

THE OLLI INSIDER

APRIL 2023 ISSUE

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



ART, SPORTS, DANCING, DINING AND NATURE

Clockwise from top left: The Huntsville Museum of Art, UAH Charger basketball, swing dancing, dining out in a member interest group, Harvest Square nature walk.



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Osher
Lifelong Learning
Institute at UAH

ONLINE NEWS TURNED BAD FOR NEWSPAPERS



When the internet came to Monroeville, Alabama, I placed it on the front page of the weekly newspaper because it was big news. I also saw it as good news for the paper and everyone else.

This was in the early 1990s. Some of us in town had dialed long-distance to try out America Online and other digital services. But the

telephone company was now going to have free local dial-up! I interviewed an expert by email and wrote the story.

The internet's possibilities were thrilling for the newspaper. We built a website and published stories there after they came out in the Thursday paper. Moreover, we started putting a couple of news briefs online every weekday. Our news operation was now daily.

Let's just say that we failed to grasp the implications.

The internet's downside for newspapers became evident later — such as in 2012, when the major dailies in Huntsville, Birmingham and Mobile cut back to three days a week. For a while, The Birmingham News' sales racks still bore the proud but now ironic slogan "Every Single Day."

And on Feb. 26, 2023, those three print newspapers died. Their owner, AL.com, is still publishing news, but not in print and not yet in the detail with which it once covered three cities and the state. (The Monroe Journal is still printing every single week. I read it online when it's hot off the press, and the U.S. Postal Service delivers my paper copy in Decatur two to 10 days later.)

Among the "Inventions that Changed the World" in Barbara Johnson's spring OLLI class are the printing press and movable type. The internet is at least as seismic. It has devastated parts of the news business while still offering tantalizing possibilities. Online advertising has undercut print advertising, the main revenue for newspapers.

Readers, viewers and listeners now can find more information than ever about the world at large but often not as much about local communities. Those of us who once trusted newspapers to vet the news, separating truth from fiction, are being cut loose. We must decide which news and which news media we can trust.



Newspaper racks at Clanton on March 13, 2013, about six months after The Birmingham News, The Huntsville Times and The Mobile Press Register stopped printing "Every Single Day."
(Photo by Steve Stewart)

Inside The Insider: Glen Adams profiles Marilyn Szecholda, chair of the Social Committee, who joined the Academy for Lifetime Learning before it became OLLI in 2005. Clay Williams presents news about summer classes as well as the celebration of our organization's 30th anniversary, which will start in August. Leah Black announces the formation of a member interest group for artists.

Jill Stewart writes about analogies, metaphors and similes and about the difference between being an elder and being old. Richard Brooks notes that happiness can come from "sharing positive possibilities," even when circumstances are dire.

Betty Koval challenges us to enjoy a book even more by visiting the location of its story. Chris Stuhlinger updates us on past and coming events and reminds us to sign up early because some events fill up weeks ahead of time.

As curriculum vice president, John Mason is looking for people who want to teach about republics, democracies and other forms of government. As a military historian, John ponders the conquests, cruelties and so-called discoveries of fabled explorers, especially Hernando de Soto.

Steve Stewart
Public Relations Committee Chair

FROM THE PRESIDENT

WORDS, WISDOM AND SCAVENGER HUNTS



When the home office bookshelves needed significant culling, I came across a book I knew I didn't buy, so it became a candidate for the giveaway pile. But the title made me pause: "I Never Metaphor I Didn't Like," written by psychologist/management consultant Dr. Mardy Grothe. The cover claimed it was a comprehensive compilation of history's greatest analogies, metaphors and similes.



Old fiddles play many good tunes, as Samuel Butler said.
(Copyrighted image via [Wikimedia Commons](#))

As a self-admitted word nerd and quotation lover, I spent the next several hours touring history's greatest word pictures, alternately laughing, groaning, and marveling at the mental images. There was commentary on everything from life and the human condition to sports, politics, insults, love, sex, writing, ages and stages, and more. Needless to say, the book never made it to the pile.

It's interesting how, when we try to make sense out of something new or something that is not well-understood, we benefit by relating it to something else that is more familiar. Grothe points out that similes, metaphors and analogies are the basis for much of the thinking people do about life. Sigmund Freud aptly said, "Analogies, it is true, decide nothing, but can make one feel more at home."

The chapter on ages and stages was thought-provoking. Aging, as you might expect, is treated with depressing images along with some celebratory comparisons.

- *Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you're aboard, there's nothing you can do.* — Golda Meir
- *Memorial services are the cocktail parties of the geriatric set.* — Harold Macmillan
- *I've learned that life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end, the faster it goes.* — Andy Rooney
- *There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle.* — Samuel Butler
- *It's true, some wine improves with age. But only if the grapes were good in the first place.* — Abigail Van Buren
- *Old age is like climbing a mountain. You climb from ledge to ledge. The higher you get, the more tired and breathless you become — but your views become more extensive.* — Ingrid Bergman

Rudyard Kipling said, "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind." We know that words matter and the images they describe can be powerful but sometimes can be unnecessarily detrimental.

Physician-writer Dr. Louise Aronson was the keynote speaker at the 2022 Osher Institutes National Conference, which Fathia Hardy and I attended last April. Dr. Aronson is the author of "Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Redefining Life." This compelling book was a Pulitzer Prize finalist and an insightful look into aging and ageism in America.

Dr. Aronson describes an exercise that a medical school professor at The University of California, Berkeley, does each year with his new medical students in a joint medicine/public health graduate program. The professor distributes some scratch paper that he will collect later and tells the students to write — without filtering — the first words that come to mind when he uses the word *old* to describe a person. The students scribble for a minute. They are told to stop, and the professor repeats the instructions, but this time with the word *elder*.

Unsurprisingly, the words the students wrote in response to *old* included *wrinkled, bent over, white hair, weak, feeble, frail, stubborn, lonely*. Their lists for *elder* looked different. The most common response was *wise*. Other words were *respect, leader, experience, power, money, knowledge*. What a difference a word makes ...

I must say, I don't know any *old* people in OLLI. From all available evidence, OLLI members are eager to be the best *elders* we can be. We don't want to settle for the stereotypes of the other word. We are seeking a more enriching and connected elderhood different from generations before us.

With the high expectations of boomers, we are trying to squeeze every last adventure out of this life. Jimmy Buffett said it this way: "Life is much more manageable when thought of as a scavenger hunt as opposed to a surprise party."

Let's enjoy the hunt.

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

APRIL 2023

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 13 | Thu | 5:30 pm | [In-Person](#)
Event: Dine Out MIG - Salt Factory Pub

Join the Dine Out MIG and enjoy dining out with OLLI friends on this visit to one of Huntsville's latest food venues located in the exciting Mid-City district.

Salt Factory Pub is an upscale gastropub that offers modern and approachable cuisine with an unbeatable beer list. The creative menu features a variety of classic comfort foods with international influences. The dishes are comprised of local and organic ingredients designed to complement the notable beer line-up of more than 50 different draft and bottled brews.

Modeled after the pubs of the English countryside, the exposed brick walls, dark hardwood floors, cozy booths and dim lighting create an inviting and casual atmosphere for guests. Visit www.saltfactorypub.com/huntsville for a menu preview.

Sign up now, [online](#).

Presented by OLLI Dine Out MIG

Apr 14 | Fri | 11:00 am | [Online/In-Person](#)
Bonus: Introduction to Stress Reduction Through Mindfulness

Everyone's trying to manage lives filled with ever-increasing uncertainty, distraction and stress. Left unchecked, stress can lead to mental, emotional and physical breakdown. In this presentation you'll learn and practice techniques of mindful stress reduction that are proven to calm body and mind and foster balance, wisdom, contentment and joy. Attendees will learn formal and informal meditation (or mind-training), therapeutic breathing, gentle stretching and gladdening the mind.

Join your OLLI friends for light refreshments served before and after the event.

Sign up [online](#).

Presented by Tom Fandre, longtime practitioner/promoter of living life more mindfully.

Apr 27 | Thu | 5:30 pm | SSB 112 | [In-Person](#)
Event: OLLI Annual Meeting and Dinner

Make plans to join us to recognize all OLLI has accomplished from the academic year.

- Address by UAH President Dr. Charles L. Karr
- Introduction of the newly-elected members of the 2023-2024 OLLI at UAH Board of Directors.
- Recognition of our many volunteers, including the Volunteer of the Year.
- Recognition of OLLI at UAH Scholarship Recipients.
- Announcement of the winner of our Annual Photo Contest.

Tickets are now available [online](#).

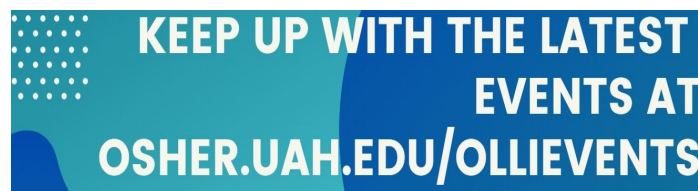
Apr 28 | Fri | 11:00 am | [Online/In-Person](#)
Bonus: Sharing a Musical Art Form: Shane Adkins & Thumb Style Guitar

Enjoy a fun and interesting demonstration of a unique form of guitar playing. Learn about the origins of thumbpicking and its effect on modern music by a professional committed to sharing this distinctive American art form. You will also hear local historical tales set to music.

Join your OLLI friends for light refreshments served before and after the event.

Sign up [online](#).

Presented by Shane Adkins, expert thumbpicking guitarist.



EVENTS COMMITTEE

IF YOU WAIT, YOU MIGHT BE TOO LATE!



I'm pleased to report that attendance at our OLLI events is steadily increasing. It's great to see that members are eager to get out, learn, explore and interact.

Our hikes/nature walks have been well-attended, and we get several new participants each time. We had a small crowd at the recent UAH Chargers

basketball games, and another opportunity is coming up to see the baseball, softball and lacrosse Chargers in action.

Keep in mind that attendance at some events has to be capped due to space and capacity. Registration for two events has already closed weeks ahead of time because we have already reached the maximum. So if you wait to register, you might be too late!

We will maintain a waiting list as needed for events with closed registration (contact OLLI staff or me). If you register for an event and later need to cancel, contact us as soon as possible to give others a chance to attend.

The Events Committee recently submitted a list of proposed events for summer semester. When the list has been published and you see an event you like, register early!

Recaps of Recent Events

- **UAH Chargers — women's and men's basketball** — The women's team battled a highly ranked opponent (Valdosta State) but lost 72-62 on Feb. 25. The men's team was able to maintain their high ranking and claimed the Gulf South Conference regular-season title with a 93-81 win over Valdosta State.

OLLI members will get free admission to UAH softball (top), baseball (bottom left) and lacrosse on April 15. (UAH photos)



- **Nature walk at Harvest Square Nature Preserve** — OLLI members enjoyed a beautiful morning March 4, exploring Harvest Square's lakes, woodlands, boardwalks and trails. Mallard ducks, signs of recent beaver activity, and interesting trees and shrubs were observed.
- **Huntsville Museum of Art** — OLLI members and guests visited the "John Cleaveland: Encounters" exhibition at the museum March 24. After an introduction to the artist and his work by docent Diana Lucas, all browsed the collection and admired the oil paintings with their amazing effects of light. The artist is known for his highly detailed landscapes, some of which are very large-scale.

Coming events

- Saturday, April 15 — **OLLI Day at Charger Park** — UAH Chargers softball, baseball and lacrosse. 1 p.m., men's baseball double header vs. Valdosta State; 1 p.m., women's softball double header vs. Valdosta State; 4 p.m., women's lacrosse vs. Flagler. Cheer on the men's and women's UAH Chargers teams. Free admission (thanks to Janet Reville for arranging this). Pre-registration and online signed waiver/release form are required. OLLI members must check in upon arrival and display their OLLI name tags.
- Friday, April 21 — **Tour of the UAH Salmon Library and Archives**, 10:30 a.m. to noon. REGISTRATION IS CLOSED.
- Friday, May 5 — **The Orion Amphitheater tour** (Huntsville), 2:30-3:30 p.m. REGISTRATION IS CLOSED.

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair



HARVEST SQUARE NATURE WALK ON MARCH 4

Harvest Square Nature Preserve on Allyson Sadie Boulevard in Harvest, not far from a Publix supermarket, was the scene for an OLLI nature walk on March 4, a calm and sunny Saturday that followed a stormy Friday.



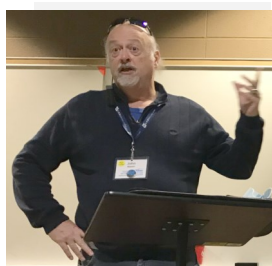
(Photos by Helen Crawford, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

HUNTSVILLE MUSEUM OF ART TOUR, MARCH 24



(Photos taken or provided by Helen Crawford and Chris Stuhlinger)

WHAT SORT OF GOVERNMENT HAVE WE HERE?



James McHenry was a Maryland delegate to the American Constitutional Convention, and he kept a diary of its events.

On the page where McHenry records the events of the last day, Sept. 18, 1787, he wrote: "A lady

asked Dr. Franklin[,] Well Doctor what have we got a republic or a monarchy — A republic replied the Doctor if you can keep it." Then McHenry added: "The Lady here alluded to was a Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia."

If someone were to ask you — or probably any other average American for that matter — that same question Ms. Powell posed to Benjamin Franklin, would you be able to tell her what type of government we have? I'm willing to bet that your answer would likely be "a democracy" rather than "a republic."

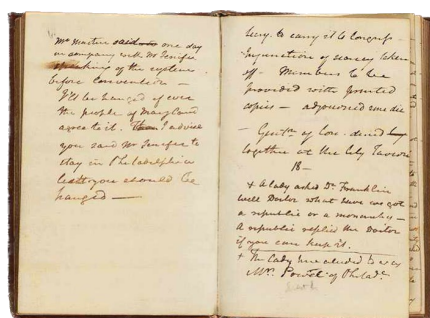
The study of civics, and government in general, seems to be on the verge of extinction. That's a shame. It seems to me that understanding what form of government we have, and perhaps more importantly how it works and what our roles in it are, should be essential to performing our role as citizens within that government. And that, then, is the topic of this month's column.

Likely one of the best treatises on our constitutional republic is found in what we now refer to as The Federalist Papers, a series of 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison between October 1787 and May 1788.

These essays were published in multiple New York newspapers of the time anonymously, under the pen name "Publius," to help defuse a serious debate as to whether this new national government "would be too powerful and thus threaten individual liberties, given the absence of a bill of rights."

As a result, another group called "Anti-Federalists," including such luminaries as Patrick Henry, Robert Yates (Brutus), most likely George Clinton (Cato), Samuel Bryan (Centinel), and either Melancton Smith or Richard Henry Lee (Federal Farmer), published a series of articles and delivered numerous speeches against ratification of the Constitution to combat the Federalist campaign.

These debates were an important factor leading to the adoption of the First Amendment and the other nine amendments that constitute the Bill of Rights and define how we are governed.



James McHenry's description of the conversation between Benjamin Franklin and a Mrs. Powel is at the bottom of the second of these two pages from McHenry's diary. (Library of Congress photo)

Have you ever read any of these papers? I hadn't until just recently when I found a copy of the book "The Federalist Papers" in the OLLI lounge book exchange. (By the way, if you've never looked at the books and magazines there, you're missing out. And, if you have a book or two that you think others might enjoy, why not leave it there to share?) Publius' essays were captivating. I actually had no idea.

Following on with this thread, then, do you know how many different types of "-ocracy" governments there are in the world? Do you know how they work? Here's a partial list: anarchy, aristocracy, bureaucracy, capitalism, confederation, colonialism, communism, democracy, electocracy, ergatocracy, federalism, feudalism, genocracy, kleptocracy, meritocracy, military dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, plutocracy, republicanism, democratic socialism, statism, technocracy, theocracy, totalitarianism and tribalism. Who knew, right?

So maybe it would be a benefit to all of us who live in whichever one of these we live in to learn more about it so that we can participate intelligently in its activities. Hmmm? I wonder where a body could find that kind of information?

Well, as it turns out, we have a history and political science department right here at OLLI! And based on what I've discussed here today, I see at least two entire semesters worth of classes that should be developed and made available to us members: one on The Federalist Papers, and one on comparative governments. And to be honest, a full treatment of either of those could develop into a multi-term project.

It's a mighty — and a mighty important — task to undertake. Are there any among you up to the challenge? I, like Mrs. Powel, will be waiting anxiously to find the answer.

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

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

TRANSITIONS



Spring semester continues to roll along. We still have over a month of classes left, with our members enjoying gardens, foreign languages, music, art and the streams of Madison County. Please remember to complete your evaluations upon completion of your courses.

Meanwhile, staff is transitioning to planning mode as we gear up for summer. Although many of our members travel and take time away from OLLI, we offer plenty of courses and activities for those who still want to participate.

We will be featuring some familiar favorites like yoga and wine camp, but will debut several new courses as well. For instance, OLLI members will have the chance to learn about artificial intelligence, the Beatles, cigar box guitars, ancient mound builders, makerspaces, stained glass, and dancing the foxtrot. Talk about variety!

Several field trips are planned as well to places like Birmingham and Scottsboro. Be on the lookout for the course guide later this month. Classes will begin June 1.

Don't miss out on our annual meeting and dinner, which will take place on Thursday, April 27. Tickets are on sale now. Deadline to purchase tickets is April 19, so don't delay.

Celebrate the past year of accomplishments and hear an

address by UAH President Dr. Charles L. Karr. This year's event takes place in the Student Services Building (SSB), Room 112. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for a wine and beer reception, and the program starts promptly at 6. We hope to see you there.

Another date to save for the future is Aug. 3, when we celebrate 30 years of lifelong learning at UAH. OLLI is planning a year's worth of events to celebrate the occasion, and it all kicks off on Aug. 3. Be on the lookout for details in the months to come.

It is hard to believe that I assumed the position of OLLI program manager on March 1 of last year. It has been a whirlwind tour through a year of activities.

There have been some ups and downs and plenty of organizational changes. But we all survived the growing pains with minimal (I hope) damage.

I appreciate the hard work of our board and other volunteers who work tirelessly to make OLLI what it is today. Special thanks to our fearless program coordinator, Alice Sammon, who is the rock upon which OLLI stands. And special props to our information technology student assistant, Jacob Bruce, who has become such a huge asset to our staff.

We all look forward to helping OLLI reach new heights in the future. And with everyone coming together, we will.

Thanks.

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

In this photo from the OLLI newsletter for October 2008, lifelong-learning presidents celebrate the program's 15th anniversary. From left are Toni Reynolds, president in 2004-05; Jim Lindberg, 2002-04; Hugh Nicholson, 2005-06; Rono Prince, 1994-95 and 1996-97; Bob Ward, 2006-07; and Sue Chatham, 2007-09. OLLI's 30th-anniversary celebration will start Aug. 3.



TRAVEL TO PLACES YOU ARE READING ABOUT



Spring is here, and I feel sure many of you are feeling the itch to travel again.

To explore and learn more about people and places where you travel is to have a true travel experience. But yes, there are those vacations where you just need to relax and take time for yourself to catch up on a good

book or binge-watch one or a few of those good shows people are talking about.

I want to challenge you to do the following: Combine your love of reading with travel to the place in a book you have read. I can attest this can be quite a lot of fun and often very moving.

Bill and I often listen to audiobooks while traveling. One of my favorite series is “Outlander.” Part of this historical fiction was set in areas of North Carolina (close to where we once lived) and Rome, New York (where Bill’s family lived).

Rome, New York, is where Fort Stanwix is located. After visiting the area since 1994, I finally talked Bill into taking me on a tour of the fort in 2002. I really wanted to see this fort that had been mentioned so many times in a book I had just read about Benedict Arnold, this whole area in New York, and the integral part it played in the Revolutionary War.

We had an interesting talk with a young National Park Service employee. She explained the history in more detail, and I added some of the history I had learned while reading the book.

This visit was in mid-October, and while we were touring, it began to snow with a slight amount of sleet. The guide had just shown us the rooms where the men slept. And during the timeframe mentioned in the Benedict Arnold book, the men had been caught there with no supplies for some time. Most had no shoes, and they were still wearing their summer clothes, some so thin you could literally read through them.

As I was standing there, tears came to my eyes to experience a fraction of the weather these men (some young boys) had experienced before the supply lines were opened.

If we step into the space of those who sacrificed, sometimes their all, so that we might have the freedoms we have today — well, for me, it was one of the most moving experiences I have ever had traveling.



A visit to Fort Stanwix in New York increased Betty Koval’s appreciation of the “Outlander” book series.
(National Park Service photo)

During the trip back to the fort in 2014, we found the new addition of a museum. In this we found many examples of musket balls with information on the lethal combination of the musket balls with the poison embedded in their grooves.

It was so interesting to actually see these examples up close and to see that the research Diana Gabaldon did for her popular historical “Outlander” series was accurate. I always marvel at the attention to detail writers delve into to entertain but also to teach us, the readers.

Another experience that was overpowering was the visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. I have read many books about the camps, but to stand and see so much was almost more than I could handle. But I felt that if others could endure it, I could at least honor them and learn more. I had a similar experience in New York at the 911 Memorial.

I hope you will try doing what we do, and there is so much history in Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi. All of these are just a few hours’ drive and could be a day trip or an overnight trip.

I understand that OLLI will have some nice day trips this summer that you can take part in, and you will not even have to do the driving! Our wonderful OLLI staff handles these trip plans and the driving.

I am such a book lover, but also a lover of travel and someone who is smart enough to know this: *The more I learn, the more I know I don’t know!* This is why I love OLLI at UAH. We have the best program for those of us who want to learn about just about anything.

(continued on the next page)

TRAVEL COMMITTEE

TRAVEL TO PLACES YOU ARE READING, CONT.

This leads me to the question I have been asking for the past few years as Travel Committee chair: *Where would you like to travel?* The Travel Committee cannot do this all alone because we need ideas and travelers.

Here are the two trips the Travel Committee has coming up in 2023:

1. Philadelphia Art Trip — May 21-26
2. Canadian Maritimes — Aug. 17-29

I have found OLLI friends love to learn, eat, laugh, and just generally enjoy ourselves. I recently read another article on how this helps us live a longer and more enjoyable life. Come along, and enjoy our ride.

Remember, *all who wander are not lost!*

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair



IN THE SWING

Traci Romine (bottom center photo) taught OLLI's four-week "Let's Swing Dance!" class to popular rock-and-roll songs in the Madison Ballroom Dance Studio. The class ended March 28.



(Photos by Sue Chatham and Paulette Bernstein)

SOCIAL CHAIR MARILYNN SZECHOLDA: MAKING OLLI 'A COMFORTABLE SPACE'

If you have enjoyed the delicious food at the OLLI Early Bird Breakfasts or at the Friday bonuses or at the Souper Bowl, you can thank the subject of this month's *Insider* profile, Marilynn Szecholda.

As chair of the Social Committee, she organizes the breakfasts and Souper Bowl and helps Leah Black, the Member Services chair, to supply the array of food for Friday bonuses.

Marilynn grew up in a suburb of Chicago, Villa Park. It was not your typical urban environment.

"We had a lot of empty lots around our house and a swamp across the street," recalled Marilynn. "It was a great place to catch tadpoles."

When she was a child, Marilynn's interests were "riding my bike to the library, tap and ballet lessons, reading — especially 'The Secret Garden' — and playing with my dogs and my special cat Tiger."

After Marilynn graduated from high school, where she was editor of the school paper, she started at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois.

"Blackburn was nicknamed 'the jeans and apron' college," said Marilynn, "because it had a work program where students worked 15 hours a week doing campus jobs. I had the unglamorous job of janitress in the girls dorm. We weren't allowed to have cars, so we spent all our time on campus. Great friendships were formed by the campus captives."

Among those friendships was Bob, Marilynn's future husband.

After two years, Marilynn transferred to Illinois State University, where she discovered she could get a teaching degree in special education. Since childhood, she had been interested in



Marilynn Szecholda with Peter Hill and Leah Black.



helping people with handicaps. After graduation, she began teaching in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

"My self-contained class had students aged 9-12," said Marilynn. "As the need grew for a class for older students, my principal set up a room with kitchen facilities, a workbench and a sewing machine. The aim was to teach life skills, as well as the three R's."

Marilynn and Bob married in 1966. Two years later, Bob came home and said, "How would you like to move to Huntsville?" He had been offered a promotion with GTE's new telephone manufacturing plant here. Marilynn said: "Huntsville has mountains! Let's go."

Marilynn continued to teach until the late 1980s, when she and her husband opened the Little Professor Bookstore.

"We ran the store for about eight years in south Huntsville," said Marilynn. "What fun to be surrounded by books every day!"

Marilynn returned to teaching and retired in 2000 with over 25 years as a special education teacher. But she didn't give up helping the handicapped. She spent two years at a school for dyslexic children and continues to this day teaching art at 8th Street Community, a group home for special-needs adults.

Bob passed away in 2008. Two years later, Marilynn met Peter Hill at a Blackburn College reunion. Peter came to Huntsville in 2012, and they have been together ever since. They lived several years in Sheffield, where they renovated two houses, one built in 1890 and the other in 1916.

Marilynn became involved in OLLI before it was OLLI: "I actually started art classes at the forerunner to OLLI, the Academy [for Lifetime Learning]. I took watercolor painting from Chuck Long and oil painting from Gail Sleeper. I've been taking classes at OLLI for a long time."

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SAY WHAT?



Two seriously ill men occupied the same hospital room.

One man was allowed to sit in bed each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

One special treat each day was the man in the bed by the window describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. He described the park with a lovely lake, the ducks and swans playing in the water, children sailing their model boats, and young lovers walking arm in arm amidst flowers of every color, with a backdrop of the city skyline in the distance.

These daily narrations connected them to the world outside the confines of their hospital room.

The day nurse arrived one morning to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. The surviving man asked if he could be moved next to the window.

After settling into his new bed, slowly and painfully, he propped himself up for his first look at the real world outside. But as he strained to look out the window, he realized the window faced a blank wall.

The patient asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate to describe such a wonderful world outside this window. The nurse responded that his former roommate was blind and perhaps wanted to share the world as he hoped it to be.

There is tremendous happiness in sharing positive possibilities, despite our tragic circumstances. Encouragement and hope are always in style.



We can see positive possibilities when we use our inner vision, even in dire circumstances.

(Art generated by DALL-E)

Today is a gift. That is why it is called "the present." Let us share hope and joy for what the world can become.

Remember, no one has ever injured their eyesight by looking on the bright side of things.

"It's not what you look at that matters. It is what you see." — Henry David Thoreau

By Richard Brooks

SOCIAL CHAIR MARILYN SZECHOLDA, CONT.

Over the years, Marilyn has served as a board member, a facilitator and, of course, social chair.

"What I have enjoyed about OLLI," said Marilyn, "is meeting open-minded people, participating in memorable classes, learning new things, and the travel. I have taken three OLLI trips: two trips to the Western national parks and a boat trip on the Danube to visit the Christmas markets. These were

memorable experiences. And I'm going to Canada with OLLI in August. OLLI is just a comfortable space for me."

Thanks, Marilyn, for all the things you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

NEW MEMBER INTEREST GROUP FOR ARTISTS



Spring has finally arrived with its promise of warmer weather and blossoming plants, and maybe allergies, too. Classes are still going strong, with some new ones beginning in the latter part of this semester. There is still plenty of time to enjoy coffee and treats in the lounge and chatting with friends.

As we approach summer, there will be time to continue activities with the OLLI member interest groups. What are MIGs?, many of you may ask. They are groups of members that meet out of class time to continue to enjoy activities or crafts that they may have started to learn about in classes. The MIGs that are really active right now are Bridge, Mah-Jongg, Tai Chi and Dine Out.

We are excited to announce the formation of the new Artist Studio MIG. This group will meet twice a month, when members can work on their own projects and share ideas

with others. More information will be forthcoming as soon as a location has been determined.

All the MIGs, except Dine Out, have been meeting on Friday morning or Friday afternoon after classes and bonus events. If you are interested in joining or finding out more information about these MIGs, you can contact me or the OLLI office.

The MIGs will usually continue meeting after classes have ended and through the summer.

Entries in the annual photo contest are being judged, and the results will be presented at the annual meeting on April 27. We are always excited to see the winners, and a slideshow of all the entries will be shown at the event.

Be looking for more information on OLLI's DVD library. This is a great resource for instructors and anyone interested in learning outside classes.

Leah Black
Member Services Committee Chair



The Dine Out Member Interest Group ate at Viet Cuisine, 210 Jordan Lane NW, on March 9.
Next Dine Out Event is April 13 at Salt Factory Pub. (Photos by Steve Stewart)

DID YOU KNOW ...?

AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY

April 2, 1513: Hey, the continent of North America *does* exist!

Toward the end of the 15th century, the world (and apparently all the historians who wrote the texts we studied in grade school) had no idea that the continent of North America existed.

Even Christopher Columbus had no idea it was there when he set sail on his first voyage on Aug. 3, 1492. Thankfully for us, he tripped over it — well, the Caribbean Islands part of it anyway — on his way to India and “discovered” America. And still today we celebrate his discovering us! Native Americans are especially ecstatic, for until that very moment, they didn’t even know they existed.

Then on April 2, 1513, the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon came ashore on the Florida coast near present-day St. Augustine — the European given credit for setting foot on North America. Odd that. Leif Erikson and his Viking friends had likely landed in Canada 500 years earlier, and Chinese Adm. Zheng He probably visited our West Coast in 1421, but I digress.

What’s important is that at last, Europeans were starting to get the idea that there was a previously unknown landmass here. And that’s the rest of this month’s story.

So when Columbus returned to Spain with tales of vast riches and numbers of slaves to be found in his “New World,” everybody was naturally excited. Adventurers flocked to the new mantra of “Gold, God and Glory” (although probably not exactly in that order), including a young soldier of noble birth, one Hernando de Soto.



Map shows Hernando de Soto’s proposed route (copyright by [Heironymous Rowe at English Wikipedia](#)). At right, an engraving of de Soto by J. Maca (from the Library of Congress).



In April 1514, de Soto sailed to the New World, where he quickly gained fame as an excellent horseman, fighter and tactician, and as a result he was soon recognized for his brave leadership, unwavering loyalty, and ruthless schemes for the extortion of native villages.

After gathering some funding and leading a few explorations of his own, he joined Francisco Pizarro shortly before the latter invaded Peru, where de Soto quickly rose in rank to become one of Pizarro’s captains. De Soto then returned to Spain in 1536, extremely wealthy from plunder he had gathered in the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire.

He was admitted into the prestigious Order of Santiago and “granted the right to conquer Florida” by the Spanish king. Returning to the New World as the governor of Cuba, de Soto was expected to colonize the North American continent for Spain within four years, for which his family would be given a sizable piece of land.

Historians have been trying ever since to trace the route de Soto’s expedition took as he “colonized” North America. The most widely used version of “De Soto’s Trail” — “The Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission” — was published by anthropologist John R. Swanton in 1939.

Much is still unknown, but today, Manatee County, Florida, claims to be the approximate landing site for de Soto’s arrival, and the good people there even erected a memorial to recognize that event.

De Soto landed in an area generally identified as south Tampa Bay in May 1539, with nine ships carrying over 620 men and 220 horses. He traveled north, exploring Florida’s West Coast, and — maybe because his army seized the food stored in the native villages, captured women to be used as slaves for the soldiers’ sexual gratification, and forced men and boys to serve as guides and bearers — he encountered some native resistance, suffering ambushes and conflicts all along his route.



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

After wintering in the Florida Panhandle, he headed north through Georgia, South Carolina and parts of Appalachia before entering eastern Tennessee and then continuing along the Tennessee River, entering Alabama from the north sometime in early 1540. Ultimately, he would head down the Coosa River Valley area to somewhere around what is today Montgomery.

Now, the area that would become Alabama had enjoyed a rich history of Native American cultural experiences for more than a thousand years by the time de Soto arrived, but in spite of this minor technicality, he was given credit for having the first expedition to explore our state as well.

Somewhere near the Montgomery area, he met the great Native Chief Tascalusa. Tascalusa, already aware of the numerous Spanish depredations, promised to provide him

with supplies for his expedition, and so lured the Spanish to the walled town of Mabila.

There on Oct. 18, 1540, Tascalusa's warriors ambushed de Soto after he had entered the town. In an all-day battle, more than 20 Spaniards and 2,500 Indians were killed in what has since been called the greatest Indian battle ever fought in America.

The Spanish prevailed, but it was a pyrrhic victory that became the turning point for the expedition. They had found no gold or silver, and the unsuccessful attempt at colonization had turned into a near-defeat with major casualties.

As a result, the expedition left Alabama, continuing slowly toward Mississippi. The next three years would see the discovery of the Mississippi River, the death of de Soto from fever, and the eventual retreat of some 300 survivors to Mexico.

After de Soto's departure, the Native American cultures that coalesced into the groups known today as the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek and Chickasaw, and smaller groups such as the Alabama-Coushattas and the Yuchis, would live in relative peace for nearly another 300 years.

Then, in the 1830s, the majority of Alabama's Native Americans were forced from their land to make way for cotton plantations and European-American expansion. But by then, thanks to Christopher Columbus and Hernando de Soto, at least they knew they existed. I wonder: Did they get credit for discovering Oklahoma?

By John Mason

THE LAST WORD



OLLI CHEERS FOR THE CHARGERS

OLLI members and OLLI information technology student worker Jacob Bruce watched UAH men's and women's teams play basketball against Valdosta State in Spragins Hall on Feb. 25. The men won the Gulf South Conference regular-season championship. (Photos by Chris Stuhlinger and Clay Williams)

