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

MARCH 2021 ISSUE











MARCH 2021 - APRIL 2021

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

Mar 5 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online

Bonus: The Nature of the Goldsmith Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary

Discover rare dwarf trillium and a great blue heron rookery in early spring, and colorful wildflowers and dragonflies in summer and fall. Track a raccoon or river otter in new fallen snow in winter. Through a virtual expedition, explore Huntsville's Goldsmith Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary to experience its seasonal biodiversity and natural history. Sign up online for the bonus using Zoom.

Presented by Dr. Marian Moore Lewis, Retired Research Professor and Nature Advocate

Mar 12 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online Winter Teacher Appreciation Day

Gather with friends to appreciate OLLI instructors and facilitators at our online event.

Sign up <u>online</u> for the event using Zoom. Presented by OLLI Social and Curriculum Committees

Mar 17 | Wed | 11:00 am | Online OLLI Event: Wear Green, Celebrate Spring

Join us as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day and bring in the spring season with fellow OLLI members. Wear your best green!

Sign up <u>online</u> for the event using Zoom. Presented by OLLI Social Committee

Apr 9 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online Bonus: Experiencing the Canadian Maritime Provinces in an RV

Discover the Canadian maritime provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island through a 6-week RV caravan trip. Learn about the history, culture, scenery, food, and everyday life of this fascinating and unique region.

Sign up <u>online</u> for the bonus using Zoom.

Presented by OLLI members Rick Rodriguez and Tessa
Lucas.

Apr 16 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online Coffee Chats: Trivia

Test your knowledge on interesting facts in many subjects while enjoying a morning with fellow OLLI members. The game will be played individually.

Sign up <u>online</u> for the coffee chats using Zoom. *Presented by Ale Pacheco, OLLI Program Manager*

Apr 23 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online Bonus: An Armchair Tour of Huntsville's Historic Homes and Buildings

Books have their place in the study and interpretation of history, but they aren't the only way to understand how economic booms, wars, or intellectual shifts affected our past. The homes and buildings that line the streets in our historic districts and courthouse square also mark the passage of time. Discover how these structures provide insight into our local and national history and the forces that shaped it. Through a virtual tour of downtown Huntsville you will learn the story of our city's distinctive architectural history.

Sign up <u>online</u> for the bonus using Zoom. *Presented by Donna Castellano*

Apr 30 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online Coffee Chats: Scattergories

Bring on your creative side as you name objects within a set of categories in a short period of time.

Sign up online for the coffee chats using Zoom.

Presented by Ale Pacheco, OLLI Program Manager

KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST EVENTS AT OSHER.UAH.EDU/OLLIEVENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

GET YOUR GREEN ON



It is March, and that means this month we welcome spring with the return of green blossoms, green grass, and, of course, wearing green in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

We are even featuring a "green thing" article in this month's issue, titled "The 'green thing': Would you

agree?," which I hope you will find amusing. Hopefully, it will bring back some warm childhood memories.

This article first made its way across the internet a while back, and it is my understanding that it received some great play. The article deals with the difference between what our generation did to help the environment (although at the time we didn't realize it) versus today's generation.

After I discussed the article with my editorial team, we decided to present you, the OLLI members, with a challenge.

We are looking for stories on what you did when you were a kid to help the environment. (You will understand this better after reading the article.) The stories we collect will then be published in the April issue in time to celebrate Earth Day, which is held every April.

Articles must be submitted by March 17 to OLLINewsletter@uah.edu. Please keep articles between 100 and 150 words. When submitting an article, please indicate that it's a "green thing" story in the subject line.

In this month's issue, we feature Tennent Lee, one of our most popular instructors, in the "People of OLLI" section.

The Curriculum Committee chair, John Mason, has some words of wisdom regarding the spring term.

The College of Professional Studies will be highlighting a few of the courses to be offered for the spring term. Of course, you can find all the courses being offered in the Spring Course Guide at Osher.uah.edu/CourseGuide

The Social Committee plans to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, so read on to find out how you can participate and wear your green.

Yes, it is March and time to get out of the winter blues and head into the spring green with renewed energy. Oh, and one more thing: Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead on Saturday, March 13.

Happy spring!

Elizabeth Kocir PR Committee Chair



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

THE SUNSHINE IS COMING



As I sit here this morning, it is very cold, there is ice covering the ground, and with Zoom, your OLLI just keeps chugging along.

There are some advantages to having online classes in the winter months. Our OLLI winter term is going well. In the

four classes I am in, and one that I lead, people are engaged, learning, and loving it. I thank our Curriculum Committee for the great job they do putting our schedules together. They have also planned a great line up for us this upcoming spring.

I know that many of you are anxious to return to a classroom environment so that we can have the social interactions we all miss so much. I wish I could tell you we have a firm commitment date for when we will be able to return, but the truth is, we just don't know.

Our leadership at the University is just as eager to see us as we are to see them. But the situation we are in is not about how much we want to interact with each other, but more importantly, how we can come together safely and interact among our group and the younger students who also wish to return to a regular campus life. We simply don't know, but the University team is working with the Provost's, President's and Chancellor's teams to develop a strategy for our safe return. Be patient; we will get there when it is safe.

When we do return to campus, the norms of our past may have changed. We simply do not know how things like social distancing will be implemented. When the time comes, have an open mind and open heart, and roll with the punches, whatever is thrown at us.

I had my first COVID-19 vaccination. Because of my previous COVID-19 infection, I had a significant immune response to the vaccine, which is good. I think my antibodies will be "able to leap tall buildings in a single bound," coining a phrase from the comic books of my youth.

I encourage each of you to get your vaccination as soon as possible. I know that it is an interesting process navigating all the computer sites and lists.

If you have concerns about the vaccines, please go to the HudsonAlpha website on "Shareable Science." Dr. Neal Lamb, who has spoken to our group numerous times, presents a series of five- to six-minute film clips on COVID -19 and the various vaccines, including the technologies that are involved in each of the types of vaccines and therapies in development. Dr. Lamb does a great job presenting simple, down-to-earth explanations of what is current in COVID-19.

During March, each of you has a responsibility to your OLLI. You have to elect new Board of Directors members, and they in turn will elect their Executive Board in May. Please make sure you vote.

OLLI board members agree to commit three years to service of your OLLI. They need your support and affirmation, and the best place to start that process is by submitting your vote.

Having said that, I will be rotating off as President of the OLLI Board of Directors. I have served two years and will continue to serve on the board as a member and on the Executive Board as Past President.

I thank you for the support you have given OLLI for the past two years. You have made our OLLI a tremendous success.

David Styers
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors



CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

WE ENDURED AND HAVE COME BACK STRONGER



As I write this, it's Valentine's Day, which gives me pause to take the time to remember all those who mean so much to me and recognize how much I appreciate them

That certainly includes all of you, whom I consider to be part of my

ever-growing family. That realization pleases me because this is a good group, we OLLI brothers and sisters, and I for one, enjoy knowing and working with each and every one of you. So, let me tell you why I started this month's column with that thought.

It won't be a surprise to any of you to hear me say that 2020 was a year to be forgotten. No, not the friends or family we may have had so adversely affected; no, we must never forget them. But the year itself. The framework that set a stage through which we fought to survive.

Those months of uncertainty, of not knowing and, frankly, of being afraid put a pallor over all our lives. But the worst imposition of all was the quarantine that put us all into isolation — forcibly and frighteningly separated from our friends and family and the connections that we humans require so very much. 2020 was indeed a malevolent, trying year that tested our wills and our strength.

But now it is, at last, over. Hope springs once again upon the horizon, and perhaps with just a little more patience, we shall soon see our lives come back to normal. Oh, there may be changes — masks may become the fashion statement of our newfound lives, for example — but we'll be back. That's what counts! Moreover, it's what we need!

I have seen that spirit begin to poke its head through the snows of the winter of our discontent (to borrow a phrase from the Bard) in our winter term. I attended nearly all of the classes offered this term and witnessed firsthand the eagerness to learn and the camaraderie of old friends who were once again celebrating the act of coming together. The lectures were crisp; the Jazzercise and exercise classes hopping; and the discussions open, vigorous, and friendly. Winter has been a great success.

And now comes the spring, with new courses beginning in April and May. You will, of course, already know this by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox because the new schedule will have been published and we'll all be scrambling to enroll in a bevy of new and exciting courses.

But here's the really good news about this, and the point of my ramblings, really: Enrollments in our classes are starting to climb again. We exceeded our expectations for the winter by just a bit over 25%. And it is *this* that tells me that we have endured and have come back stronger.

I have no doubt that this trend will continue in the spring and set the stage for a resurgence of our program as we move into the new academic year.

So, my friends, let's all begin to put our winter blues behind and spring forth with a new vitality and a new energy in the New Year.

For those of you who have been on the sidelines for the past many months, we've missed you, but now it's time to rejoin the fold.

We are preparing a great new curriculum that will offer something to everyone. The world may have changed, as have the paradigms of education, but your OLLI family has not. And we welcome you back!

Also, we encourage our instructors and members to attend our Winter Teacher Appreciation Day on **Friday**, **March 12th**, **at 11:00 am**. It will be a day to celebrate our amazing volunteers and the hard work they put into the winter term. You can register for the event by clicking HERE.

And with that, I shall bid you adieu for this month. Till next time...

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

COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Spring 2021 term registration is now open! We have more than 30 courses planned for you this term. Do not miss the opportunity to participate in discussions, learn a new skill, and expand your knowledge in different topics. Courses have different start dates throughout April and May. View the OLLI Spring course guide at Osher.uah.edu/CourseGuide.



American Revolution in the South—A Civil War

4/5 - 5/10 • M • 1:00—2:30 pm • 6 sessions • Bob Anderson • \$35

The Revolutionary War in the Carolinas and Georgia was much different than the type of battles in the New England States. Colonials and Tories in the southern states fought with vicious convictions of remaining within the crown or becoming a separate nation. Take a look into the battles of Monck's Corner, Waxhaw's, Ramseur's Mill, and other battles/skirmishes as well as murder and plunder in the South and their political and social consequences as part of a civil war.



English Language and Vocabulary Building

4/27 - 5/18 • T • 8:30—10:00 am • 4 sessions • Dr. Bill Confer • \$25Are you curious about the language you are reading presently? Improve your vocabulary with DVD instruction and instructor-led discussions. Expand your understanding of English as a language by discussing influences on American English, learning how connotative values of words lend nuance to denotative (or literal) definitions, and giving examples of some of the quirky and curious English language expressions.



Explore a New Side of Art Journaling

4/7 - 5/5 • W • 10:30 am—noon • 5 sessions • Monica Yother • \$30

Let's go on a safari together! Through the pages of your art journal you'll discover or rediscover creative ways to express yourself. Members will be given a list of materials for the course and will use found materials and specific writing/thought prompts to explore uncharted (or abandoned) lands. Perfect for beginners as well as those who have taken other Art Journaling courses.



Elder Law

4/8 - 5/13 • Th • 3:00—4:30 pm • 6 sessions • Connie Glass • \$35

Successful aging is in part a result of planning ahead. Planning for asset preservation and management during your lifetime is just as important as planning for how your assets will be distributed when you are gone. Learn more about the documents needed for a complete estate plan and options available to preserve and manage assets in the event of long-term care.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WE NEED YOUR VOTE ON BOARD MEMBERS



As a member of OLLI at UAH, you have the special obligation (and privilege) of choosing the directors of our program.

Each year we ask for nominations to our Board of Directors, and a worthy few have once again answered our

call. Our entire program is administered through the UAH College of Professional Studies with the assistance of the OLLI Board. From the classes you attend, to the marketing to the community, and with all the special events and benefits in between, your board members have been the driving force behind the scenes.

Board members change over time, as each is elected for a three-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms. The system allows for continuity in our procedures yet flexibility with new ideas and programs. It is now time to choose this year's new board members, and the responsibility lies with you, our members.

You will soon see an email (or an item in the *eNews*) announcing the opening of the OLLI at UAH annual election for the Board of Directors. Each nominee has been approved by the Nomination Task Force and is qualified for election. These qualifications include:

- 1. Availability to serve as a board member for three years
- 2. Active membership in OLLI at UAH for at least one year prior
- 3. Participation in at least two terms of OLLI at UAH courses
- 4. Understanding of the OLLI mission, programs, membership and committees
- 5. Completion and submission of Board of Directors Candidate Nomination Form

Please take the time and effort to submit your vote for our new directors. All instructions and candidate information will be included on the online ballot. Your vote is important to our program and its continued success.

Janet Reville Nomination Task Force Chair



2019 OLLI Board of Directors



SOCIAL COMMITTEE

JOIN THE IRISH FUN ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY



Ahh, the pandemic! What's there to say about a year that has been both disappointing and yet, heartwarming and fulfilling? I count my blessings and realize I'm very fortunate.

In case you didn't know, I teach art and crafts to adults with special needs. They live in a group home and

are cared for with so much love. I have been with them for three years and COVID-19 has presented special challenges for them. Fortunately, none of the residents have become sick although there were some close calls as they were exposed on several occasions. But we have carried on all masked up.

Let me tell you about them. They are the most loving people who so appreciate everything you do for them. They range in age from the 20's to the 70's. We paint, make magnets out of puzzle pieces, create greeting cards, make key chains, and do many other projects. They love parties and dancing. A couple of them had jobs before everything changed in 2020. I love working with them. They do as much or more for me as I do for them!

Another thing I am grateful for is OLLI. I'm so glad we have been able to keep classes going with Zoom. I've learned so much in my five classes this winter term and I'm looking forward to the spring term. And the coffee chats and bonuses are so much fun. It is such a benefit to be able to see the people I have come to know through OLLI. I know we are all looking forward to returning to campus and getting together in the lounge before classes.

I guess my biggest disappointment is missing all the UAH basketball games this year. In spite of my not being able to cheer them on, they have had a terrific season. First in the conference. How about that!

So, in conclusion, stay connected with OLLI by attending our courses, bonuses, and fun events. The Social Committee is planning a fun event to celebrate St. Patrick's Day virtually. On **March 17th at 11:00 am** join us to wear green and celebrate spring!

Be sure to put on your best green outfit and we will see you soon!

Marilynn Szecholda Social and Events Chair



PEOPLE OF OLLI

TENNENT LEE: HISTORIAN, LAWYER, MUSICIAN

Five minutes in one of Tennent Lee's OLLI history courses will convince you that here is a walking military encyclopedia, especially on the World Wars.

His lectures are remarkably detailed, with numerous pictures to illustrate his points. His answers to sometimes-difficult questions indicate how much more his knowledge extends. It's no surprise his classes are almost always packed.

Teaching is in Tennent's blood. He grew up in Tuscaloosa, where his father was a professor at The University of Alabama. His mother was the longtime organist and choir director at First Presbyterian Church there.

After graduating from Tuscaloosa High School, he earned degrees at Alabama from the School of Commerce and the School of Law. Following three years in the Army Judge Advocate Corps, he moved to Huntsville in 1963 to begin the practice of law. "I did primarily trial and appellate practice in civil cases," he said. "I spent my days researching, developing and analyzing facts and then trying to distill them into something that could be logically and persuasively presented to a jury or judge — exactly the same skills needed to prepare and teach a course at OLLI!"

After Tennent retired from the firm Wilmer & Lee in 2006, he was left looking for something to do.

"I could not put my brain into idle," he said. "My dad was our family history researcher, and I was helping him organize his materials when I came across an oral history I had taken on my mother's first cousin, Sam Caldwell. Sam was an Annapolis graduate and was serving aboard the destroyer *Worden* at Pearl Harbor. The ship and Sam served in all of the major engagements of the Pacific War through the battle of Midway.

"My interest was piqued, and I began to research the *Worden* and the battles in which the ship and my cousin fought. I told friends about my research and how much fun I was having. Jo Ann Jones, who was then in Continuing Education at UAH, told me about OLLI and how I needed to teach military history courses there."

Thus was born Tennent's first course: "World War II in the Pacific." He has been teaching ever since, with courses covering both World Wars and the Civil War.

"My favorite was 'Spooks and Snoops or How Allied Intelligence Won the War.' The course was all about code breakers, double agents and large-scale deceptions, which played such a big part in Allied successes, especially D-Day."

Tennent does not spend all his time immersed in military history. He developed a love of music from his mother and, beginning in high school, had his own dance band, which continued through law school.

His love of music and the arts led him to serve on the boards of the Huntsville Symphony, Arts Council, and Museum of Art. He was also chairman of the Alabama State Council on the Arts. His love of music ranges from country to classical to contemporary Christian, but his special love is music from the Golden Age of Jazz in the 1950s.

He and his wife, Diane, are active members of Big Cove Presbyterian Church, where he helps lead a Bible study course.

They have four children between them, although sadly the two oldest passed away in 2019.

Tennent and Diane plan to move into an independent living community this spring and let someone else do the cooking and yard work.

Thanks, Tennent, for all you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams



Tennent Lee

IN MEMORIAM

SAYING GOODBYE TO FORMER OLLI INSTRUCTOR TAAVO VIRKHAUS

Taavo Virkhaus, music director and conductor of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra from 1989 to 2003, died of COVID-19 on February 10.

Taavo was born on June 29, 1934, in Tartu, Estonia, to a family of conductors. His grandfather, David Otto Virkhaus, is considered the Father of Estonian Band Music; the Estonian Songfest held every four years begins with a parade carrying a torch lit from the eternal fire that burns at his grave.

Taavo's father, Adalbert August Virkhaus, was the first professionally trained (in Leipzig, Germany) conductor of the Estonian Opera House. Taavo began conducting as a 4-year-old guest conductor of a summer band in a resort town and was a huge hit.

Taavo immigrated to the United States with his family at a young age. Taavo's father received a job offer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where Taavo graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School. About this time, he became an American citizen.

He received a full-tuition scholarship for playing in the orchestra of the University of Miami, where he graduated with honors. He received his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting and Composition from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he also was given full scholarships for playing in the orchestras. Taavo always credited his education to his violin.

He then served on the conducting faculty of the Eastman School of Music, where his first violin concerto was awarded the Howard Hanson Prize, and he met his wife, Nancy.

Taavo was the music director and conductor of both the Duluth Superior and the Huntsville Symphony orchestras, with many guest-conducting engagements around the world. He wrote six symphonies and two violin concertos, as well as many incidental pieces.

Taavo always claimed he was the biggest patriot, and he loved the United States for what it is, as well as for the opportunities it gave him.

After retiring as the conductor of the Huntsville Symphony, Taavo continued to spread his love of music to the community by volunteering to teach classes for the OLLI program at UAH.

He was an entertainer and storyteller by nature, and his classes were always entertaining as well as educational. Often a member of the symphony board would attend his class and give OLLI members an advance look at the symphony program for the following year. Sometimes this included discounts for tickets.

OLLI members will remember Taavo with fondness, respect, and gratitude.

By Nancy Virkhaus and Sue Chatham



Taavo Virkhaus



THE 'GREEN THING': WOULD YOU AGREE?

This item has been circulating for years on the internet. The author is unknown. If you know who wrote it, please email OLLINewsletter@uah.edu, and we'll give credit.

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags because the plastic bags are not good for the environment.

The woman apologized to the young girl and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded: "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

The older lady said that she was right — our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day. The older lady went on to explain:

Back then we returned milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottle over and over. So they really were recycled. But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Grocery stores bagged our groceries in brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable, besides household garbage bags, was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our schoolbooks. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school) was not defaced by our scribblings. Then we were able to personalize our books on the brown paper bags. But too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

We walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then we washed the baby's diapers because we didn't have the throwaway kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But the young lady is right, we didn't have the "green"

thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one TV or radio in the house — not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of Montana. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used to wad up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working, so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right, we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the blade in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then people took the streetcar or a bus, and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's \$45,000 SUV or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing." We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computer gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest burger joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

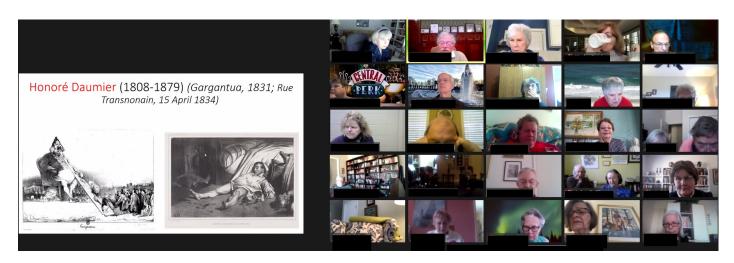
Do you have a "green thing" memory you would like to share? If so, we would like to hear from you. Please submit your article to the <u>OLLINewsletter@uah.edu</u> by March 17. Please keep articles between 100 and 150 words. When submitting, please indicate in the subject line that it's a "green thing" story.



WINTER TERM BONUSES AND COURSES!



Members playing OLLI Bingo



The Art of the Panel Cartoon Bonus presented by Dr. Bill Confer

THE LAST WORD







