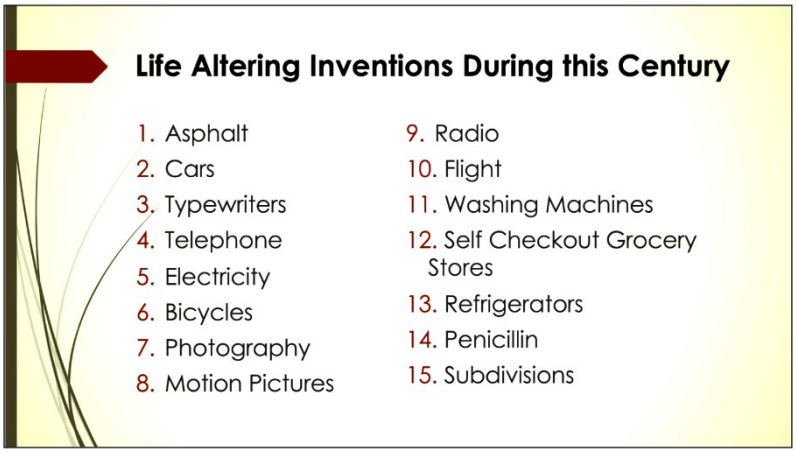
Mosby's response? "Well, it made you immortal."

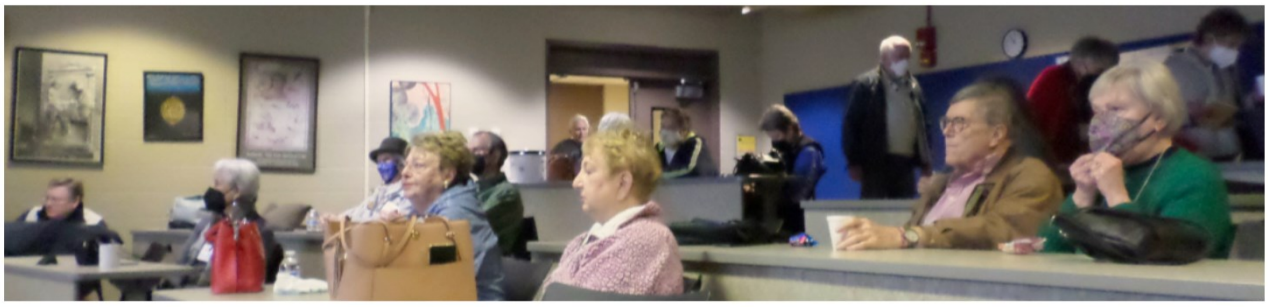
That it certainly did, though a potato-grubbing pig, a forever-supportive wife, and a springtime shad bake certainly didn't hurt.

By John Mason

HOW U.S. LIVES CHANGED FROM 1860 TO 1960

Ron Klein, a retired professor of history and geopolitics, presented a bonus Feb. 25 about technological changes in the lives of everyday Americans between 1860 and 1960. It was a preview of a course that he will teach for OLLI, starting this month.





(Photos by Glen Adams and Fathia Hardy)

TOUR FEATURES TAMPA ARTIST

OLLI members toured the Encounters by Dean Mitchell exhibit at the Huntsville Museum of Art on March 18. The tour, led by docent Candace Bean, provided an introduction to the life and works of Mitchell, an award-winning, nationally known contemporary artist living in Tampa, Florida. The exhibit ended March 20. (Photos provided by Chris Stuhlinger)

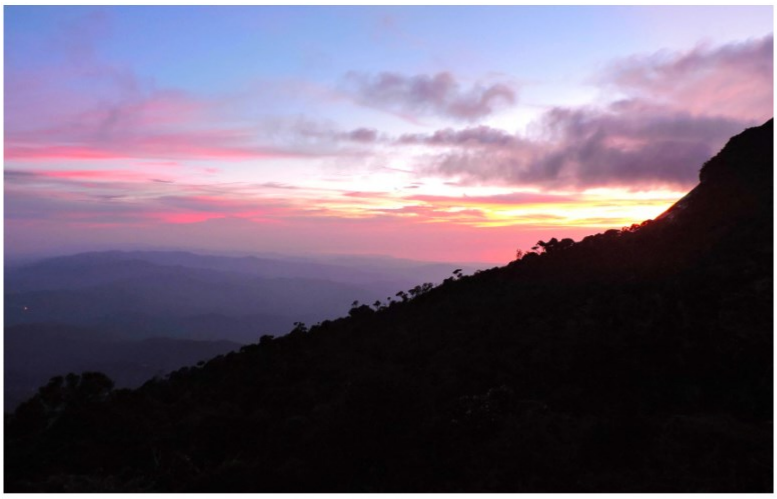
OLLI members cheered on the UAH men's and women's basketball teams during their home games against Delta State on Feb. 26. They also greeted members of the Pep Band. The Chargers' men's team won 75-65, but the women's team lost 61-55.

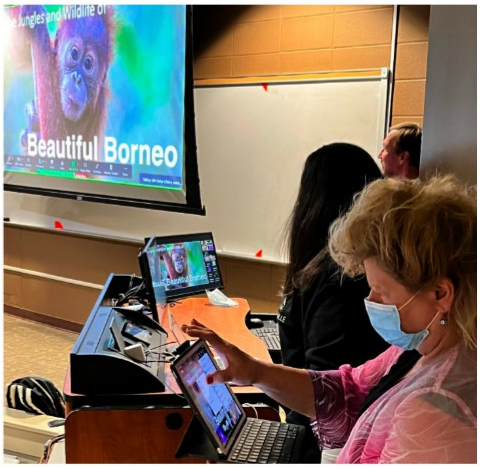
CHEERING FOR THE CHARGERS

(Photos by Steve Stewart)

BORNEO'S ANIMALS, JUNGLES, MOUNTAINS

Tom Ress, world traveler and writer, shared photos and tales from hiking the jungles and Mount Kinabalu on Borneo during a bonus on March 4. Borneo is an island in Southeast Asia.

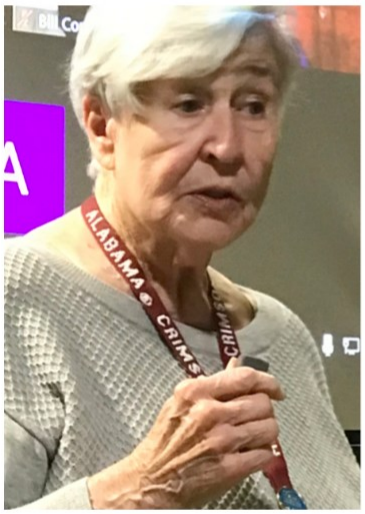
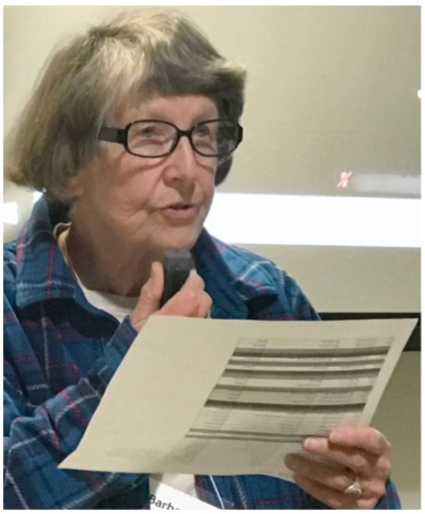
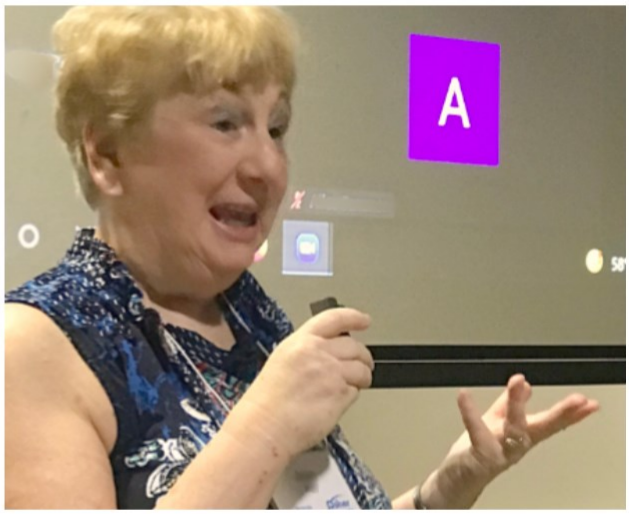


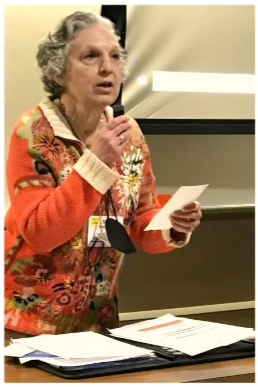


(Photos by Tom Ress and Steve Stewart)

EXPRESSING THANKS TO WINTER TEACHERS

John Mason, vice president of curriculum, and the curriculum chairs thanked those who taught classes during the winter term on Teacher Appreciation Day, a live and virtual event on March 11. They also thanked members of the OLLI staff.

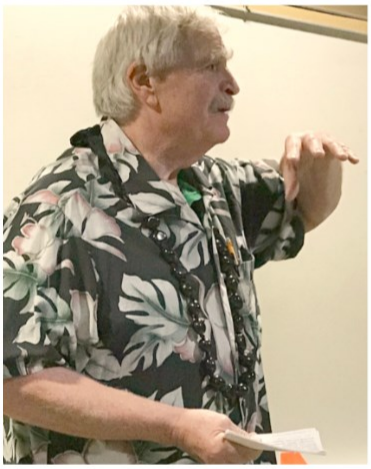






(Photos by Steve Stewart)

ENTERTAINING TEACHERS AND ONE ANOTHER

Teacher Appreciation Day on March 11 included Hawaii-style entertainment by Luana's Wahines, as well as snacks and conversation in the OLLI lounge in Wilson Hall.



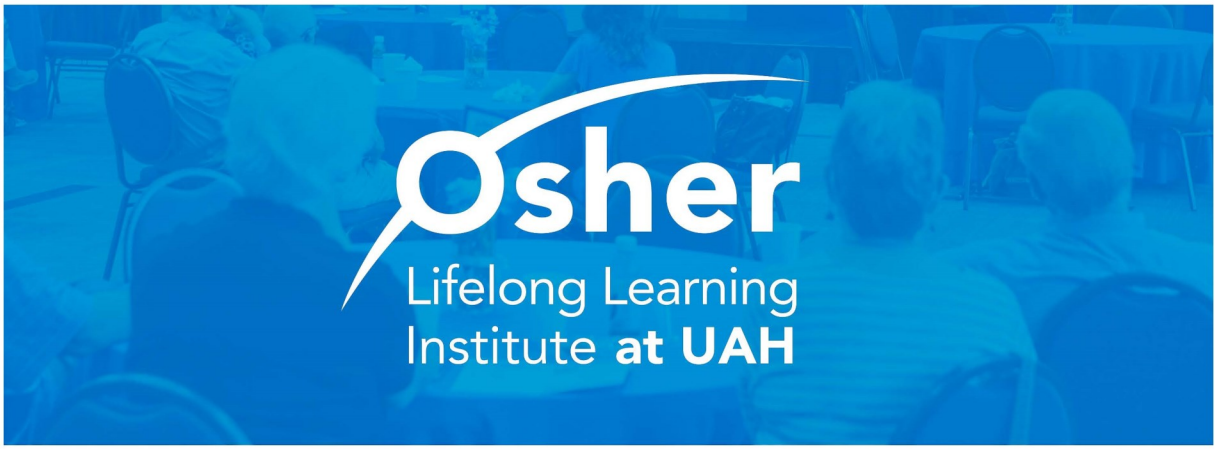
(Photos by Steve Stewart)

HIKING MONTE SANO ON A SATURDAY MORNING

OLLI members learned about the history of Monte Sano and its State Park, along with several bits of nature, during a leisurely morning hike to the fire tower on Saturday, March 19. Highlights included the Fearn/O'Shaughnessy lily pond and home site (late 1800s), oddly shaped trees, twisted vines, fungi such as the cracked cap polypore in the top right photo, and the 100-foot-tall historic fire tower (which was still standing, although it was due to be dismantled).

(Photos by Sue Chatham, Val Seaquist, Chris Stuhlinger and a helpful stranger)

OLLI Annual Meeting



SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, May 17

6:00 pm • Student Services Building, Room 112

The Wait Is Over!

Save the date for the highly anticipated OLLI Annual Meeting and Dinner.

Join us to recognize all OLLI has accomplished over the past three academic years.

- Introductions of the newly elected members of the 2022-2023 OLLI at UAH Board of Directors.
- Recognition of our many volunteers, including the Volunteer of the Year and Legacy Award.
- Announcement of the winner of our Annual Photo Contest.

Special entertainment will be provided by our OLLI Reader's Theatre course participants.

For more information, contact 256.824.6183 or **OLLI.info@uah.edu.**

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