

THE OLLI

News for the members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UAH

INSIDER

APRIL 2020 ISSUE



Osher
Lifelong Learning
Institute **at UAH**

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

In this issue, we will be wrapping up all the fun Winter Term events enjoyed by our members.

David Styers has written an excellent article explaining OLLI's position as it relates to the current health conditions we are all facing. Please give it a read.

I hope you will take the time to read Ken Rex's article on the OLLI Support Fund. This is a vital source of revenue and greatly assists in our efforts to bring you quality courses and activities.

Of course, we can't forget the great pictures our members love to send us on the activities they enjoyed participating in this past term.

Even though OLLI classes and events are canceled until further notice, the Editorial Staff is hard at work planning the May issue, so please stay tuned. Articles and pictures for the *May OLLI Insider* are due by **April 17, 2020**. As a reminder, we do not publish the *OLLI Insider* for the months of June and July.

Stay safe and healthy.

Elizabeth Kocir
Editor *OLLI Insider*

The *OLLI Insider* article submission deadline is the 17th of each month for the following month.



WHAT DOES OLLI MEAN TO YOU?

We are looking for members to share their testimony!

Please send us a 100 word or less testimony to OLLI.info@uah.edu.



**OLLI AT UAH
REMOTE HOURS**

M-F
**9:00 am -
4:00 pm**

Questions?
Email us at
OLLI.info@uah.edu
or call us at 256.824.6183

THESE ARE SERIOUS TIMES FOR OUR OLLI



By this time, you are likely aware of the serious actions that have been taken by your OLLI Board of Directors to do our part in protecting the health and safety of our members.

The majority of our members are within the age demographic that is most impacted by the coronavirus, COVID-19. If you are as I am, you are staying abreast of the latest news as this disease spreads across our state and nation.

We did not take these actions lightly. As this disease has unfolded, we, along with the College of Professional and Continuing Studies, monitored the news in real time. The University did an excellent job of communicating with us the guidance issued from the chancellor and Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama System that we are a part of.

Each of us depends upon our OLLI family for camaraderie and learning. These were tearful decisions for our board. These decisions are behind us now, so the question is "Where do we go from here?"

Our current plans are that we will continue to monitor the events as they unfold. Our board committees will meet, as needed, utilizing the Universities videoconferencing software, Zoom, to plan future events for OLLI.

If you are on one of these committees, your chair will contact you if a meeting is required. All meetings, if any are scheduled, are voluntary.

Our election of new board members, which is done online, will continue on the current timeline. What will change is we normally invite newly elected board members to the April board meeting. Because the meeting has been canceled, we will not be able to have them participate in it. You will be contacted by phone or email to advise you of the outcome of the election.

Your OLLI Executive Board will meet in April to determine urgent business and to decide upon the May board meeting.

If the May board meeting occurs, we will induct our new board members at that meeting and elect officers for the next calendar year. If conditions do not allow this to happen, we will review again for a potential June meeting. Let's all be patient and let the data available help us navigate this process.

CPCS, which plans the summer OLLI program, will pursue an enhanced summer program to bring us back together if conditions allow that to occur. Those details will be forthcoming as we see what unfolds. I encourage you to support whatever programs are put together if your personal circumstances allow.

In addition, when this problem passes, the board has requested our Social Committee plan a celebration to bring us all together to link and bond with our OLLI friends, whom we have been separated from due to this virus. When things clear and we join together, please help all of us celebrate.

One last thing: This closing of the OLLI Spring Term will have a significant financial impact on our operational budget.

If you think about it, we typically have about 450 members in our Spring Term. If each of these members takes only three courses, that means our program loses about \$45,000 in revenue.

Those of you who have already registered for courses will receive a refund of those registration fees over the next several weeks. If you are financially able, I ask you to consider donating these rebates to the OLLI Support Fund to help offset this significant revenue loss. It will greatly help mitigate the financial loss that will occur.

Thank you for whatever you can do!

David Styers
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

KEEP IN TOUCH; WE'LL BE BACK TOGETHER SOON



What a strange time to be writing an article for our wonderful *OLLI Insider*.

While we are sequestered at home and seriously practicing social distancing as a reaction to the pandemic from the coronavirus (COVID-19), I am missing OLLI.

Since our OLLI activities and Spring Term were canceled in mid-March, I have been in regular email and phone contact with the CPCS staff and several friends.

Though there is currently a lot of uncertainty, one thing I do know for certain is that contacts with OLLI friends are important. If you have contact information for any OLLI friends, take the initiative to reach out. Kindness and human contact are vital at this time.

Now, on a brighter note, I have very positive memories of our wonderful Winter Term. Courses were engaging, well-presented by our terrific volunteer teachers and well-attended by eager-to-learn OLLI members.

Thanks to all of our CPCS staff and to the volunteer Curriculum Committee, who planned such an exciting term as well as an academic year.

We concluded with a very festive Teacher Appreciation Luncheon on March 6th. Our new location at Faith Presbyterian Church was the perfect-sized venue, with plenty of parking and easy access.

The OLLI Social Committee decorated with a St. Patrick's Day theme, and our delicious food included beautifully decorated cakes honoring our teachers.

Teachers were treated to tasty pretzel treats in the shape of shamrocks and were ceremoniously served on silver platters as their names were called by discipline chairs. We all enjoyed hearing several delightful poems written in a Winter Term course *Poetry Writing for Fun* taught by Dr. Melissa Morphew.

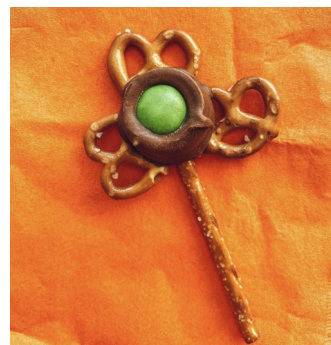
Topping the event, everyone enjoyed folk singer Allen Polk as he tugged at our hearts with his rendition of "Danny Boy," followed by a rousing second Irish tune, "Wild Rover."

So even in uncertain times and a national crisis, I can cherish my fond memories of this academic year at OLLI and I am confident that we will be back together soon with robust courses and exciting activities.

Stay safe, and join me in looking forward to an enhanced program soon.

Linda McAllister

VP of Curriculum, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors



Shamrock treat given to instructors



St. Patrick's themed cake

POETRY FOR ALL

This winter term we had the luck to offer the course *Poetry Writing Workshop for Fun* taught by our amazing CPCS faculty member Dr. Melisa Morphew. We want to share one of the poems written by a student in this course, John Mason.

The Archaeologist Dreams of Families Past

I've searched the past my whole career for that perfect, ancient urn,
to land my work in all the texts, Indiana Jones returned.
From caves high in the Andes to Ethiopia's deep'ning Rift,
I've dug up scores of ancient bones, our family's precious gift.
And always, kneeling in the dust, my mind begins to dream
of ones we've left so far behind – *australopithicenes*.

Were they the first of ancient man to stand up on two legs,
and stride into a strange new world through burning sands and sedge?
But walk they did across the plains for near a million years,
then they were gone, new men arose, before they disappeared,
the new learned fast, and tools and fire became the catalyst
for the coming of a newer clan called *Homo habilis*.

This "Tool Man" brought new leaps and strides that started man's advance
that soon would see his children move to Asia, Spain and France.
Each day brought stresses then unknown, to test those family bands
the Younger Dryas climate change brought glaciers to the land.
We nearly went extinct just then, our few, poor predecessors,
But they survived and from them came one *Homo antecessor*.

I've never held an *ante's* bones, but know he left the jungle
to live in Europe long ago, man's old, archaic uncle.
From where he came, or where he went, the finds may not express
Was he an intermediate or just one more failed test?
Regardless he's the key to what may be our genesis,

POETRY FOR ALL-CONTINUED

Heidi doesn't seem to get the credit he deserves,
for near as soon as he was born two newer groups emerged.
The first would be the man that is our cousin so robust,
we know him by his common name, he's called *neanderthalis*.
Far to the north of human's range along the ice he roamed,
til fifty thousand years ago when new men found his home .

These new men seemed so much like him, though not as short or thick,
and quickly occupied his range, of herds they had their pick.
That said, for years they got along, the short man and the lanky,
they even, says our DNA, indulged in hanky-panky.
But evolution waits for none, and skills began to change.
And so the new man gained control of *neanderthalis'* range.

The old now found he could not cope with newer competition,
his numbers then began to shrink, brawn losing to cognition.
And that is how we came to rule, we known as "Wisest Man".
We continued on around the globe and conquered every span.
Though we've lived just some thousand years, a shorter time than most,
let's not forget those early men, our race's long-lost ghosts.
I've looked back on the steps they took with pride and realize
I'll never equal Leaky if they never fossilize.

ART + OLLI = DEBBIE WEST

Debbie has been teaching art history courses at OLLI for 15 years on subjects ranging from the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance to French and Post-Impressionists, the Art of Spain, Dutch Masters, American Art, Color Theory, and most recently, in celebration of Alabama's 200th year of statehood, the Artists of Alabama.

Debbie is not the usual Huntsville transplant; instead, her family has lived in Madison County since the mid-1800s. Debbie recounted that she developed an interest in art at a young age. "When I was 5, my parents gave me a Childcraft book, *Art for Children*. In a lifelong love affair with books, it remains my most precious book, one that still inspires me to this day."

In the fourth grade, Debbie had an epiphany: she needed an art teacher, but in those days there were *no* art teachers in Alabama's public elementary and middle schools. This idea nagged her, so while in middle school, Debbie questioned her principal about the lack of art classes available to artists such as herself.

She made such a case that he creatively solved the problem by letting her become her own art teacher. While the other children were in choir or band, she worked alone, creating posters, decorating hall bulletin boards, and teaching herself with the books and materials she had requested, which were purchased for her by the PTA.

After Lee High School, Debbie enrolled in the University of North Alabama, married, had one son and moved across the United States with her husband. She transferred to four different universities, returned to Huntsville after a divorce and finally finished her degree in K-12 art education at UAH.

A major influence in Debbie's life and art was her husband of 17 years, the late Jack Dempsey. Jack and Debbie married after she moved back to Huntsville.

He had been brought to UAH in 1965 to create the new university's art department, which he did with great success. Debbie recalled that Jack was an inspirational iconoclast who taught her to question the status quo, to never stop thinking and to lead, not follow.

In 1976, she became one of the original six elementary school art teachers hired in Huntsville. She spent 15 years at the elementary level, five years in two middle schools and five years at Huntsville High. She retired after 25 years.

On a group trip to Italy in 2005, OLLI instructors asked Debbie to explain the paintings they were seeing at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. This defining moment occurred when Debbie recognized the opportunity to share her love of art with her peers by teaching art appreciation and art history at OLLI.

Because many of her students are well-versed in art themselves, they often add their own interpretations of the pictures and artists, which Debbie loves.

"I want to hear their responses and thoughts," she stressed. "That enhances my own appreciation and understanding. *Why else would I be here?*"

At first, Debbie worked her way through all the Great Courses on art, but with encouragement from other OLLI members — and especially encouragement from Linda and Bill McAllister — she began creating her own courses. Remarkably, she has never repeated a course in 15 years. A course might cover the same time period, but it is never taught the same way.

Although each course requires many hours of work, piecing together the information and images to present the history of art, Debbie declares: "*Art is worth any amount of preparation*. I want the class to be worth the students' time. I love the symbiosis with the students and encouraging their creativity, which never fails to spark my own. I am constantly learning from my students."

What's next? New territory. She has proposed a course for future terms about sexuality in art, titled "The Paradox of Femininity."

By Glen Adams



Debbie West

GET INVOLVED WITH OLLI ONLINE



As you are aware, OLLI at UAH suspended operations on **Monday, March 16, 2020**. The CPCS staff is now working remotely, but are still available through email at OLLI.info@uah.edu or through phone at 256.824.6183,

Monday –Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please note that UAH will be closed during spring break from March 30th to April 3rd.

As a reminder, together with the OLLI Board of Directors, the following difficult decisions have been made:

- OLLI Spring 2020 term is canceled. Refunds for term registration and related fees will be processed over the next several weeks. Instructors and guest speakers have been contacted.
- Local group tours are canceled:
 - Historic Huntsville Tour, April 4th;
 - Alabama Supercomputer Tour, April 9th;
 - Mooresville, AL tour, April 11th
- Roaring 20's Party and Showcase on April 20th is canceled.
- Member Interest Groups (MIGs) and committees will not meet until further notice.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but we want to make sure our members are safe during the COVID-19 outbreak. You can stay up to date with the most recent CPCS communication regarding the COVID-19 at [CPCS.uah.edu/COVID19](https://cpcs.uah.edu/COVID19).

Throughout this time of social distancing, the CPCS staff has put together many of opportunities and resources for you to participate in such as online lectures, tours, entertainment and more!

Make sure you are checking your email for the weekly eNews sent every Friday. In there, you will find more information on how to participate in the online lectures and sign up for the discussions through Zoom Video Conferencing, up to date information on UAH campus guidelines, tours from different museums and attractions around the world, and entertainment such as opera, different shows, art and music. If you have any suggestions/recommendations on what activities to share online please click [HERE](#) to fill out our *Stay Engaged and Share Learning* form.

As we approach the summer season, we are working diligently to offer a robust program by adding more courses in different disciplines just for you! We hope to share many of the upcoming summer courses with you soon.

Stay safe!

Ale Pacheco
OLLI Program Manager

GREAT DECISIONS LECTURES

PROVIDED BY THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

Check your eNews for the pre-recorded lecture link.

Live discussions using Zoom will accompany the lecture on the following Wednesday at 10:00 am.



FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

OLLI CRITICALLY NEEDS YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT



As many of you know, our contributions to the OLLI Support Fund over the last few years have helped keep our OLLI at UAH program functioning. This program means a lot to many of us, but we are now facing tough times

with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting its very existence.

It is hard for me to ask you to make a donation this spring when we aren't having any classes because of the outbreak of this disease. However, the fact is that it is critical — now more than ever — for us to give financial support to OLLI at UAH.

Without spring term we won't have the tuition income from the approximate 450 members. We want our program to be able to get through this funding issue and be there to keep it running when we can again have classes, maybe this summer and hopefully next fall.

In our small way, we can help with our donations.

You can donate to the OLLI Support fund online or by mail.

To donate online please click [HERE](#) and select “Give to the OLLI at UAH Support Fund”. Then select the amount you would like to give either one time, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. The designation should show: **OLLI –Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.**

Continue by entering your information including your card, billing address and email.

To donate by mail please submit the donation form found [HERE](#) and make the check payable to: **UAH Foundation-OLLI Fund.**

You can mail the sealed envelope with the form and check to:

UAH Foundation-OLLI AT UAH FUND
Shelbie King Hall, Third Floor
301 Sparkman Drive
Huntsville, Alabama 35899


Special Donation Gift

To further encourage donations this spring, we are making available an “*I Support OLLI!*” Tote Bag. You will receive an email at the end of April, explaining how to make your donation so you can have one of these amazing tote bags.

Thank you in advance for making a donation to our OLLI!

Kenneth Rex

OLLI Fund Development Committee



Support
Lifelong Learning

For many adult learners, OLLI has created a special community to learn and engage in social, cultural, and educational events. Did you know you can show how our program has impacted your life by donating to OLLI?

- Give to the OLLI Support Fund and help us continue to grow and maintain our program.
- Establish a Legacy Giving plan and pass your love of lifelong learning to future generations.

Make Your Tax Deductible Gift to OLLI at UAH Today!

LEGACY GIVING:
UAH Foundation
256.824.GIVE

BY MAIL:
UAH Foundation —
OLLI SUPPORT FUND
Shelbie King Hall, 3rd Floor
Huntsville, AL 35899

DONATE ONLINE:
[Osher.uah.edu/DonateOLLI](https://osher.uah.edu/DonateOLLI)
Select OLLI SUPPORT FUND

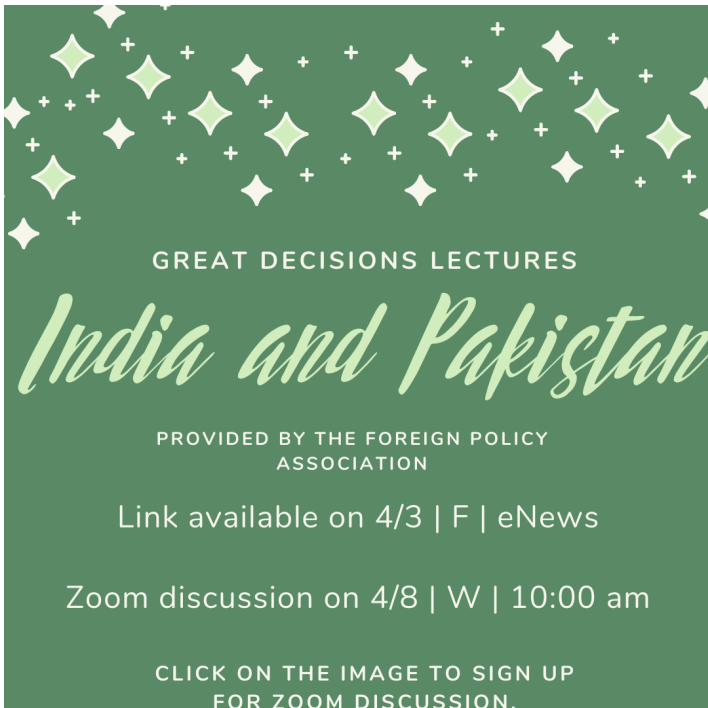
MOSAIC OF LOVE AT STONE CENTER



TEACHER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



THE LAST WORD



GREAT DECISIONS LECTURES

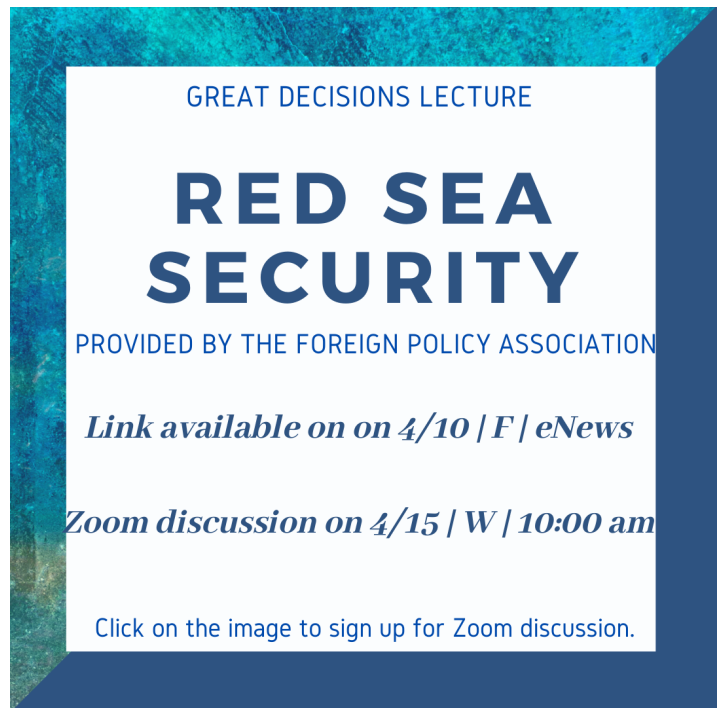
India and Pakistan

PROVIDED BY THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

Link available on 4/3 | F | eNews

Zoom discussion on 4/8 | W | 10:00 am

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO SIGN UP FOR ZOOM DISCUSSION.



GREAT DECISIONS LECTURE

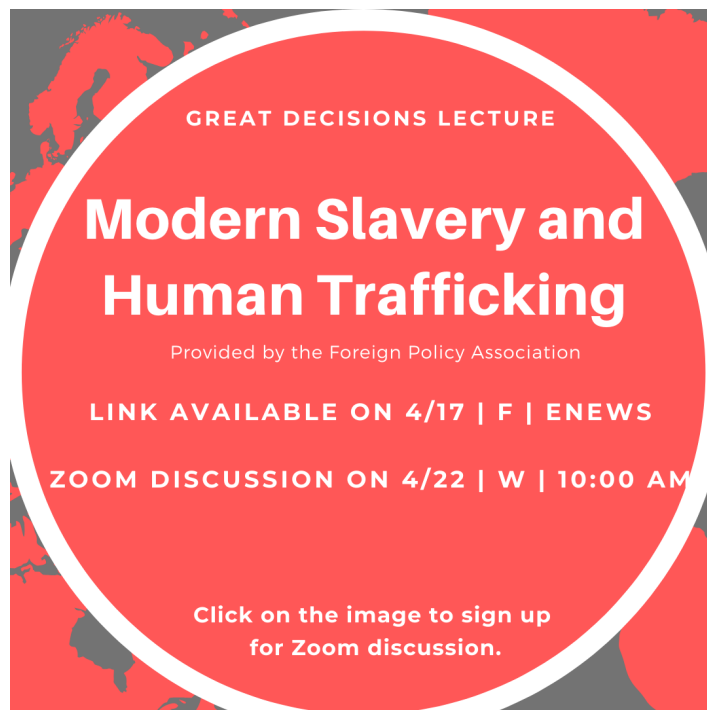
RED SEA SECURITY

PROVIDED BY THE FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

Link available on on 4/10 | F | eNews

Zoom discussion on 4/15 | W | 10:00 am

Click on the image to sign up for Zoom discussion.



GREAT DECISIONS LECTURE

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Provided by the Foreign Policy Association

LINK AVAILABLE ON 4/17 | F | ENEWS

ZOOM DISCUSSION ON 4/22 | W | 10:00 AM

Click on the image to sign up for Zoom discussion.