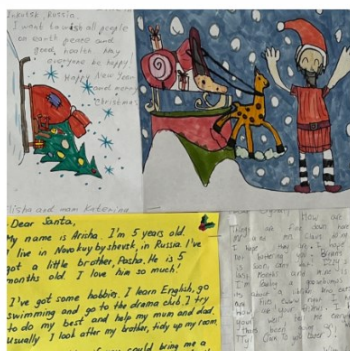


THE OLLI INSIDER

DECEMBER 2022 ISSUE

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



SWAMPS, EAGLES, HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

Clockwise from top left: Bald eagles spotted during a hike at Blackwell Swamp; letters to Santa Claus from Russia and other places, posted in North Pole, Alaska; Mike Ezell explaining the tupelo swamp at Beaverdam Boardwalk; a blacksmith demonstrating his craft at Burritt on the Mountain; Tom Borchert describing how Humphrey Bogart, Richard Nixon and Sarah Palin affected U.S. defamation law; Molly Wilkinson Johnson, associate professor of history at UAH, after her presentation on the history of Ukraine and Russia; OLLI program coordinator Alice Sammon, who is this month's Insider profile subject, with husband George.



[Osher.uah.edu](https://osher.uah.edu)

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Lifelong Learning
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FROM THE EDITOR

THANKS, SANTA; ENJOY THE JACK DANIEL'S



"Kids Say the Darndest Things." That was the name of a TV show, but we could have adopted it at the weekly newspaper in rural southwest Alabama where Patrice and I worked.

Every year, we told children that Santa Claus had asked us to help handle his mail. We invited them to send their Santa letters to the

newspaper for publication. Our friends at the local post office occasionally received a letter addressed to "Santa Claus, North Pole" and placed it in our mailbox.

My all-time favorite letter came from a child who didn't care that he lived in a dry county.

"Santa," he wrote, "I'm leaving you some cookies and Jack Daniel's."

He may not have put the apostrophe in the right place. We published the letters largely unedited, preserving the children's charming spelling, grammar and punctuation. (Sometimes if the letter came from a preschool child, we suspected that a parent was making the amusing errors, though.)

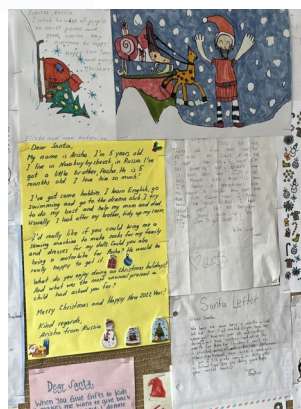
While visiting North Pole, Alaska, in August, our OLLI tour group found dozens of Santa letters posted in a shop.

"Firstly," one child wrote, "I want to say that I am extremely happy that you could bring me my favorite present that I wanted, and it was an X-box one and the rest of the fantastic presents I am oredey [sic] playing with. Secondly, I would like to say that you gave up your own time to deliver the presents when you should be with your own family. Finally, you should have a massive rest from all that rushing about and get a big sleep."

From Russia, another child printed neatly in polished English: "I'd really like if you could bring me a sewing machine to make socks for my family and dresses for my dolls. Could you also bring a motorbike for [brother] Pasha? He would be really happy to get it." She asked what Santa enjoys at Christmas and "What was the most unusual present a child had asked you for?"

Another letter from Russia (you know, the country waging war on Ukraine) said: "I want to wish all people on earth peace and good health. May everyone be happy!" I nominate that child to replace Vladimir Putin.

Another child inquired about the welfare of Santa's elves and reindeer, and one told Santa, "When you give gifts to kids it makes me want to give back."



Letters to Santa Claus posted in North Pole, Alaska, came from Russia and other places

It turns out that not only do kids say the darndest things — they also say the most insightful and inspiring things. They express gratitude, empathy, inclusiveness, unselfishness, generosity, candor and curiosity. It's too bad they have to, um, grow up.

Inside *The Insider*: Marilyn Szecholda invites us to OLLI's first holiday party since before the pandemic.

Alice Sammon, the ubiquitous OLLI program coordinator, is the subject of this month's profile by Glen Adams. Clay Williams mentions a few of the 70-plus courses that will be offered in spring semester. Barbara Johnson reminds us of the good we can achieve with year-end financial gifts to OLLI.

Betty Koval wraps up her travelogue from Alaska and invites us on future trips. David Styers recalls Christmas celebrations he's seen around the world.

Jill Stewart reflects on the value of storytelling. In his military history column, John Mason spins a true yarn about a Revolutionary War soldier who had a secret. In his curriculum column, John names people and circumstances to be grateful for.

Leah Black explains what the Member Services Committee offers, including the annual photo contest. Chris Stuhlinger looks back on a successful year of events, and we have dozens of pictures from recent events.

One more thing: Share with readers your favorite unsung perk (perquisite) of OLLI membership. (Mine is all you can eat for \$6.54 in Charger Cafe.) Email OLLINewsletter@uah.edu.

Happy holidays!

Steve Stewart
Public Relations Committee Chair

FROM THE PRESIDENT



OUR STORIES — WRITTEN, READ, TOLD, HEARD



Along with good walking shoes, my AirPods have become required equipment for my power walks around the neighborhood. I have found that I am more willing to walk longer and farther if I can listen to a good story in the process.

A favorite podcast choice for these sessions is “The Moth

Radio Hour,” where ordinary folks tell their stories, usually focused on a weekly theme, recorded at “story slam” events around the country. I am sure people who see me wonder why I may be laughing or crying as I move quickly past them. But stories can have that power — to move and inspire us.

Those of us who are regular public radio listeners may also appreciate the “StoryCorps” segments featured on NPR, as well as the local “Sundial Writers Corner” on WLRH. Recently, I also had the opportunity to hear local writers read their works aloud at a monthly “Gathered Words” event of the Huntsville Literary Association’s Creative Nonfiction Workshop. Each writer recounted experiences that were so relatable and entertaining.

Jimmy Neil Smith, Tennessee native and founder of the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, has said: “We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling.”

At no time is this fact more evident than at holiday gatherings of our families and friends. The stories of our memories or shared experiences seem to spill out on those occasions, prompting laughter or tears — and sometimes corrections — from those gathered.

The course guide for OLLI’s spring 2023 semester will soon be available online for you to peruse. We have a very exciting lineup of around 70 courses to choose from. Among them are quite a few opportunities to hear, read, study and create stories.

One good thing about being a “seasoned” adult is that we have lived through many seasons that have provided a wealth of material for our own stories. Maybe it is time to record and share them.

“Stories are our primary tools of learning, the repositories of our lore and legends,” observed Edward Miller, illustrator and product designer. “They bring order to our confusing world. Think about how many times a day you use stories to pass along data, insights, memories or common-sense advice.”

I hope you will plan to join us for OLLI’s holiday party Dec. 15. We have certainly missed this celebration for the last two years. And remember to mark your calendars for the spring term open house Jan. 6.

In the meantime, I wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season, and may the stories shared in your homes bring you comfort and joy.

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors



Storytelling erupts at gatherings of families and friends — prompting laughter, tears and sometimes corrections. (Photo by Jill Stewart)

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2022 - JANUARY 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.

Dec 9 | Fri | 11:00 am | [Online/In-Person](#)

Bonus: Wildlife of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

The incredible diversity of wildlife found in the Galapagos makes this group of islands off the coast of Ecuador so special. The islands are home to many unique species of birds, reptiles and mammals. After visiting the Galapagos and experiencing the wildlife, Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution. Witness this photographic journey through the islands, which includes a vivid look at the wildlife of the islands by exploring the rainforest and wildlife of mainland Ecuador before boarding a boat for a trip through the islands. Sign up [online](#).

Presented by Tom Ress, avid traveler and prolific writer.

**Dec 15 | Thu | 6:00 pm | [In-Person](#)
Event: Holiday Party**

OLLI at UAH invites you and your family and friends to join us in celebrating the holiday season for the first time since 2019 at our holiday party extravaganza! Come enjoy complimentary beer and wine, dancing and dinner. Holiday entertainment is provided by DJ Ted Canon. Dinner ticket includes entrée choice of citrus and herb crusted wild salmon, chicken piccata or penne pasta with asparagus and fontina (vegetarian). All entrees served with salad, dessert, and complimentary beer, wine, or sodas.

**Cost: \$30/person | Sign-up [online](#) is required |
Registration ends on Sunday December 4.**

Open to OLLI Members and Guests

Please make a note of the following dates!

Dec 23 - Jan 2, UAH Closed for Holiday Break

Jan 6, Open House for Spring Term 2023

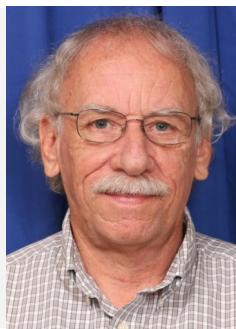
Jan 30 - May 5, Spring Term 2023



EVENTS COMMITTEE



THANK YOU FOR SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF EVENTS



It's hard to believe that the year 2022 is already drawing to a close. As the holiday season is upon us, I want to thank all the OLLI members who participated in and supported our events this year. Many thanks to OLLI staff for their behind-the-scenes administrative work to help facilitate our events.

And I especially appreciate the help of the other two members of the Events Committee, Michelle Laverty and Val Seaquist, to contact potential event venues and organize logistics for our visits.

We tried to offer a variety of events: museum and art tours, business and history tours, local sports, hikes and bike rides, and more. It was great to see a trend of increasing attendance at our events. Several were filled to capacity.

The Events Committee has more events planned and scheduled for spring semester 2023. We hope members will find events that interest them. Once again, there will be two events where members can bring up to two guests. So, stay tuned for more ...

Recap of recent events

- **Big Cove Creek/Flint River greenways bike ride** — OLLI bikers enjoyed a leisurely ride along Big Cove Creek and the Flint River on a sunny Saturday morning, Oct. 29. Several wild turkeys were spotted feeding in a nearby field.
- **Beaverdam Boardwalk/Blackwell Swamp hike/nature walk** — Despite a cool morning of Nov. 12, a large group of members explored the Beaverdam Boardwalk and the surrounding water tupelo swamp, one of the largest in Alabama. Afterward, some members viewed recent tornado damage near Blackwell Swamp, and even spotted two bald eagles perched in a nearby pine tree.
- **Burritt on the Mountain Tour** — OLLI members experienced a fascinating tour of the late Dr. William Henry Burritt's mansion and stories about his life Nov. 18. A tour guide in 1800s-period dress led the group through several relocated cabins in the historic park and explained the furnishings and ways of life during that time period. A blacksmith demonstrated tools of his trade while sharing the lore of that era.

Upcoming Events

Although there are no additional OLLI events scheduled for December (except the Veterans Museum visit on Dec. 2, for which the registration deadline has passed), you might be interested in checking out some of the public holiday events coming up in the Huntsville area. Visit these websites for information:

- [Huntsville holiday events — Christmas shows and things to do](#)
- [Holiday/Rocket City Mom — Huntsville events, activities and resources for families](#)
- [Huntsville holiday events — Eventbrite](#)
- [Huntsville holiday events 2022 — We Are Huntsville](#)

Happy holidays!

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair



Mike Ezell explains the tupelo swamp and other attractions at Beaverdam Boardwalk on Nov. 12. For more pictures from this event, see Page 6.
(Photo by Helen Crawford)



BOARDWALK/BLACKWELL SWAMP NATURE HIKE



(Photos by Ed Bernstein, Helen Crawford, Marsha Langlois, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)



TOURING BURRITT ON THE MOUNTAIN NOV. 18



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



BIG COVE CREEK/FLINT RIVER GREENWAYS RIDE



(Photos by Chris Stuhlinger)

RADIO STATION WLRH HELPS PROMOTE OLLI

You may have heard Glen Adams' voice on public radio station WLRH (89.3). The station helps OLLI to promote courses, events and member recruitment by providing free public service announcements for nonprofit organizations. WLRH is funded in part by donations. Here, Glen, a member of OLLI's Public Relations Committee, is at the studio to record a PSA.



FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE



Keep OLLI at UAH
STRONG!



It has felt so good to get back into the swing of things at OLLI – classes, bonuses, early bird breakfasts, hikes, travel, and just enjoying our community. OLLI is a special place where you meet interesting and enthusiastic people, learn things you never knew you wanted to know, have great travel partners, and find opportunities to interact and grow.

OLLI receives funds from a variety of sources, including a percentage of the interest from the national Osher Foundation endowment, revenue from program fees, donations, and in-kind support from UAH. These funding sources, including generous gifts from donors, have helped OLLI manage the economic burden from the recent pandemic and continue to offer fun and exciting opportunities for our members.

Our recent bonus lecture, *Cash Isn't Always King*, highlighted ways donors can support the areas that mean the most to them, including:

1. Donating cash directly.
2. Directing some or all of our IRA required minimum distributions to the charity of our choice.

A gift to the OLLI at UAH Support Fund helps provide quality educational programming and supports a community where those 50 and over can belong and continue their journey of lifelong learning. It also helped us make a capital investment to purchase our own 12-passenger van - the OLLI Trolley. Making a year-end gift is easy and tax-deductible, and it makes a lasting impact at UAH.

I hope you consider a year-end gift to OLLI to allow this community to prosper for years to come.

Best Regards,

Barbara Johnson,
OLLI Fund Development Chair

Donating by Mail?



Use the donation form at
tinyurl.com/DonateOLLI.

Donating Online?

Follow these three easy steps:



- 1 Visit Osher.uah.edu/DonateOLLI



- 2 Click on "Give to the OLLI at UAH Support Fund"



- 3 Insert your information*, amount to donate, billing information, and click on "Donate."

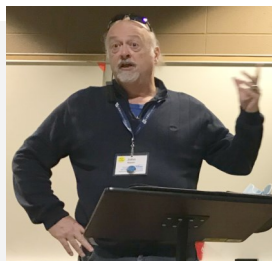
**Members have the option to make a recurring gift monthly, quarterly, or yearly. Also, members can submit a matching gift with certain companies or previous employers.*



PART OF THE  University of Alabama System



REASONS TO BE THANKFUL DURING HOLIDAYS



*Christmas toys all over the place,
Little Joannie has a funny smile upon her face.
'Cause Joannie has a secret, and this secret she must share!
She wants to tell somebody, so she tells her teddy bear:
"I saw Grandpa Zoom an OLLI class,
Sitting in his easy chair last night."*



(Art from Cindi Albright
through Creative Commons,
tinyurl.com/gratitude-22)

Don't you just love Christmastime? No more pumpkin spice, and old-time carols playing everywhere? I heard this one just today, and it made me think how lucky we all are to be able to be together this time of year, Zooming unforgettable holiday memories together.

So in keeping with that spirit, this month's column will be short and positive and will take the opportunity to recall all of the good things that have happened to the program this year, and all the things I believe our OLLI family can be thankful for.

First, I'm thankful for some of the changes that are on the way, most of which will be examined in other columns here. Change is good, and we have a lot of good to look forward to in the coming year.

One thing we can count on, though, is the strong support the UAH administration gives to our program. They are "all-in" for OLLI, and that bodes well.

Why am I thankful for changes? Because I view change as an avenue for growth, and growth as the path to success. So I embrace the coming changes and hope you will as well.

Second, I'm thankful for our continued growth. We hit a milestone this past month unseen since 2019: the presence of 700 members again, some 350 of whom signed up for courses in the fall!

That's terrific news, but it's not time to stop and sit on our laurels. Our goal now is to get back to 1,000 members and enrollments approaching 500.

Yes, those are lofty numbers, but for the best lifelong learning program in the state, if not in the Southeast, they are achievable.

So for those of you whose memberships have expired, why don't you take a minute to go online and renew! Or if you know of someone who isn't a member, why not give them a gift membership for Christmas? Learning is a gift and an exercise that we can all enjoy every day.

Third, I'm very thankful for our discipline chairs and all the hard and thoughtful work they put into making our educational program one of the best out there! These are some of the best people I've ever had the pleasure of working with, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate them. Thanks, guys!

And because of their hard work and dedication, we will be offering 71 classes this coming spring. 71! There will be plenty of interesting and challenging topics to choose from, and I believe all of us can find something there.

Fourth, I'm thankful for our instructors. I can tell you, planning and executing a course for us is hard work. Our instructors don't get paid, so they do this strictly for the enjoyment of studying and sharing their interests and knowledge with you.

Not only do I look forward to working with them every term, but I also hope that some of you will join their ranks. Teaching can be a wonderful experience, and I guarantee you it will broaden your horizons.

Fifth, I'm thankful for our College of Professional Studies staff. Without them and all that they do, we wouldn't exist. Clay, Alice, and the rest are always there, making sure all facets of our program run smoothly and that it's always working toward our best interests. Guys, for the entire OLLI family, I say: Thank you!

And finally, I'm thankful for all of you. You are wonderful friends and make being an OLLI member ever enjoyable. And so, to coin a phrase, ahem,

*But I heard him exclaim as he put down his pen —
"Happy holidays to all, and I'll see you again!"*

Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season! And with that, I'll bid you adieu.

Till next time ...

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

LOOKING TOWARD THE SPRING



Our fall semester has come to its conclusion. A total of 337 members took part in nearly 60 courses, and there were a number of bonuses, special events, and member interest group activities.

The trend of members returning to campus is growing. That tendency is evident with our

upcoming spring offerings, as more teachers are choosing to teach in person only.

OLLI will still offer a large number of virtual options, but the importance of community is clear. Our members love learning new things, but even more importantly, they desire to meet in person with their friends for fellowship.

Speaking of spring, OLLI will be offering over 70 courses. The new course guide should be available momentarily, so keep an eye peeled on our website and your email.

The semester features past favorites such as Writing Your Life Story, Socrates Café, Elder Law, Beers Around the World, and Tai Chi, but there are several new selections guaranteed to generate lots of interest. These topics include photography, foreign languages, music, knitting, history, Shakespeare, cryptography, art, astronomy, astrobiology and so much more.

This semester emphasizes physical and spiritual health as well. And we continue to feature several fascinating Alabama Shares courses from our friends in Auburn and Tuscaloosa.

Spring semester starts on Jan. 30 and runs until May 5, with our open house occurring on Jan. 6. (A few Alabama Shares courses start earlier in January.) We look forward to another great semester of learning opportunities.

Looking for more good news? Our membership has reached the 700 mark! As you know, COVID dramatically reduced our numbers, and staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to raise our membership back to pre-pandemic levels. We are not there yet, but hitting 700 was a milestone that shows that we are on our way back.

Can you believe the holidays are almost here? Wasn't it just Halloween? Are you exhausted trying to determine what to get your friends and family? Stop stressing and give the gift of lifelong learning! OLLI gift memberships are the perfect gift. For just \$25, you can share the exciting world of OLLI with others. Your friends and family won't miss the socks and candles.

See osher.uah.edu/giftmembership.

Speaking of holidays, it is time again (for the first time since 2019) for the OLLI holiday party. Join us on Dec. 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Conference Training Center on campus for an evening of dining, drinking and dancing. The registration deadline is Dec. 4, so sign up now. Details are on the OLLI website and in your *eNews*.

Finally, UAH and OLLI will be closed from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2 for the holiday break.

Happy holidays!

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager



Attend courses in-person on the UAH campus.



Attend courses taught in-person at an off-campus location.



Combine the convenience of online with the interaction of peers on campus. Interact with fellow participants from the comfort of your home through Zoom.



Join instructors and peers online using Zoom. There are no participants on campus.

OLLI will continue offering courses in person, online and blended, identified by these icons in the course guide. The COVID pandemic pushed all classes online, but members are returning to campus in increasing numbers.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

WE'RE HAVING A PARTY DEC. 15. BE THERE!



Enjoying a delicious dinner, dancing to our favorite music, and celebrating with OLLI friends — sounds like a holiday party!

Yes, for the first time since 2019 we are planning to get together and *party*. So mark your calendars for Thursday, Dec. 15, from 6 to 9 at the Conference Training Center on the UAH campus.

A varied menu is planned, including herb-crusted salmon, chicken piccata, and penne pasta with asparagus and fontina. Also, we'll have salad, dessert, and complimentary wine, beer and sodas.

Ted Cannon, deejay, will entertain us during dinner and afterward so we can get out and “cut a rug.” Plan to come and enjoy the festivities.

Register online by Dec. 4. The cost is \$30 per person. Hope to see you there.

Get ready — “Souper Bowl” is coming the first week in February. Check your cookbooks for your favorite soup recipe, and bring some to share for a potluck luncheon. Look for more details in the January *Insider* and the weekly *eNews*. We'll have the date, time and signup information.

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair



OLLI's holiday party will take place Dec. 15 in the Conference Training Center on the UAH campus. It will be the first such party since this one in 2019 at the Jackson Center. COVID-19 thwarted partying in 2020 and 2021.

TRAVEL COMMITTEE



FROM ALASKA TO PHILADELPHIA AND BEYOND



I simply cannot believe this is December! It amazes me how fast the time goes by. We wake up on a Monday with a list to accomplish or meetings to attend for the week, turn around and look at the calendar, and it is the weekend *again!* I am just guessing it is like this for most of you!

I must say I do enjoy staying busy and making my time count. Serving on the OLLI board, as Travel Committee chair and in other community organizations keeps both Bill and me active. I even *stretched* my brain this year to learn bridge and found this is *not* an easy game to learn — it is a *constant* learning experience but has its merits! It certainly keeps me on my toes.

The bridge member interest group at OLLI has some of the nicest people, and I find them exceptionally helpful when I can't decide what to bid on — which is often. I do not get to play with them much but do enjoy the fellowship. If there is a member interest group you enjoy, sign up and participate — you won't regret it.

OUR GREAT ALASKA ADVENTURE

Now on to the rest of the story of OLLI travelers' great Alaska adventure 2022. I believe I left off last month at the amazing Anchorage Museum and Alaska Native Heritage Center. I cannot say enough about how wonderful these two experiences were.

So, you have heard the expression "hurry up and wait." On Saturday, Aug. 20, we had to leave the hotel at 5:20 a.m. to get to the train station (which was packed) to wait for the 7 a.m. train to Seward. Believe me when I tell you, it was worth the wait! The ride was fun, and we were served breakfast on the train.

The scenery was something to behold. It is almost indescribable. The glaciers in the distance, which have decreased so much in the past 15 years, were a first for some of us. There was some wildlife, but, on the train, it was hard to snap a clear photo. We also decided maybe it was early for even the wildlife!

We checked into a quaint little hotel right downtown, within walking distance from the shopping and eating. We had lunch at the Alaska Sea Life Center right on Resurrection Bay. We had a private behind-the-scenes tour, explored



Tour leader Sally Smith is a former mayor and legislator. Chris Stuhlinger walks past the 1951 edge of the shrinking Exit Glacier.



(Photos by Margrit Carr and Steve Stewart)

the sea life exhibits and had a talk by an intern on her experiences working for the summer with the sea life at the center. Later in the afternoon, we had an optional talk at the library on the 1964 earthquake and tsunami hitting Seward and Valdez, even causing land and buildings in Anchorage to drop by one story.

Sunday morning found most of us traversing up the side of a mountain on a National Park Service-led tour to view Exit Glacier. What a view! Along the trek there were dated signs showing where the glacier had been in particular years. It was also pointed out to us in *vivid* realization how much the glacier has melted since 2005. The photos we were able to take were taken from the vantage point of where the glacier had been in 2005. The glacier was a good distance from the point we stood.

Do not tell anyone in Alaska there is no global warming, for they will show you examples. It was sad to know in another 20 years most of the glaciers there will be gone. We do not fully know the impact on our environment this will make.

There were a few ladies who went on a floral and fauna exploration with one of the park rangers. I understand they have some amazing photos of these local plants. We enjoyed seeing the photos and hearing of the plants they had seen.

(continued on the next page)

FROM ALASKA TO PHILADELPHIA, CONT

Our afternoon adventure found us boarding a Major Marine vessel for lunch and a four-hour tour of Resurrection Bay. (Note: I am not a big water person, and I kept repeating in my head, “A three-hour tour” — we all know how that turned out for those on the SS Minnow in “Gilligan’s Island”!). The weather was not great because it was a bit windy with sporadic rain. While others braved the elements, I chose to remain inside, for I was way outside my comfort zone but found myself enjoying the scenery. I chose to watch them while they shot photos of sea otters, puffins, sea lions, dolphins and even a whale breaching the water.

Two of the best parts of the trip were being hosted by local families. Almost everyone went to the larger hotel and was regaled with local lore.

Another six of us were hosted by a local who had since moved to Astoria, Oregon, and returned to open a fish processing plant. It is seasonal, and they were in the process of closing the plant for the season. She would soon return to Oregon for the winter. The operation is small, and she explained it was like a big family. Her sister made the dinner, and two of the other young ladies who cooked for the seasonal workers made the desserts! She entertained at the house used for the management, visitors and office space. She was an exceptional artist and painted local animals and sea life on the driftwood she collected. Again, the food was exceptional, and we truly enjoyed our evening with them.

On Monday, we boarded a bus to the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center at Portage Glacier on our way to Anchorage. We took the scenic route through Girdwood, a resort town, home of the Girdwood Summer Sled Dog Adventure and many other attractions. It was so small that I Googled “things to do” and was so surprised at what this small community had to offer. Check it out!

Further on our drive, we spotted belugas in the water. To think those little white spots on the water were small whales! We did have a quick bus tour of Lake Hood, and at Earthquake Park we saw a section where part of the ground is a one-story level difference. We then attended the farewell dinner and enjoyed rehashing our adventures one last evening together.

Tuesday, many had early-morning flights, and a few of us stayed for another day and another walk around the city. When — not if — you go, do plan to walk around and explore the history of any area you visit in Alaska. It may feel like another time to us, but this is their lifestyle, and to be frank it is quite peaceful. I truly understand why some made this their forever home.

TRAVELERS’ COMMENTS

Sallie Robinson:

There are so many wonderful memories from the OLLI UAH Alaska Adventure that it is difficult to narrow them down to one favorite. My favorite day overall must be the day spent mostly outside in the Seward area — morning hike to the Exit Glacier overlook, followed by afternoon wildlife boat ride on Resurrection Bay, and completed by the wonderful dinner prepared by Friends of the Seward Library.

The trip provided a great introduction to the many things that Alaska has to offer for those with a curious mind. I really enjoyed learning about how the terrain, vegetation and wildlife in the various geographic regions of Alaska impacted the way different Native cultures lived their lives.

I liked hearing the stories of people who are native to Alaska, those who relocated 40 years or more ago, and those visiting as we were. It was wonderful traveling with the OLLI group of interesting and interested people.

Chris Stuhlinger:

Our Alaskan Adventure left me, and our group, with some wonderful memories of the places we visited and activities we experienced. Knowing ahead of time that the places we would visit would be familiar to me, I was really looking forward to seeing how the rest of our travel group would react to the Alaskan landscape and people. Before the trip, there seemed to be some travelers who may have been somewhat skeptical about spending two weeks with a tour group in Alaska, and others who were sure that one visit would be enough.

As the tour progressed, it was great to see how much everyone enjoyed our adventure! Those who seemed skeptical before, or weren’t necessarily interested in a second visit, had clearly changed their minds, and talked about how much they enjoyed the many different destinations, the variety and quality of the educational offerings, seeing wildlife and mountains and glaciers, and getting to know the local people and indigenous cultures. Most of the travelers told me they want to come back and see more!

So that is my favorite memory — seeing how well our travelers interacted, how much they enjoyed every day of the tour, and especially how much they became enchanted with Alaska. That made the whole trip for me!

(continued on the next page)

FROM ALASKA TO PHILADELPHIA, CONT

Linda Kay Myers:

Sally Smith [a guide and tour leader] was always competent, funny, knowledgeable about Alaska, and got us all to the right place at the right time. She seemed to have a lot of experience in leading groups like ours and took care of all problems with ease. I especially enjoyed her conversations about Alaska politics, a subject she knew so well from her time in the Alaska legislature and as mayor of Juneau. She also had a knack for making the people around her relax and enjoy themselves, whether they were members of our group or the people in the hotel trying to get us all into rooms.

Chris Stuhlinger had an extensive knowledge of Alaska from his previous travels and was always willing to keep us informed about the places we were visiting. I know he had a hand in selecting what things we saw and did an outstanding job of selecting an interesting variety of venues and parks for us to explore. He also was the primary recruiter to get people to sign up for the trip, and amazingly we wound up with a great group. Everyone was interesting and got along with the others without major conflicts.

This is the first time I have ever done a trip with OLLI, and I particularly enjoyed the lectures from all the great teachers associated with the University of Alaska Fairbanks OLLI. I learned about wildlife, birds, fish, Native Alaskans, native languages, aurora borealis, climbing Denali, the pipeline, and many other interesting topics. Alaska is so unique; I am grateful I got a sample of the great teaching available at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Highlights to me were swimming in the Chena Hot Springs, the scenic ride through Denali National Park, the beautiful train ride from Anchorage to Seward, the boat ride through Resurrection Bay with all the sea life, and the hike to Exit Glacier.

We certainly had excellent meals throughout the trip and always had plenty to eat. But I am partial to seafood, so the highlights to me were the dinner at Zudy's in Seward with the halibut cooked to perfection and the final dinner of savory salmon in Anchorage.

MORE TRAVEL IN 2023

That concludes Act 3 of our Alaska Adventure, and with our traveler commentary you see how much it meant to all of us. In saying all this, I hope I have whetted your appetite to take a tour with OLLI and check out the two upcoming trips for 2023. Perhaps you can write about your adventures in a future travel column.

The Travel Committee has two wonderful trips for you to take advantage of another learning experience. Hurry and sign up soon! Email olli.info@uah.edu for information.

- **The World of Art:** The Barnes Foundation, Murals, and More by Road Scholar — May 21-26, 2023, in Philadelphia.
- **The Canadian Maritimes:** Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island by Grand Circle Travel — Aug. 17-29, 2023.

Be patient. There may be a little wait time. These travel companies are very busy now and have fewer staff than before.

I do hope you have a wonderful holiday season — stay safe and well. We will see you all in the new year!

All who wander are not lost! Safe travels, and keep learning as you go!

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair

RIDING AND WALKING THROUGH 49TH STATE

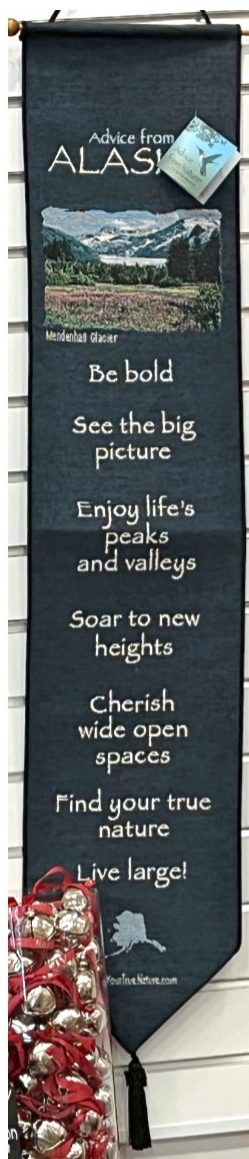
Participants in OLLI's Alaskan Adventure traveled by bus (and sometimes a train) from Fairbanks to Anchorage on Aug. 12-23, with stops in Seward and elsewhere. Events included an outdoor meal in Fairbanks and a hike to Exit Glacier.



(Photos by Howard Carr, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

GETTING TO KNOW ALASKA AND ALASKANS

Gift-shop slogans could only touch the surface of OLLI travelers' Alaska experience. They lunched at a senior center, talked with Alaska Natives, dined in homes, and saw salmon swimming. Dan White, chancellor of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, welcomed them.

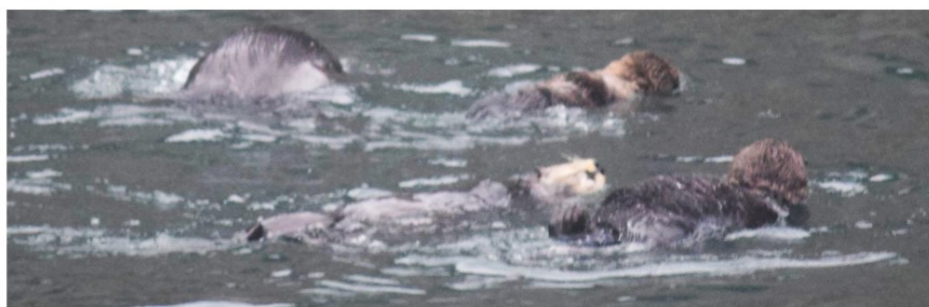


(Photos taken or contributed by Margrit Carr, Bonnie Jane Peterson, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)



MOMENTS, PEOPLE, OTHER ALASKA MEMORIES

OLLI members and other creatures such as dolphins and otters were swimming in the hot springs and bays of Alaska. Here are some of the images that travelers found memorable. To learn more about the Alaskan Adventure, attend a bonus session at UAH on Feb. 3.



(Photos taken or contributed by Howard Carr, Rick Heeth, Chris Johnson, Marsha Langlois, Cliff Lanham, Sallie Robinson, Til Stuhlinger and Carolyn Zelff)

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEMBER SERVICES WORKS BEHIND SCENES



What a great turnout of OLLI members and guests at the last open bonus lecture, the Oct. 28 program on “Ukraine and Russia: Nationalism, Empire and War”!

The Member Services Committee’s responsibilities impact the members most directly by providing refreshments and the opportunity for socializing at these

events. It was so delightful to see everyone enjoying themselves and sharing news and smiles. This is one of the wonderful benefits of OLLI membership.

Mostly, Member Services operates behind the scenes, keeping all important coffee supplies available in the lounge, for example.

Rick Heeth is busy keeping OLLI’s extensive DVD collection in order. Lately, he has been integrating some large donations of DVDs into our library. It’s a lot of work so that OLLI members can check them out for their enjoyment or instructors can use them to supplement their classes. You can check them out in the OLLI volunteer office.

Enter the photo contest

Harriett Somerville is the point of contact for our annual photo contest. She offers this information:

Each year OLLI holds a photo contest to select the best photographs on a selected topic taken by members. Photographs taken by members of OLLI between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, are eligible for the prizes.

It is a wonderful time of the year with its late sunrises, early sunsets and long shadows to catch the perfect photograph for this year’s topic, “Light and Shadow.” Gentle editing is permitted, but make sure you keep the original photograph.

Digital photos must be in JPEG (JPG) format and be at least 2 megapixels to produce sharp printed images. So grab your cameras, go through your images, and submit your named favorites at OLLIPhotoContest@uah.edu anytime before the April 1, 2023, deadline.

Last year’s winners can be seen outside the OLLI volunteer office.

Join a member interest group

Remember that member interest groups (MIGs) will continue to meet during the break before classes begin at the end of January. Bridge and mah-jongg meet on Fridays at 1 pm and tai chi meets on Friday morning at 9.

Those members who have taken tai chi classes are more than welcome to continue practice and learning on Friday mornings at 9.

Happy holidays.

Leah Black
Member Services Committee Chair



Food and socializing enhanced the experience of members and guests attending the Oct. 28 lecture on Ukraine and Russia.
(Photo by Steve Stewart)

NEED SOME HELP? GO ASK ALICE SAMMON

New OLLI members quickly learn there is one standard answer when they have trouble registering for courses or getting Google Classroom to work: “Go ask Alice.” And Alice Sammon solves the problem, smiling all the while.

Alice, who is the OLLI program coordinator, is the subject of this month’s *Insider Profile*.

Alice hails from the Great White North.

“I was born and grew up in Toronto,” she said, “and spent summers on a family farm in Saint-Patrice de Beaurivage in Quebec. My mother was an emergency-room nurse, and my father was an executive for plastics corporations in Canada. I grew up in a very large Irish-Catholic family. I have five sisters, four brothers and 27 first cousins!”

Alice went to Wesley College in Dover, Delaware, and graduated with a business degree. She has spent most of her professional career in sales and marketing.

Alice met her husband, George, while living in Boston.

“George was in the Navy and had traveled the world and open seas,” said Alice. “George was a deep-sea diver in New York City for many years while we lived in Naugatuck, Connecticut.” George now is a beekeeper and carpenter.

“We moved to Huntsville about 28 years ago to be closer to family,” said Alice. “We wanted our children to grow up with a bunch of cousins down the street. We still live on the same street as two of my sisters.

“We have three wonderful grown children: Matthew, Emily and Katherine. Matthew and his wife, Brooke, live near Nashville. Emily and her husband, Mitchell, reside in Denver. Katherine just finished her graduate studies and lives in Nashville.”

Alice started with OLLI in 2016.

“I worked part-time for several years for Maxine Doherty, who was the OLLI program manager for many years. She was my first introduction to OLLI and has been a wonderful teacher and mentor.

“But now that I’m working full time for OLLI, part of me wants to quit so I can join OLLI and participate in all it has to offer. It is such a spectacular program, and I have met so many wonderful people from all over the world because of OLLI.”

Thanks, Alice, for all you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams



Alice Sammon and husband George near Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the wedding of daughter Emily to Mitchell. From left are Mitchell and Emily; daughter Katherine; and son Matthew with his wife, Brooke.

HOLIDAYS ENJOYED AROUND THE WORLD

In my working career, I have traveled all around the world. I even on one trip did a complete circuit of the world in 10 days, stopping in Germany, Singapore and Australia. My travels have been exciting and interesting.

A curious part of my travels was that I tended to do a lot of end-of-year travel putting together plans for the upcoming calendar year with the businesses I was involved in. Always the goal was to get home in time for the holidays. During these travels, I have had some experiences I would like to tell you about that have become a part of my holiday memories.

In 1998, I was working in a customer's manufacturing plant in England just before Christmas. It was a very difficult time, as we were working 10-hour shifts. The plant had no windows or natural light. During that time of year, the daylight hours are very short, and so we would arrive in the dark and leave in the dark.

By the time we finished our work, we were very homesick. We were returning to the U.S. on the Monday prior to Christmas, so we decided to spend the weekend in London before catching our flight from Gatwick Airport.

London was alive with Christmas as we walked through the city. On Sunday evening, we were walking down the Strand in London in the evening and about to catch our train back to the airport for the night.

Along the way, we walked into Westminster Abbey, that great thousand-year-old church of London. When we walked in, the church was just beginning its Evensong Christmas carol service. We ended up sitting there within that beautiful church and listening to the carols for more than an hour. It was one of the most touching Christmas experiences of my life.

On another Christmastime, I was in Ulm, Germany, for a board meeting. Ulm is famous for its Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market). That takes place in the Munster Platz in front of the Ulmer Munster Church. The church was built beginning in 1377 but was not completed until 1890. Some would call it a cathedral, which technically it is not since it was never the home church of an archbishop. It is now a Lutheran church.

As I walked through the market in front of the church, I saw all the crafts, smelled the roasting nuts and saw the vendors selling mulled wines. It put into my memories the Christmas depicted in "A Christmas Carol" and other Old World Christmas experiences. My only regret from that trip

was that I could not get a ticket to the "Messiah," which was being performed in the Munster, but I do admit I stood outside the church in the cold and listened to the choirs singing this great cantata. I will always remember that experience.

My final Christmas experience I will relate was in China. We do not picture a Christian festival in a communist country, and it is not that. What Christmas is in China is a commercial festival with all the lights and pageantry of Santa, with no concept of the significance of the season.

When I traveled to China, I typically stayed at the Ritz Carlton in downtown Shanghai, and they would have breakfast with Santa running every day with the children of those Chinese who were wealthy enough to afford the experience. The Chinese enjoyed the exchanging of gifts and the commercial side of the experience. The red decorations of Christmas roll well into the coming Spring Festival, typically in February, that is awash in red decorations, a happy color.

Of all the travels I completed, for me nothing was more important than getting home for Christmas with my family. May you have a happy holiday season!

By David Styers
Immediate Past President
OLLI at UAH Board of Directors



From outside the Ulmer Munster Church,
David Styers listened to choirs singing
Handel's "Messiah."
(Photo by David Styers)

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

December: A truly *revolutionary* war soldier

The 4th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (originally known as Learned's Regiment) was organized in spring 1775 at Roxbury, Massachusetts, to consist of 10 companies from southwestern Worcester County.

The unit was originally raised by Col. Ebenezer Learned outside Boston, Massachusetts. On June 14, 1775, it was incorporated into the Continental Army and assigned to the Eastern Department of the Main Continental Army. It saw its first action at Bunker Hill (or more likely Breed's Hill) on June 17, 1775, and then accompanied the army through some of the biggest battles of the Revolutionary War, including the New York Campaign (winter 1776 through 1777), the Battle of Trenton (Dec. 26, 1776), the Battle of Princeton (Jan. 3, 1777), the Battle of Saratoga (Sept. 19-Oct. 7, 1777), the Battle of Monmouth (June 28, 1778), and the Battle of Rhode Island (Aug. 29, 1778).

On Jan. 1, 1781, the regiment was assigned to the 1st Massachusetts Brigade, an element of the Highlands Department — the smallest department in the area — and formed around the defenses on the Hudson River north of New York.

The Continental Army of the American Revolutionary War was organized into six regional departments for command and administrative purposes. Each department had a semi-autonomous commanding general. The Continental Congress dealt with and through those department commanders.

Throughout the war, Congress retained the authority to appoint or remove these commanders. In practice, when an urgent need arose, a commander was just as frequently appointed by George Washington or the executive power of one of the states, pending the approval of Congress. So, our early command structure was something of a mish-mash, yet it still somehow managed to work.

The department commanders and their staffs also worked directly with the governments of the states within their departments. At first these were all the ad hoc or provisional governments, but the practice continued as more formal or structured governments emerged in each of the states.



This memorial for Deborah Sampson Gannett is at Rock Ridge Cemetery in Sharon, Mass. (Photo by Leon H. Abdalian from Wikimedia Commons)

By convention, the commanders were major generals, which left George Washington as the ranking general of the army throughout the war.

In 1782, as the Revolutionary War raged on, a man named Robert Shurtleff joined the 4th Massachusetts Regiment. Shurtleff was given the dangerous task of scouting between the lines to assess any British buildup of men and materiel in Manhattan, which Gen. Washington was contemplating attacking.

In June 1782, Shurtleff and two sergeants led about 30 infantrymen on an expedition that ended with a confrontation — one on one — with local Tories, resulting in the capture of 15 men. At the siege of Yorktown he dug trenches, helped storm a British redoubt, and endured cannon fire. In short, Pvt. Shurtleff always seemed to be where the action was fiercest.

As you might guess, being engaged in all this combat didn't come without some injuries. Shurtleff's first wound was a saber slash across the left side of the head. Practically self-healing, it did not require the services of a doctor, so he bandaged it up and continued to march. But the second wound, caused by a musket ball that pierced his thigh, is where the rest of the story begins.

(continued on the next page)



MILITARY HISTORY, CONT

Because, you see, Pvt. Robert Shurtleff was actually one Deborah Sampson, born in Plympton, Massachusetts, on Dec. 17, 1760. Deborah had spent the early part of her life working as a general handywoman and as an indentured servant, and by 1782, she realized that she was meant to do more.

Using \$12 she had saved, she bought enough cloth to make herself a suit of men's clothes. As each article was completed, she hid it in some hay. And when all was ready, she wrapped a bandage tightly around her chest, assumed her new identity, hiked the 75 miles to Worcester, Massachusetts, enlisted, and became Pvt. Robert Shurtleff, the newest member of Capt. George Webb's 4th Massachusetts Regiment.

None of her comrades suspected that a woman had joined their ranks, and the lack of beard and mustache was just attributed to the recruit's youth. So she joined her comrades in arms without experiencing any insurmountable obstacles.

Ahh, but finally the rigors of combat caught up with Deborah in the guise of that pesky musket ball in her thigh. She was also apparently struck by a piece of shrapnel about the same time.

Frightened at the thought of detection, Deborah crawled away from a field dressing station and treated the wound herself. Legend has it that she cut the piece of shrapnel out by herself, but that musket ball would remain embedded in her thigh for the rest of her life. Yet she soon healed and returned to her unit. She endured.

Finally, it was a doctor in Philadelphia who made, a year and a half into her service, what must have been for him a truly remarkable discovery.

Deborah had been stricken by a "malignant fever" and, close to death, she was taken to a Philadelphia hospital for treatment. Unable to move, she could only lie in pain and misery as one Dr. Binney decided to check her heartbeat. We can only imagine the doctor's surprise when he encountered the tight bandage Deborah always kept wrapped around her upper torso. But to his credit, the doctor kept the secret to himself and transferred Deborah to his own home to recuperate.

Alas, the good Dr. Binney finally was forced to reveal Deborah's secret to the local garrison commander, Gen. Patterson. The word, as you might imagine, went swiftly up the chain until Gen. Washington himself heard it, and decided it would be in the best interest of the service to authorize Pvt. Shurtleff's immediate discharge. And so, Deborah returned to Massachusetts in November 1783.

She was married in 1784 or 1785 to Benjamin Gannett, and in time she became the mother of four children. Deborah died on April 29, 1827, at the age of 66.

In memory of this daring woman patriot, a street in Sharon, Massachusetts, was named after her, and on April 10, 1944, a Liberty Ship was christened the SS Deborah Gannett in her honor.

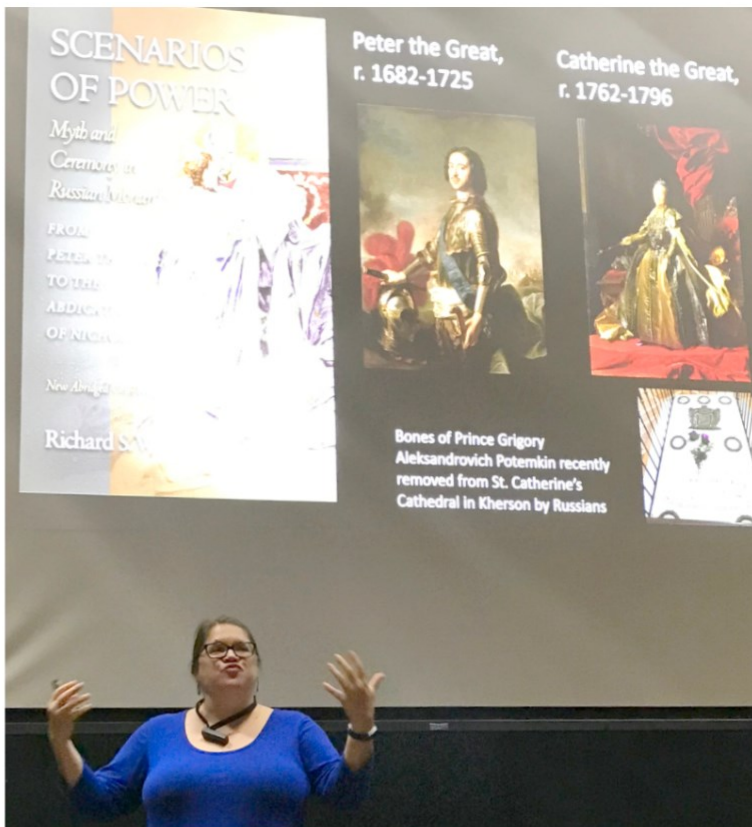
So to mark her 262nd birthday, I'd like to give a salute to Revolutionary War hero Pvt. Deborah Sampson, aka Robert Shurtleff. She served with pride, with selflessness and with honor. None of us could do more.

By John Mason



EXAMINING HISTORY OF UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

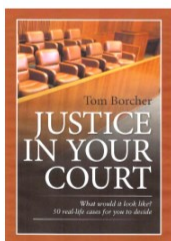
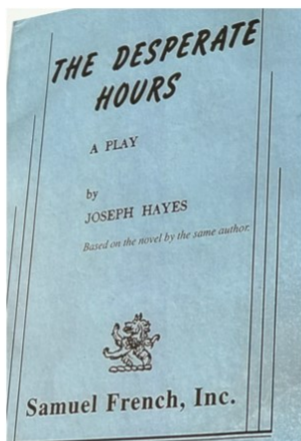
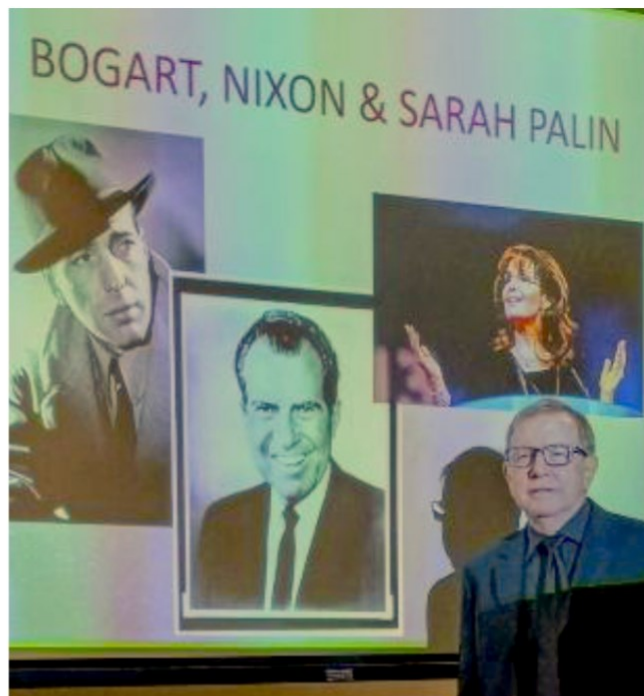
Molly Wilkinson Johnson, associate professor of history at UAH, presented “Ukraine & Russia: Nationalism, Empire & War” as a bonus Oct. 28. The event was open to the public — a way to educate about the historical context of the current Ukraine-Russia war and to promote OLLI membership.



(Photos by Glen Adams and Steve Stewart)

HOW BOGART, NIXON AND PALIN MADE LAW

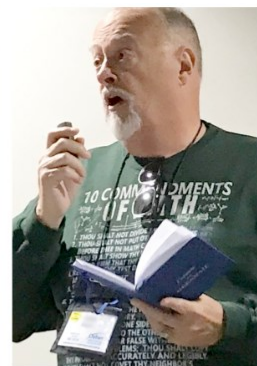
Tom Borchert, a retired trial lawyer, explained how Humphrey Bogart, Richard Nixon, Sarah Palin, a book, a magazine article, a play and a movie influenced defamation law in the United States while presenting a bonus Nov. 4. Afterward, Tom autographed copies of his recent book, "Justice in Your Court," which presents actual court cases and asks the reader to render verdicts. The book is similar to "You Be the Judge," a course he has taught for OLLI .





FALL SEMESTER TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY

Expressing gratitude to those who taught nearly 60 OLLI courses during fall semester was the main business on Nov. 16, but the program also included line dancing. Snacking and socializing took place in the lounge and hallways of Wilson Hall.



(Photos by Glen Adams and Steve Stewart)



SEEING MONTGOMERY'S CIVIL RIGHTS LEGACY

OLLI members traveled to Montgomery — the birthplace of the civil rights movement — on Nov. 10 and visited locations including the Rosa Parks Museum (left) and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.





2023 OLLI PHOTO CONTEST

- The topic for this year is “Light and Shadow.”
- Photos must be taken from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.
- The photographer must be a current OLLI member.
- Gentle photo editing is permitted, but keep the original photo.
- Submit the named photo in a standard digital jpg format — at least a 2MP final pixel size is recommended.
- Photographers may submit photos anytime until the April 1, 2023, deadline.
- Submit photos to OLLIPhotoContest@uah.edu.

RENEW YOUR OLLI AT UAH MEMBERSHIP

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