

INSIDER

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



OLLI MEMBERS CREATE, PRODUCE AND PERFORM

The Holiday Season is here, and for many of us, it's off to the ballet, the symphony, the theater, the museum, the Galaxy of Lights at the Huntsville Botanical Garden, ice skating at Big Spring Park, and other urban attractions — or maybe to nature and its eternal beauty.

And OLLI members “gather together” to learn, create, and enjoy friendship.

Photo credits, clockwise from top left:
Huntsville Botanical Garden, Steve Jones, Steve Stewart

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2021

Sign up for each event by clicking on the image below. Events are available on Zoom

Teacher Appreciation Day

**11/5 | F | 10:30 am
WIL 168 & Online**



Click on the image to register.

OLLI at UAH Shakespeare Final Performance

Join members from the Shakespeare Theatre Workshop as they give their final performance!

Open to OLLI members, family, and friends! (Must RSVP)

11/13 | Sat | 5:00 pm

Click on the image to register.

WINTER TERM OPEN HOUSE

**12/10 | F | 10:00 AM
WILSON HALL LOBBY**

Get festive while learning about the winter term starting on January 24th!



HOLIDAY trivia

**12/15 | W | 11:00 AM
ONLINE ONLY**

Click on the image to register.

THE SEASON OF THANKSGIVING



Hello, everyone!

Those of us on the *Insider* team and the public relations committee are honored to work with OLLI at UAH to help strengthen and advance our mission of lifelong learning for adults over 50.

In this issue, Kathryn Cataldo profiles the vibrant Joan May, whose contributions to the arts and culture have grown the Huntsville Ballet School into a professional company that inspires and delights audiences.

During this season of harvest, there is a great opportunity for members to help build back our community. Janet Reville writes in this issue about a gift certificate program that will help you invite others into our world of learning. With a gift certificate, you can achieve three things at once: give a delightful opportunity to a friend or relative, support OLLI financially, and enlarge our membership rolls.

While many of us will travel this year to visit friends and relatives, be sure to consider an adventurous trip to Alaska next year. Chris Stuhlinger is planning a 2022 trip that offers a breathtaking, once-in-a-lifetime journey by air, boat and train, organized by the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Summer Sessions and described in this *Insider*.

Many of us are inspired in this season by the changes of tree colors, the cooler temperatures, and the opportunity to gaze in wonder and find peace in the moment.

Guiding us on a new journey, ecologist and OLLI board member Steve Jones shares his photographs that explore the Tennessee Valley and Mother Nature's power and wisdom.

As the *Insider* was going to press, we learned that Ale Pacheco, our OLLI program manager, will be leaving us. We will miss her. We appreciate the expertise, talent, diligence and enthusiasm that Ale has brought to OLLI, and we wish her and her family happiness and success.

We also appreciate Fathia Hardy, Alice Sammon, and others on the UAH staff who provide the institutional support that makes OLLI possible.

My hope this November is to have more compassion for ourselves and others, as we all face different challenges and circumstances during this season of harvesting, giving and change.

With gratitude to all who fill our lives with joy, the *Insider* team and I wish you the best during this season of hope and change.

Steve Stewart
Chair, Public Relations Committee



Ale and the OLLI Board of Directors 2021-2022

FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE GATHER TOGETHER



November has arrived, and probably most of us are anticipating holiday events that will, hopefully, be an improvement from last year.

We have usually marked this season with special gatherings of friends and family and even an OLLI holiday celebration of some kind. But nothing about the last 20

months could be considered “usual,” particularly when it comes to gatherings.

One of my favorite podcasts is *On Being* with Krista Tippett. Recently she interviewed Priya Parker, a conflict resolution strategist, who wrote a book titled *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters*. Ironically, the paperback was released in April 2020 at the height of the pandemic, when it was essentially illegal to gather anywhere. The following excerpt offers some thoughts to keep in mind about why our gatherings matter:

“Why do we gather? We gather to solve problems we can’t solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, mourn, and mark transitions. We gather to make decisions. We gather because we need one another. We gather to show strength. We gather to honor and acknowledge. We gather to build companies and schools and neighborhoods. We gather to welcome, and we gather to say goodbye.”

For those in our demographic, there is an additional truth. Virtually every list of critical factors that contribute to the health, well-being, and longevity of older adults includes the importance of maintaining social connections. Certainly, that was also a basic understanding of the *Bernard Osher Foundation* — along with learning for the joy of learning — when the OLLI program was created.

The pandemic has forced us all to experience gatherings differently. Some OLLI gatherings were simply canceled. Many others were moved to computer screens.

And now we have some hybrid experiences back in the classroom where we sit farther away from fellow members in the room and simultaneously interact with other classmates virtually. However, the OLLI lounge, where we have often enjoyed casual gatherings, has mostly remained dark and locked for safety reasons.

Thankfully, the COVID data in our area has begun to improve. The OLLI board of directors recently voted to offer coffee again in the lounge in Wilson Hall.

Just this week, several of us sat in the lounge and enjoyed our first cups of coffee and conversation in a while, and it almost felt like we had sat down to Thanksgiving dinner. Each of us commented about how much we had missed this experience and how good it felt to gather like this again, even if we must continue to mask and social distance.

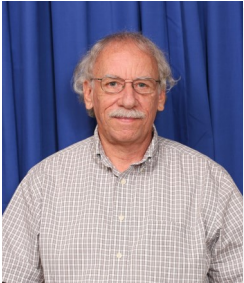
Now we are looking to next term to reschedule the annual meeting and other events as circumstances allow. Priya Parker pointed out that the old template of our traditional gatherings won’t really bring back the good old days because there must be an acknowledgment that our world has changed and we are changed people after what we have been through.

For me, the change I feel is that I will never again take for granted my opportunities to gather with others to celebrate, or to learn, or to play or problem-solve, or to simply share life experiences. And for that, at this time of year, I am most thankful. Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

TRAVEL COMMITTEE

DISCOVER ALASKA IN AUGUST 2022!



Join fellow OLLI at UAH members for a 12-day adventure trip through south-central Alaska. The trip is scheduled for Aug. 12-23, 2022, and will include visits to Fairbanks, Chena Hot Springs, Nenana, Denali National Park, Talkeetna, Anchorage, and Seward.

The trip is organized by the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Summer Sessions. The trip cost is \$4,500 per person, with a \$1,300 single supplement. All lodging and meals are included. Transportation in Alaska will be by bus/motor coach, railroad, and boat. Airfare to Alaska is not included.

Highlights will include Creamer's Field Wildlife Refuge, a riverboat tour on the Chena River, the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline, the University of Alaska's Museum of the North, wildlife scouting in Denali National Park, the Alaska Native

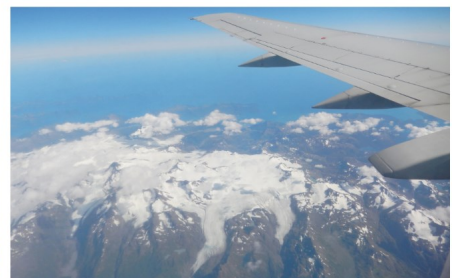
Heritage Center, a scenic railroad trip from Anchorage to Seward, Exit Glacier, a boat tour through Kenai Fjords National Park, and more.

Registration is now open, and several OLLI at UAH members have already signed up. The maximum group size for this tour is only 25 participants, so register soon to reserve your spot!

For more details about the tour and registration information, contact OLLI at UAH member Chris Stuhlinger at cstuhlinger@gmail.com, or Travel Committee Chair Betty Koval at bbkoyal13@gmail.com.

Chris Stuhlinger
Point of Contact for Trip

There is lots to see on a tour of Alaska.



FUND DEVELOPEMENT COMMITTEE

GIVE \$25 OLLI MEMBERSHIPS TO YOUR FRIENDS



In today's society, we are always hearing about downsizing, minimizing, getting rid of stuff, decreasing our possessions, putting a value on people (not things), digitizing memories ... the list goes on and on.

It is often said we spend the first half of our lives accumulating "stuff" and the last half getting rid of it. If you are in that "last half" category, you've probably already talked to your friends and family about exchanging "experiences" instead of "things."

Have you considered sharing an OLLI at UAH membership as a gift for someone? Perhaps a friend you don't get to see too often? A family member who may enjoy an After-Five class or even an occasional virtual class? Your son or daughter who may be wondering exactly what "OLLI" is?

An annual membership to OLLI at UAH is only \$25 and is available as a gift certificate for the recipient. You may choose to have it emailed or mailed to them, or you can claim the paper copy and tie it with a bow! Here is how you can purchase a gift membership:

1. On your computer, open your internet browser and go to Osher.uah.edu/GiftCertificate

2. Log into your account through the "Login" tab on the top menu or at the bottom of the page. Your login is the same one you use for online registrations. If you don't have one, you will also be given the option to create one.

3. Once logged in, the screen will go back to the "Gift memberships" page. If it doesn't, retype the link as directed in No. 1.

4. At the bottom of the page, select one of the four options listed for gift certificates. The 12-month membership is the most common, but any of the options may be selected.

5. Click on "Add to cart" at the bottom of the page. This will take you to your cart, where you can choose "Checkout."

6. The next page asks for the recipient's information: name, mailing or email address, and a gift message from you.

7. The next page is for your payment information.

Once completed, your request for a gift certificate goes to the OLLI staff, and they will contact you with questions about exactly how you want the certificate delivered. What an easy and valuable gift for someone you care about — the gift of learning!

Janet Reville
Fund Development Committee Chair



FAREWELL, OLLI MEMBERS



Dear OLLI members,

First of all I want to congratulate all of you as OLLI at UAH has been named a contender in the non profit of the year category for the 36th Annual Small Business Awards presented by the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce. This is a

huge accomplishment and I hope you are proud of your OLLI!

In other news, as many of you have heard, I will be leaving OLLI and UAH by the beginning of this month, as I have accepted another position in the Huntsville area. I want to thank all of you for welcoming me in to OLLI 2.5 years ago. I have enjoyed working with each one of you and I will miss you!

Also, big thanks to the OLLI Board of Directors, committee chairs, instructors, and facilitators for helping us make OLLI such a successful program, especially as we faced a pandemic this past year and a half. Their hard work doesn't go unnoticed and we are grateful for all of our volunteers! I'm sure better days are ahead, but stay patient with the OLLI staff and OLLI leaders as we transition into a new term.

Fathia Hardy, CPS Director of Outreach and Support Services, will be the interim program manager for OLLI until a new manager is hired. Alice Sammon will remain as OLLI Program Coordinator. If you have any questions about OLLI or need any assistance please do not hesitate to contact them.

I wish you all the best in your future OLLI activities and hoping for a great 2022! Don't forget to attend the Teacher Appreciation on Friday, November 5th at 10:30 am.

Take care,

Ale Pacheco
OLLI at UAH Program Manager



Ale with Jill Stewart and Linda McAllister at Fall Open House 2019.



Ale with OLLI members at Cook Museum.



Ale with OLLI members at Online Bonus.

JOAN MAY: A PASSION FOR EDUCATING AND A LOVE FOR THE ART OF DANCE



Joan May was born to be a teacher and an inspiration to others. Some call her a champion in service to OLLI at UAH and the Huntsville Ballet.

"My parents were amazing people who enriched my life in many ways, and gave me the confidence to be the best I could be," Joan said.

Born in Philadelphia, Joan fell in love with dance at an early age. "My mother had always wanted to be a dancer," she said, "but as an immigrant from Lithuania, she never got the opportunity. When I was about 4 years old, my mom would sneak peeks through the doors of the Arthur Murray studios to watch and learn ballroom dancing."

While Joan's dad worked and went to night school studying engineering, her mother taught ballroom dancing in their home to couples for \$5 a session, which was "good money back then," Joan remarked. As Joan watched from the staircase, she saw her mother teaching foxtrot, rumba, cha-cha, and waltz.

"Mom wanted me to study ballet, so from the age of 9, I took a trolley car and a subway after school to study with a Russian teacher in downtown Philly, and it became part of my life."

The family moved to Huntsville when Joan was 14 and her dad got a position at Redstone Arsenal. While attending Huntsville High (Class of '61), Joan learned that the principal's wife was a ballet teacher.

"I believe she was a European ballerina, and she taught ballet class in her basement studio," Joan remembers. "I was able to continue enjoying that skill, and it gave me confidence in a new environment."

Joan headed to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa to major in education during the Bear Bryant and Joe Namath years.

Following graduation, Joan would marry Mike, a longtime sweetheart, and have two children, Robin May Seale and Brett May. Robin studied dance as well.

Joan was a school teacher and taught first, second, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades over a 45-year period.

"Fourth grade was my favorite," she said. "I even taught them ballet moves, and we would put on a fourth-grade spoken version of *The Nutcracker* at Whitesburg Elementary."

She earned two master's degrees, one in elementary education and the second in developmental learning. A volunteer leader, Joan helped on a committee that planned Early Works, a children's museum in downtown Huntsville.

Following retirement, Joan found OLLI at UAH eight years ago. She introduced our 50-and-older members to the Huntsville Ballet and the Brain Dance course.

Developed by kinesthetic expert Anne Green Gilbert, the Brain Dance is a movement series composed of eight developmental patterns that healthy human beings naturally move through in the first year of life.

"What we found was that it helps keep our minds active, and cycling through these patterns at any age has been found to be beneficial for the central nervous system," Joan said.

"It increases focus, balance, core strength, body awareness and general coordination with relaxing music, releasing stress, improving breathing and the body-mind connection."

Cathy Curry, director of outreach and education for Huntsville Ballet and Community Ballet Association as well as OLLI instructor said: "I've been thrilled to help spread the benefits of the Brain Dance to adults. Mind/body connective fitness is a priority for all our Huntsville Ballet programs, so this is a great fit. Research has shown that the Brain Dance has great benefits for cognitive abilities, coordination, oxygenation, and balance — all elements that are so important as we get older."

OLLI students have responded positively.

"It's wonderful that they're so open-minded to trying something new and outside the box," Cathy said. "Many students have reported great results for both their minds and bodies while participating in the class. They've also told me that Brain Dance is great fun!"

"Joan's constant enthusiasm and ability to connect makes her an extraordinarily special person. Her never-ending curiosity for new people and ideas is what makes her a total dynamo!"

A champion for OLLI at UAH and Huntsville Ballet, Joan shares her never-ending curiosity, skills as a great people person, and passionate energy with everyone she meets.

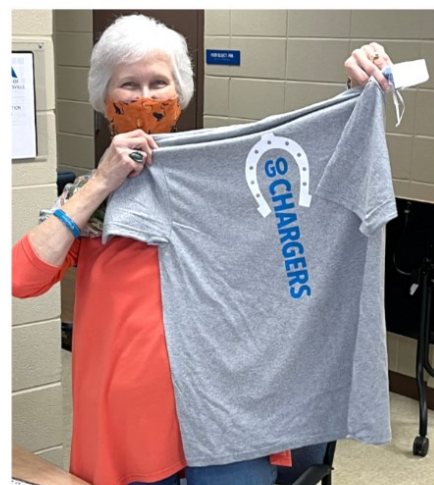
By Kathryn Cataldo

FRIDAY BONUS LOOKS AT HUNTSVILLE BALLET

Cathy Curry, director of outreach and education for the Huntsville Ballet, discussed its educational programs, classes and performances, as well as the background and history of ballet. Dancer Abby Callahan performed. It all happened during a Bonus session on October 1st for on-campus and online attendees. Curry also taught a course, “The Brain Dance,” during OLLI’s fall term.



BINGO BRINGS PRIZES AT OCT. 8 COFFEE CHAT





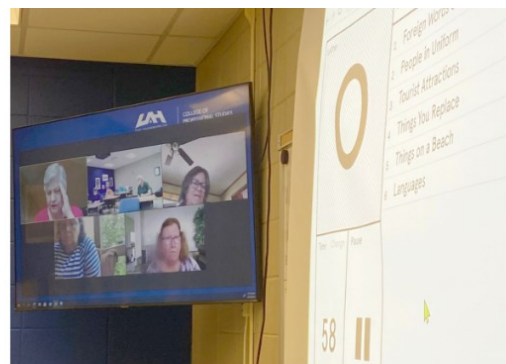
DO IT YOURSELF: HOLIDAY GIFTS AND DECORATIONS

OLLI members sharpened their skills in a five-week course called "Holiday DIY: Gifts and Decorations," Sept. 20-Oct. 18. Janet Reville taught the class. Guest presenters showed how to make candy gifts, garland trees, unique wrappings and tags, and other items to make the season merry.



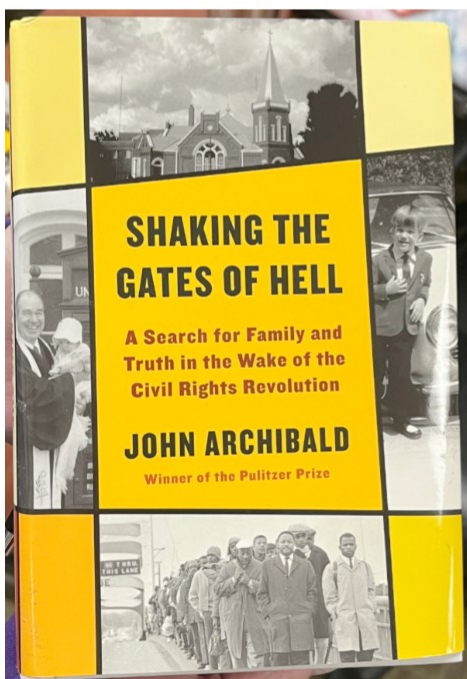
SCATTERGORIES GAME TAXES OLLI BRAINS

OLLI members played Scattergories in person and online during a Coffee Chat on Friday, Oct. 15. Scattergories requires creative thinking as contestants score points by uniquely naming objects within a set of categories, beating a time limit.



‘FIRESIDE CHAT’ WITH AUTHOR JOHN ARCHIBALD

John Archibald, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for AL.com and recent book author, was one of the speakers in the just-completed “Fireside Chats with Authors” course taught by Betty Koval. Archibald comes from a family of Methodist ministers, and his book reflects on human rights issues that have faced his family and the church. He spoke Oct. 12, reading aloud from his book as well as from Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 challenge to white ministers in “Letter from Birmingham Jail.”

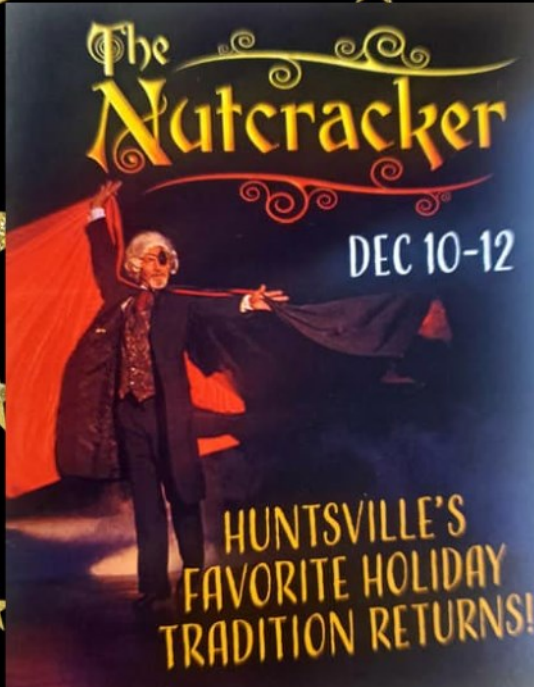


ALABAMA'S 'PERFECT OUTDOOR DAYS' OF FALL

OLLI board member Steve Jones says he welcomes “cooler weather and the long season of perfect outdoor days as fall slowly transitions to spring.” He shot these photos. Left to right: top row, Camp McDowell in Winston County, Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve, and a sugar maple in Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge; second row, the nature preserve, a cypress tree in the refuge, the nature preserve, and Wells Memorial Trail at Monte Sano State Park; and third row, Staghorn sumac seed head at Harvest Square Nature Preserve, sugar maple at Bradford Creek Greenway in Madison, sunset at Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve, and Wells Memorial Trail. If you want to see more nature adventures, join the Facebook group [Nature-Inspired Life and Living](#) or visit the website stevejonesgbh.com.



THE LAST WORD



OLLI MEMBERS CAN
RECEIVE 35% OFF
THE NUTCRACKER
TICKETS.

Contact fellow member, Joan
May at jmikemay@comcast.net
to receive the offer.