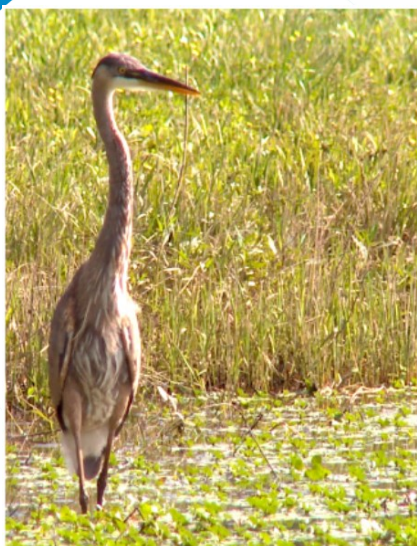


THE OLLI INSIDER

MARCH 2023 ISSUE

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



DANCING, TOURING, DELIGHTING IN NATURE

Clockwise from top left: A great blue heron in Goldsmith-Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary; touring Martin Stamping and Stove Factory (aka Stovehouse); hiking Blevins Gap Nature Preserve; belly-dance class in Wilson Hall; Valentine's Day dancing with new OLLI partners at Vitality Living Upland Park.



Osher.uah.edu

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Lifelong Learning
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GUESS A WORD TO KEEP THE BRAIN YOUNG



Do you play Wordle? I didn't until a slow day at voter registration.

I was one of two volunteers ready to register voters on a college campus, but the foot traffic was light. So the other volunteer, whom I had just met, whipped out her phone and taught me Wordle and Spelling Bee, two New York Times

games that are also available elsewhere online.

The answer to each Wordle puzzle is a five-letter word, and you get six guesses. You start with no clue. But after each guess, the app tells you which of the letters you used are in the right word, which are in the correct positions, and which are not in the word at all. When finished, you can get a critique from The Times' WordleBot.

Friends taught me to start with ADIEU because it contains four of the six vowels. I used to follow it with STONY, which contains the other two vowels plus some most-used consonants. Then I found a better second word, which I'll keep to myself.

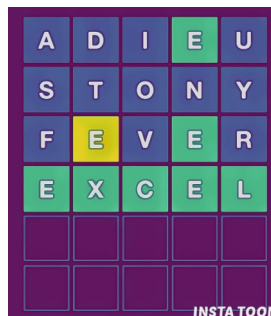
Often I determine the answer in four of the six rounds. Several of my Facebook friends do it in two or three rounds. Possibly my approach requires more steps but less time. I'm going with that excuse.

Now, spouses and other spoilsports are apt to point out that your Wordle time could instead be used to clean the house, tend the yard, take out the garbage or feed the dog. But I have it on good authority (wapo.st/3lmfeuy) that keeping the mind active helps stave off dementia for us "seasoned adults" (a euphemism I borrowed from Jill Stewart's January column). That must be why my Medicare Advantage plan offers brain games as a benefit.

"Doing puzzles is fun and good for your brain," said Bob Darnall, OLLI member and teacher. "Whether it is word, math, logic or jigsaw puzzles, they all can stimulate you while providing hours of entertainment. In my 'Passion for Puzzles' class, I try to include many different types of puzzles to help you decide what activities you most enjoy."

Inside The Insider: I have seen Jill doing Wordle, but her column this month suggests that she finds dancing more valuable.

Glen Adams profiles Phil Graham, who has taught diverse courses since he recognized OLLI's potential as an engine of opportunity. Nancy Darnall's long list of OLLI benefits could include some you don't know about.



Each move in Wordle gives you information about what letters are — or are not — in the answer.

Clay Williams says OLLI membership is growing and a partnership is blossoming with a retirement community. Marilynn Szecholda reminds us of free weekly breakfasts and other OLLI amenities.

John Mason's columns put current events in historical context. He relates curriculum to spy (or weather) balloons and military history to the Spanish flu and COVID.

Chris Stuhlinger writes about upcoming outdoor and indoor events including forests, flowers, landscapes, and paintings of the same.

Betty Koval practices what she preaches by traveling. She tells about her travel plans and some that you should consider.

Leah Black reminds photographers to enter the annual photo contest by April 1. And Volunteer of the Year nominations are due March 10.

One more thing: When I noticed "Ophthalmology Management" magazine in my doctor's waiting room, I knew he needed help from OLLI if not from the entire Salmon Library. So I asked the receptionist to place the OLLI course guide there. All of us have doctors and could do the same, reaching prospective members. You can obtain course guides and brochures from the OLLI staff or the volunteer office (151 Wilson Hall).

Steve Stewart
Public Relations Committee Chair

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS PUZZLE?

Try this puzzle offered by Bob Darnall. The answer is elsewhere in this newsletter.

In Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," Portia has three caskets (gold, silver and lead), inside one of which is Portia's portrait. Each casket has an inscription. No more than one of the inscriptions is true.

- Gold — The portrait is in this casket.
- Silver — The portrait is not in this casket.
- Lead — The portrait is not in the gold casket.

Where is the portrait?

DANCE LIKE NO ONE IS WATCHING



It was on the streets and in the ballrooms of New Orleans during Mardi Gras season where I learned we should all be dancing a lot more — dancing just for the joy of living, dancing with abandon in the second line parades through the French Quarter, or dancing with a little more decorum in the ballrooms of the old line krewes.

I have seen generally reserved and dignified adults, of every age and stage, become entirely different and joyful people in those experiences — my own family members among them. But it was at OLLI where I learned that dancing has the potential to actually make us smarter, longer.

Our spring term curriculum has included several dance opportunities: “The Art of Belly Dancing,” “Let’s Swing Dance,” “Line Dancing” and even “Brain Dance.” Looking at the catalogs of other OLLIs, I have also found classes of “English Country Dance,” “Intro to Pacific Island Dances,” or “Beginning Salsa Dancing.” It seems that seasoned adults like all kinds of music and movement.

As a brain dance class member, I’ve become more curious about the effects of the eight developmental movement patterns and the mind/body connection.

Most of us can easily understand the health benefits of dance as a physical activity and maybe even for stress reduction. But the brain is where the real magic happens, according to a 21-year study of adults 75 and older led by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, funded by the National Institute on Aging, and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. This study set out to determine whether any physical or cognitive recreational activities influenced mental acuity. Researchers found that some activities had significant beneficial effect and others had none.

The cognitive activities studied included reading books, writing for pleasure, doing crossword puzzles, playing cards, and playing musical instruments. Physical activities examined included playing tennis or golf, swimming, bicycling, dancing, walking for exercise, and doing housework. Remarkably, almost none of the physical activities seemed to offer any protection against dementia. The cardiovascular benefits were certainly there, but this study was about the mind. The single physical activity that offered protection against dementia was frequent dancing.

- Reading — 35% reduced risk of dementia
- Bicycling and swimming — 0%



Brain Dance, taught at Huntsville Ballet studios by Cathy Curry, is one of several OLLI dance classes. (Photo by Jill Stewart)

- Doing crossword puzzles at least four days per week — 47%
- Playing golf — 0%
- *Dancing frequently* — 76%. This was the greatest risk reduction of any activity studied, cognitive or physical.

So what is it about dancing? The complete details of this study are worth our further review, but it gets down to frequent dancers having greater neuroplasticity. Our brains never create new synapses or pathways unless they are needed. Dancers, particularly freestyle social dancers, make a lot of split-second decisions, especially in the lead and follow roles. This means their brains have created more complex neural pathways, which seem to protect them as brain cells weaken and die with age.

Richard Powers, dance historian and teacher at Stanford University, makes this observation that should resonate with all OLLI members:

“The essence of intelligence is making decisions. The best advice, when it comes to your mental acuity, is to *involve yourself in activities which require split-second rapid-fire decision making*, as opposed to rote memory (retracing the same well-worn paths) ...

“One way to do that is to learn something new. Not just dancing, but anything new. Don’t worry about the probability that you’ll never use it in the future. Take a class to challenge the mind. It will stimulate the connectivity of your brain by generating the need for new neural pathways.

“Then take a dance class, which can be even more effective. *Dancing integrates several brain functions at once — kinesthetic, rational, musical and emotional — further increasing your neural connectivity.*”

That sounds like us. Shall we dance?

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

DINNER, DANCING WITH NEW OLLI PARTNERS

OLLI members were guests at Vitality Living Upland Park for a free dinner and dance on Valentine's Day. The new retirement community in Huntsville is forming a partnership with OLLI. Vitality residents will become OLLI members, and OLLI will teach a course there.



(Photos by Patrice Stewart and Steve Stewart)

CALENDAR

MARCH - APRIL 2023

Sign up for each event by clicking “Online/In Person.” All bonuses/events with online option are through Zoom video conferencing. You will receive an email with the Zoom meeting invitation one business day prior. There is a limited capacity for in-person events.

Mar 7 | Tue | 7:45 am | In-Person

OLLI at UAH Event: Early Bird Breakfast

Join your fellow OLLI members for food and fellowship with breakfast treats sponsored by the Social Committee. Come early, grab that premium parking spot, eat good food and swap stories before classes begin. Cost is Free! Feel free to bring your own favorite foods as well.

Presented by OLLI Social Committee.

Mar 31 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online/In-Person

Bonus: How Did We Get to the Roof of Africa?

This travelog presentation describes one couple’s journey to the top of Africa at Mount Kilimanjaro! Learn why they undertook this journey of a lifetime and how they prepared for this incredible feat in Tanzania. Photographs and a brief video will highlight their weeklong adventure as they climbed Africa’s largest mountain.

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

Sign up [online](#).

Presented by Dr. Cheryl McAuley, retired Army veteran and world traveler.

Apr 14 | Fri | 11:00 am | Online/In-Person

Bonus: Introduction to Stress Reduction Through Mindfulness

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

Sign up [online](#).

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

Apr 15 | Sat | 1:00 pm | In-Person

OLLI at UAH Event: OLLI Day at Charger Park — UAH Chargers Baseball, Softball & Lacrosse

Cheer on the men’s and women’s UAH Chargers teams. Free admission. Please wear your OLLI member badge.

Sign up [online](#).

Presented by UAH Chargers.

Apr 21 | Fri | 10:30 am | In-Person

OLLI at UAH Event: UAH Salmon Library and Archives

Join library staff as they highlight the library’s key services, especially the Archives and Special Collections. (Access to the library is a perk of being an OLLI member.)

Free admission. Please wear your OLLI member badge.

Registration Deadline is April 14.

Sign up [online](#).

Presented by UAH Salmon Library Staff.

**KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST
EVENTS AT
[OSHER.UAH.EDU/OLLIEVENTS](https://osher.uah.edu/ollievents)**

EVENTS COMMITTEE

TAKE A HIKE, RIDE YOUR BIKE, AND 2 TOURS THAT YOU WILL LIKE



Coming up in March and early April will be two opportunities to connect with nature, along with a guided tour of an art exhibition and a chance to learn about tulip farming.

IMPORTANT: Remember to register online in advance of all events and agree to the waiver/release form (see the registration links below, in the weekly *eNews*, and on the OLLI website). Bring your OLLI name tag to all events. When you register for an event, make sure that the email address you enter is correct.

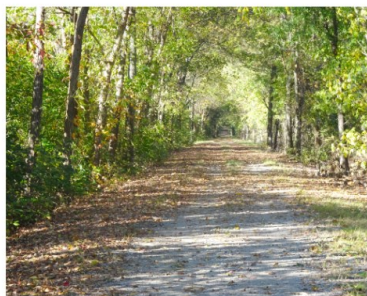
Note that some events have a registration deadline and/or a registration limit. And up to two guests per member are welcome to attend the Harvest Square and Art Museum events (guests must also register).

Recap of recent events

Stovehouse tour — OLLI members were treated Feb. 10 to a tour of the Stovehouse complex with visits to event venues and storefronts that had been converted from the original stove factory buildings. Many of the original structures and fixtures have been retained.

Blevins Gap Nature Preserve Hike — Another large group of hikers turned out Feb. 11, this time to trek up the trail from Blevins Gap to the ridgetop. The rewards were two spectacular overlook views of Hampton Cove and Bailey Cove in the valleys below

(continued on the next page)



Top: John Cleaveland's oil painting "Thread of Light," depicting the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia. OLLI members and guests will tour his exhibit at Huntsville Museum of Art. You also can (from left on second row) hike at Harvest Square Nature Preserve, bike the Richard Martin Trail, and tour Hubert Family Farms.
(Second and third photos by Chris Stuhlinger; others used by permission)

EVENTS COMMITTEE

TAKE A HIKE, RIDE YOUR BIKE, CONT.

Coming events

- Saturday, March 4 — **Hike/nature walk at Harvest Square Nature Preserve**, 10 a.m.-noon. Meet at the trailhead at 111 Allyson Sadie Blvd. in Harvest off Jeff Road near Publix supermarket. Drive northwest on Jordan Lane (Highway 53) about 4.5 miles from Research Park Boulevard; turn right on Jeff Road. We will choose from several easy trails, some of which provide views of two ponds. Six trails total just over 2 miles of hiking. Hear nature narratives along the way. **NOTE:** Each attending member may bring two guests (guests must also pre-register and agree to waiver form). forms.gle/6ux1WvcavQU8xRDP9.
- Friday, March 24 — **Huntsville Museum of Art**, docent-led tour (“Encounters: John Cleaveland”), 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Join us for an OLLI-only 60-minute docent-led tour of the Cleaveland exhibition at the Huntsville Museum of Art. We will meet in the museum’s lobby at 1:15. The tour will be free for museum members; non-museum members will pay \$8 with the OLLI group discount. The money will be collected by the museum prior to the tour. *Standing in front of one of Cleaveland’s large-scale oil paintings, you may feel as if you could walk right into the landscape before you* (hsvmuseum.org/encounters-john-cleaveland). Registration deadline is Monday, March 20, at 4 p.m. **NOTE:** Each attending member may bring two guests (guests must also pre-register and agree to waiver form). forms.gle/iaihRuWVahFoUsm57.
- Saturday, April 1 — **Bike ride at Richard Martin Trail** (just north of Athens), 10 a.m. to noon. Meet at the parking lot at Piney Chapel Road and Delaney Road, one-fourth mile east of Elkmont Road. BYOB — bring your own bike — to ride the southern half of the Richard Martin Trail (Rails to Trails) 6 miles to Elkmont and back (round trip 12 miles). The trail is mostly wooded with a crushed gravel surface. forms.gle/c2YdPW2mWkASaQsX8.
- Friday, April 7 — **Hubert Family Farms tour**, 3-4:30 p.m. Meet at the farm at 432 Narrow Road, New Market. From Huntsville take Highway 231/431 north through Meridianville and past Meridianville Middle School. Turn right on Walker Lane, and then after 2.2 miles turn left onto Narrow Lane. Hubert Family Farms will be on your left after 0.8 miles (hubertfamilyfarms.com). Spend a spring afternoon walking between rows of almost 400,000 blooming tulips. Enjoy the vivid colors and peace of this valley farm during a guided tour, and, before you leave, you can pick and buy your own bouquet. Tickets \$8, tulips \$2.50/stem (pay at the door). forms.gle/Wju5ycerdxN8bon16.

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

MIG MEETS AT MEXICAN RESTAURANT



The Dine Out Member Interest Group got together at La Finka Mexican Restaurant and Grill on Feb. 9.

(Photos provided by Sandra Dabrowski)

HIKING BLEVINS GAP NATURE PRESERVE

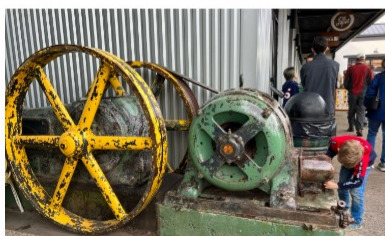
A hike in Blevins Gap Nature Preserve on Feb. 11 showed life in the mountain forests, with high and wide views of the surrounding landscape.



(Photos by Steve Stewart, Chris Stuhlinger and a helpful stranger)

EX-FACTORY IS NOW A FOOD-AND-FUN VENUE

Stovehouse — which now offers live music, events, dining and shopping — used to be Martin Stamping and Stove Factory. OLLI members took a tour Feb. 10.



(Photos by Helen Crawford and Chris Stuhlinger)

BALLOONS FOR SPYING, WARFARE, WEATHER



The Chinese spy balloons, the Japanese Fu-Go bomb balloons, and the Air Force explanation of the Roswell crash are examples of controversies and misinformation that have long surrounded the use of balloons.

On the other hand, weather balloons are used for a specific purpose in meteorology: to gather data for weather forecasting. And therefore, we begin yet another wide-ranging discussion of how science and the news can be an integral part of improving the OLLI at UAH curriculum program.

We have all been enthralled over the past couple of weeks with the continuing saga of the Chinese spy — or weather, depending on whom you believe — balloon, believed to have been up to 200 feet tall, that soared across the continental United States before being shot down over the ocean near the Carolinas.

We shouldn't have been surprised. The Chinese have been using these balloons to gather information around the globe for a number of years. And they aren't the only historical instances of countries, or perhaps even alien civilizations, to employ them. Maybe the takeaway, then, should be how successful a device as simple as a balloon can be.

Fu-Go balloons were incendiary balloon weapons deployed by Japan against the United States during World War II. A hydrogen balloon measuring 33 feet in diameter, one of these carried a payload of two 11-pound incendiary devices plus one 33-pound anti-personnel bomb, or alternatively one 26-pound incendiary bomb. Between November 1944 and April 1945, the Imperial Japanese Army launched about 9,300 of these balloons from sites on Honshu, of which about 300 were found or observed in the U.S. and Canada, with some in Mexico.

Launched with the intention to start large forest fires in the Pacific Northwest, the balloons traveled on high-altitude and high-speed jet stream currents over the Pacific Ocean, using a sophisticated ballast system to control their altitude.

In the end, the bombs were ineffective as fire starters due to damp conditions, causing only minor damage and six deaths in a single civilian incident in Oregon in May 1945. But the Fu-Go balloon was the first weapon system with intercontinental range, with its attacks being the longest-ranged in the history of warfare at the time.



An apparent Chinese spy or weather balloon photographed recently by Chase Doak over Billings, Montana (from [Wikimedia Commons](#)). Maj. Jesse A. Marcel holds foil debris from 1947 UFO incident in Roswell, New Mexico (photo courtesy of Fort Worth Star-Telegram Photograph Collection, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library — also via [Wikimedia Commons](#)).

And then, of course, there was the Roswell incident. The town of Roswell, located near the Pecos River in southeastern New Mexico, became a magnet for UFO believers due to the strange events of early July 1947, when ranch foreman W.W. Brazel found a strange, shiny material scattered over some of his land. He turned the material over to the sheriff, who passed it on to authorities at the nearby Air Force base.

On July 8, Air Force officials announced they had recovered the wreckage of a "flying disk." A local newspaper put the story on its front page, launching Roswell into the spotlight of the public's UFO fascination that has lasted even until today.

Of course, the Air Force soon took back its story, and finally issued a 1,000-page report in 1994 stating that the crashed object was actually nothing more than a high-altitude weather balloon launched from a nearby missile test site as part of a classified experiment aimed at monitoring the atmosphere in order to detect Soviet nuclear tests. Whom are you going to believe — E.T. or the U.S. Air Force?

And this gets us to the rest of the story. Meteorology and weather balloons actually play a significant and important role in our everyday lives. The study of meteorology provides numerous benefits for lifelong learning, as it offers a comprehensive understanding of the earth's atmosphere and the various processes that drive weather patterns.



BALLOONS FOR SPYING, WAR, WEATHER, CONT.

By studying meteorology, individuals can gain a greater appreciation for the importance of accurate weather forecasting, as well as the role it plays in various industries, including agriculture, transportation and energy. And do you know what? We have a meteorology school right here on campus! Hmmm? Any possibilities there?

A meteorology class for a lifelong learning program like ours could include topics such as atmospheric composition and structure, the physics and dynamics of weather systems, and the tools and technologies used to gather weather data. Hands-on activities, such as launching weather balloons, analyzing data and creating weather forecasts, might even be valuable components of such a class.

In addition, guest speakers from the meteorological community could provide real-world perspective and insight into the field. Not to mention, considering where we live and the approaching severe weather season, the class could also provide a better understanding of severe weather, i.e., tornadoes, and how to forecast and survive them.

So studying meteorology is an enriching and educational experience that offers valuable benefits. A well-designed meteorology class could provide a comprehensive understanding of the science of weather, as well as practical skills and knowledge that can be applied to our own personal interests. So that begs the eternal question: Do we have any volunteers out there with backgrounds, or simply interests, in the subject who might be willing to prepare a class that all of us should look forward to?

Oh, with regard to full disclosure, I actually used ChatGPT to create an outline for this column based on the parameters given in the first paragraph. Of course, I filled in the details along with the occasional bits of homespun wit and wisdom I know you've all come to expect. So the point of this disclosure is, for writers in any venue, this new technology has a lot of promise.

And with that sunny conclusion, I'll bid you adieu. (Did you see what I did there?) Till next time ...

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

NOMINATE A VOLUNTEER BY MARCH 10

March 10 will be the deadline to make nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award, using the form at tinyurl.com/OLLI-vol.

Anyone who volunteered during spring, summer or fall of 2022 or winter 2023 is eligible to be considered if he or she will be a current OLLI member on May 1, 2023.

Selections will be based on dedication and support for OLLI as an office worker, facilitator, ambassador, committee chair, committee member, leader of a member interest group, board member or instructor — or in some other capacity.

By Steve Stewart

COURSE SPOTLIGHT

Time to register for Spring 2023 courses that have not yet begun. Tuition is \$20 plus the per-course fee. You can register for courses at [Osher.uah.edu/OLLIRegistration](https://osher.uah.edu/OLLIRegistration).



BASIC SPANISH CONVERSATION

3/27 – 5/1 • M • 1:15 – 2:45 pm • 6 sessions • In Person • Y. Nuckels • \$30

Looking for ways to boost your skills in Spanish conversation? Learn words, phrases, sentences, and grammar that will improve your ability. The course includes a review of material such as numbers and names of weeks and months.



HERBAL TEA

3/28 – 4/18 • TU • 1:15 – 2:45 pm • 4 sessions • In Person • M. Rex • \$25

Join us as we explore the wide world of herbal teas. Herbal teas are made from the infusion of herbs, spices, or other plant material in hot water. Learn the history of these fascinating drinks and taste the multitudes of varieties.



MODERNISM: THE ART OF GUSTAV KLIMT

3/30 – 5/4 • Th • 1:15 – 2:45 pm • 8 sessions • Live Virtual • D. West • \$30

Explore the controversial art of Austrian symbolist painter Gustav Klimt. Klimt is noted for his paintings, murals, and other objects whose primary subject was the female body. The shocking reactions that Klimt's work has provoked — during his lifetime up to the present day — help contribute to his renown as the most innovative Art Nouveau painter and a master of modernism.



THE STREAMS OF MADISON COUNTY

4/11 – 5/22 • Tu • 10:30 – Noon • 4 sessions • Live Virtual • J. Chamberlain • \$25

Explore our Madison County-area streams that flow into the Tennessee River, from Beaverdam Creek to the Flint River. Learn the history, popularity, and future of local greenways along these streams as well as the relationship of streams, greenways, and municipal water and sewer systems. The course includes a discussion of smart growth: how much greenspace is enough in our booming area? Field trips are also being offered.

Save 20%

When you register for 4 or more term courses at once.

OLLI GROWTH CONTINUES



OLLI membership numbers continue to rise.

Spring semester has seen our numbers approaching the 800 mark, a number that has not been seen since COVID. Increased offerings have been one major reason for our jump in membership.

Special events have been one reason our membership has grown. But unfortunately, the bonus scheduled for this Friday titled “The James Webb Space Telescope’s First Year of Extraordinary Science” has been canceled. Our presenter, Rand Baldwin, is unavailable to give you this presentation due to unforeseen circumstances. We will make every attempt to reschedule this popular event. Please check the OLLI website for the latest events and course offerings at [Osher.uah.edu](https://osher.uah.edu). Please accept our apologies for this schedule change.

Another exciting bit of news in the works is a partnership with Vitality Living Upland Park, a new retirement community in Huntsville. OLLI at UAH and Vitality are finalizing a memorandum of understanding that allows their residents to become members. This allows their members to have full membership benefits as well as one course per semester held at their venue. OLLI will get the nice boost in membership. This provides a “win-win” for all parties involved.

Our annual meeting is rapidly approaching. Mark your calendars for April 27 for another fun evening and celebration of OLLI’s accomplishments for the past year. The event will be held in the Student Services Building (SSB). Be on the lookout for updates on how to buy tickets in upcoming weekly *eNews* editions.

Although spring semester is over a month old, there are still a host of courses that do not start until this month or April. Check out the spring course guide to see what other courses you might be interested in taking.



A dinner and dance on Valentine’s Day signaled a new partnership between OLLI and Vitality Living Upland Park.
(Photo by Steve Stewart)

Preparations are underway, however, for summer. With everyone’s already busy summer schedule, we offer fewer courses than in fall and spring, but still feature plenty of exciting courses on history, fitness, meditation, pop culture and art. Several day trips will be planned as well. The summer session runs from June 1 to Aug. 4, and the course guide should be available in late April.

Spring break for UAH is March 13-17. There will be no classes that week, and UAH and OLLI offices will be closed.

Remember, never stop learning!

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

WHERE WILL YOU TRAVEL? OLLI OFFERS TRIPS



Here we are and it is March already! Time flies when you are having fun! Speaking of fun — where are you traveling during spring break? I do hope you have a destination in mind and enjoy the experience.

Now — to the serious stuff! The Travel Committee cannot do this alone. We need ideas from you members of somewhere you would like to travel and learn about. The travel companies we talk to have a plethora of interesting destinations.

My daughter and I are planning (well, to be honest, she has done most of the arranging) a trip to Paris and a weekend at Chateau de Gudanes not too far from Toulouse, France.

A couple bought the chateau in ruins and have turned it into a beautiful wedding destination and event center. They offer many different types of opportunities to spend a few nights or a week with them. They have vegetable gardens and a French pastry chef on staff.

I will be honest: When my daughter told me this, she knew I would go. I truly want to get to know the pastry chef! I would love to learn about French pastry baking.

I will admit cooking is not my forte, as I always slice or dice one of my fingers. Baking, however, is a different story. I love to bake, and I love even more to eat pastries. I have never met a pastry I did not like — yes, some are better than others, but let's face it: No bad pastry has crossed my lips or continued to sit on my hips.

Back to our travel plans. In Paris we are each choosing three things we want to see and or do. Mine are easy: (1) Go to the top of the Eiffel Tower, (2) see at least one museum, and (3) tour Montmartre for the day. Of course, we will eat great food. I am not sure of her three, but I am sure I will enjoy them as well.

We will take the train to Toulouse for the night and will be picked up for the three-hour ride to visit the chateau for another three days.



Set on a hilltop in the French Pyrenees, Chateau de Gudanes is a place of history, romantic imagination, tranquility, and views of the surrounding valleys and mountains. (Photo from [Wikimedia Commons](#))

There we will do what we choose to do. The options include going to the local villages to tour and shop, leisurely strolling the grounds, and enjoying all the animals that share the estate. Me, I want to meet and talk with the chef and learn more about the renovation process they have done and are doing.

Some of the floors and ceilings were not even intact when they purchased the property. There is so much World War II history in the area due to the Resistance being active in the area.

Chateau de Gudanes' website is chateaugudanes.com. Please do take a few minutes and explore the beauty of this area. The history is a huge part of my interest, and the scenery is another.

Remember to look at and hopefully join the groups traveling to Philadelphia and the Canadian Maritimes this year. See the *eNews* or go by the volunteer office (151 Wilson Hall) for a flyer.

Remember, *all who wander are not lost!*

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair

PHIL GRAHAM DELIVERS OLLI ‘OPPORTUNITY’



Phil and Mary at a dog ball with therapy dog Wicklow; their family members, including grandchildren.

From genealogy to the World War II battles in the Atlantic to tai chi covers a whole lot of ground. But that is the range of the OLLI courses Phil Graham has taught in just the last three years. Phil is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

Phil grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, where his father was a livestock commission agent at the Omaha Union Stockyards, which were then the world's largest stockyards. His father had started there in 1927 and continued there until retirement, except for a break in WWII. Phil's mother worked full-time as a bookkeeper until her retirement.

Phil's interests growing up can be summed up in one word: sports.

"I was an above-average athlete, whether playing baseball, football, ice hockey, distance running, handball or judo," recalled Phil. "To be honest, sports probably interfered with academics to the point that I didn't concentrate enough on my studies."

At the University of Montana, Phil thought about a legal or law enforcement career, but instead chose the Navy, where he would spend over 20 years — and meet his wife, Mary, in officer candidate school. They have been together 44 years.

During Phil's Navy career as a supply corps officer, he served aboard four surface combat ships, commanded the

Naval Regional Contracting Center in San Diego, and was in the Office of the Defense Representative to Pakistan. He found time to also earn Master of Science and Master of Arts degrees to go along with his B.A. from Montana.

After retirement from the Navy, Phil went to work for a company, CACI, as a consultant to what was then the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization in Arlington, Virginia, which became the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). Beginning in 2003, Phil traveled to Huntsville repeatedly in support of a Huntsville-based MDA project office.

"I got to know the layout of Huntsville, and I thoroughly enjoyed the community and the people I met," said Phil.

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) moved Phil and Mary to Huntsville in 2007.

"To be honest, Mary was reluctant," said Phil. "She agreed Huntsville had a lot to offer, but didn't look forward to another household move. She agreed that we should follow the BRAC relocation, but I swear the trail of her fingers digging into the ground followed us from Northern Virginia to Huntsville."

In 2007, Phil went to work for MDA as a federal employee. He served first as a contract officer and later as deputy director in the Special Projects Contracting Directorate. In 2018, he retired.

(continued on the next page)

PHIL GRAHAM, CONT.

Phil had already joined OLLI in 2016, but work prevented him from attending many classes. In 2018 that changed. He took Cliff Lanham's genealogy class and Tennent Lee's class on the WWII naval war in the Pacific. "Both classes hooked me into taking more classes on topics that interested me but that I hadn't time to study," said Phil.

Phil's involvement deepened the next year when Cliff asked him to co-teach the genealogy class. "I discovered for myself that I enjoyed presenting information on subjects that I had some experience with and knowledge about."

Phil had always been intrigued by a conversation he had years ago with a man who saw a merchant ship on fire just off the Atlantic Coast with a Nazi submarine in the background. There was no mention of the attack in the newspapers, and Phil had never heard of any attacks on ships in U.S. waters. Thus was born his class "The Battle of the Atlantic."

In 2021, Phil and Mary began taking Jerry Pang's tai chi classes. When Jerry had to step away from his classes, Phil and Candi Holcomb were able to fill in as instructors until Jerry returned.

During all of these years of work and moving, Phil and Mary managed to raise four sons successful in their own rights: Eldest son Nathan is a registered nurse in California; Brendan is the senior Air Force aide to Vice President Kamala Harris; Ryan is a litigation attorney for Cardinal Health Systems; and Connor is an information technology project manager for GEICO.

Now their household consists of five dogs: three standard poodles and two Havanese. Four of them are therapy dogs and help support therapy programs at an elementary school, at Huntsville Hospital and soon at Fox Army Medical Clinic.

What has OLLI meant to Phil?

"I equate OLLI to opportunity. In its multiple-faceted design and course delivery, OLLI offers unbridled freedom to extending one's learning to new topics, to travel to unexplored places and to take on responsibilities that benefit a very appreciative and supportive community."

Thanks, Phil, for all you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams

KATHY ELLIOTT REFERS A FRIEND, WINS PRIZES

Kathy Elliott (left) won OLLI's Refer a Friend drawing for January 2023. By referring a friend for membership in OLLI, Kathy wins term tuition and one free course for the fall. Here she is with Alice Sammon, OLLI program coordinator.



MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY DEADLINE IS APRIL 1



I am really excited to see that entries are beginning to trickle in as the April 1 deadline approaches for the annual OLLI photo contest. Be sure to get out and grab some more examples of “Light and Shadow” and email them to the photo site.

Check the guidelines for submission so that you have a chance to win first, second or third place or even an

honorable mention. Winners will be announced at the annual meeting April 27, and the photos will be framed and on display. There will also be a slideshow presentation of all the entries.

Be sure to get your entries in. It is always amazing to see the creativity of our OLLI members.

Our member interest groups are growing, too. The bridge, dining, mah-jongg and tai chi MIGs are very active right now, and we have a hiking MIG in the works and even rumors of a possible art MIG. So be ready to hear more soon. If you are interested in any of them, check on how to join.

Many of our members are really enjoying the snacks and chatting before and after the Friday bonus events. It is so great to feel the energy as people get to socialize again and find out interesting things about OLLI members. We are a diverse and talented group of people, for sure.

Leah Black
Member Services Committee Chair



Take advantage of the free book and puzzle exchanges in the OLLI lounge, 152D Wallace Hall. Find something you like and take it home; add to the collections if you can.
(Photos by Steve Stewart)



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.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE



FRIENDSHIPS BLOSSOM IN CLASS AND LOUNGE



After just finishing the second week of spring term, I want to talk about two of my classes.

On Thursday afternoons, we gather to share our lives in story form. As I have been walking through the rooms of my life, I'm amazed at how many memories are still alive.

People, places and events that I haven't thought about in years come into bright focus. This class is called "Writing Your Life Story," and I highly recommend it. The opportunity to share our stories is one of the great things about this OLLI class. Strangers become people we know.

"Why You Are Who You Are" is a class about the five personality traits we sapiens display in varying degrees. Researchers are exploring the genetic components of happiness — a question of nature versus nurture. Class discussion makes this one very interesting.

Well, now back to Early Bird Breakfasts in the lounge (152D Wilson Hall). We will continue to serve free breakfast until March 7, and many members are participating. So join us at 7:45 to noon on Tuesdays for an assortment of breakfast treats.

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair



Free Early Bird Breakfasts on Tuesdays provide food and socializing.
(Photos by Steve Stewart)

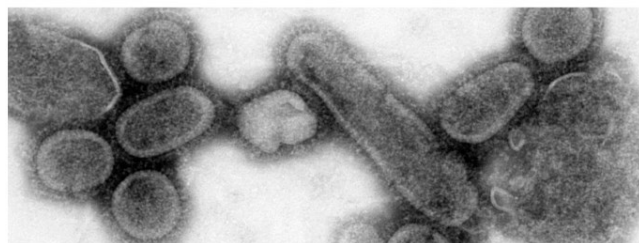
SOUPER BOWL FEATURES TASTY CREATIONS

Some of OLLI's best cooks shared their soup creations and recipes during the OLLI Souper Bowl on Feb. 17, five days after football's Super Bowl and directly after the bonus session on nature stewardship. The soup was free and plentiful.



(Photos by Glen Adams and Steve Stewart)

THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY



Children playing about 1919 (from Harris & Ewing collection, Library of Congress); an emergency hospital at Camp Funston, Kansas, during influenza epidemic (from Otis Historical Archives, National Museum of Health and Medicine); a reconstructed Spanish flu virus (from U.S. Centers for Disease Control); and a 1918 influenza epidemic burial site in New Zealand (from [Creative Commons](#)).

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

March: Kansas flu goes global!

As World War I drew to a close in 1918, hundreds of thousands of American troops were still embarking for Europe to participate in the closing offensives of World War I. But they left something behind, and that something soon began to show up in the ditties to which American schoolgirls jumped rope:

*I had a little bird,
And its name was Enza.
I opened the window,
And in-flew-Enza.*

Influenza left its devastating mark in both world and American history that year. This microscopic killer circled the entire globe in four months, ultimately claiming the lives of around 50 million people. The United States lost 675,000 people to the epidemic — more casualties than World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined.

Pharmaceutical companies worked around the clock to come up with a vaccine to fight the Spanish flu, but they were too late. The virus disappeared before they could even isolate it. We saw this again to a degree in 2019 — not necessarily because the industry wasn't ready, but more likely because they were using last year's tactics to fight an ever-evolving entity.

In his 1990 book, "America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918," Alfred Crosby tells the story of the Spanish flu pandemic, noting that "No matter what they called it, the virus attacked everyone similarly. It started like any other influenza case, with a sore throat, chills and fever. Then came the deadly twist: the virus ravaged its victim's lungs." And then, they died!

This particular viral outbreak was one of the deadliest in the history of mankind, but "Spanish flu" is a misnomer. Perhaps it should have more correctly been called "Kansas flu." And that's the rest of the story.



DID YOU KNOW ...?

AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT MILITARY HISTORY, CONT.

Because despite its name, researchers believe the Spanish flu most likely originated in the United States, transmitted perhaps from either birds or pigs to humans. But regardless, one of its first recorded cases was at Fort Riley in Kansas on March 11, 1918.

Remember now that at this time, World War I was nearing its end. America had been sending troops to France for nearly a year (the first arrived in June 1917). But apparently, the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions found in military camps at the time were the perfect, fertile breeding ground for the virus. Within a week, 522 men had been admitted to the Fort Riley camp hospital suffering from the same severe flu-like effects. Soon thereafter, the Army reported similar outbreaks in Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama and California. Navy ships docked at ports along the East Coast also reported outbreaks of severe influenza and pneumonia among their crews.

But this version of flu seemed to target only military personnel and not civilians, so the virus was largely overshadowed by those pocketbook items that seemingly draw much of our attention, such as Prohibition, the suffragette movement and, of course, the never-ending bloody battles in Europe.

Indeed, by May 1918, as the troop ships departed, influenza began to subside in the United States. But this ordeal wasn't over; in fact, it was just beginning. Those soldiers from Fort Riley, now ready for battle, were perfect incubators for the virus during their long, cramped voyage to France. Once they hit French shores, the virus exploded, striking the Allied forces and Central Powers with equal force.

The Americans fell ill with "three-day fever" or "purple death." The French caught "purulent bronchitis." The Italians suffered "sand fly fever." German hospitals filled with victims of Blitzkatarrh or "Flanders fever."

The epidemic quickly evolved into a pandemic and spread across the globe: north to Norway, east to China, southeast to India, and as far south as New Zealand. No place would be safe as long as the virus could hitch a ride on naval ships, merchant vessels and trains, and so it traveled easily to the four corners of the earth.

Puerto Rico was an early victim, exposed around the beginning of summer 1918. It wreaked havoc on the population. But surprisingly, the Panama Canal Zone — the crossroads of the world at the time — was barely affected. It's thought that the virus arrived at Tampico,

Mexico, courtesy of the steamship Harold Walker. So essentially, the virus had traveled around the world and returned again to U.S. shores in just four short months.

So why then, if the epidemic appears to have started in Kansas, is it called "the Spanish flu"? Well, we can thank military secrecy and wartime censorship for that.

As 1918 was ending, both the Allied forces and those of the Central Powers had been decimated by the flu, but censors stifled any reports to hide information that could be valuable to the enemy. Spain, however, which maintained something of a benevolent neutrality throughout the war, didn't impose this wartime censorship on its newspapers. She openly reported the deaths of millions of *Spaniards* caused by the flu in May and June — reports that were quickly picked up by media around the world. Spain was outraged at being blamed and pointed its finger at France, saying the disease had come from battlefields there, blowing over the Pyrenees mountains. But it was too late: The name endured.

Regardless of what it was called, it would soon top the headlines here at home when the second and third waves of Spanish flu began to pound the United States during the winter of 1918. Nobody was immune. The country's indigenous people and the poor suffered disproportionately. Those in the cities fared poorly, too. New York City buried 33,000 victims; Philadelphia lost nearly 13,000 in just weeks. Overwhelmed with bodies, many cities soon ran out of coffins and some had to convert streetcars into hearses.

Crosby described the burdens endured: "In some cases the dead were left in their homes for days. Private undertaking houses were overwhelmed, and some were taking advantage of the situation by hiking prices as much as 600 percent. Complaints were made that cemetery officials were charging fifteen-dollar burial fees and then making the bereaved dig the graves for their dead themselves."

This was a global disaster.

Yet today, this worldwide pandemic is still known as the "Spanish flu." The similarities to COVID are striking. That may be a function of how humanity deals with crises like this. No one likes to take the blame, even if there's no real blame to take.

Viruses have been around a lot longer than we, have evolved into efficient pathogens, and will long outlive us. So maybe, as it is with all of our interactions with Mother Nature, we should just all learn to get along.

By John Mason

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, OLLI?



On Valentine's Day, several OLLI at UAH members held a committee meeting on Zoom, not at all unusual for our members. A question arose about our program and how it may be different from other seasoned-learner programs. This is not an "Ours is better than yours" response, but rather a "Wow! Look at what we have and do" response.

I began by researching Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and the Osher Foundation founded by Bernard Osher.

As of today, the foundation has donated \$1 million to \$2 million in support of each of 125 OLLI programs, with at least one program in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Alabama has three (UAH, Auburn, and UA Tuscaloosa), of which ours was the first recipient. Two million dollars, in two equal payments, was donated to the OLLI Endowment; a portion of the annual earnings helps support our program. The predecessor to OLLI was the Academy for Lifelong Learning, founded on Aug. 3, 1993.

Whew! Now, to the point!

We often say, "Come for the classes, stay for the fun," but not all OLLI members participate in classes. In any given term, roughly half of our members are involved in the classes. So, what do the other half gain in OLLI membership value? Well, yeah, the fun!

My goal was to investigate and share what your \$25 annual membership fee yields. It wasn't difficult to identify several stated benefits, but OLLI goes beyond that list and offers other perks. I'm going to go to "and much more" now and list the well-recognized benefits later.

Here are some actual "and much more" benefits of OLLI at UAH. I verified these through both personal involvement and informal survey plus observation. I am going to elaborate here.

- ♣ Free parking on the UAH campus (a \$140 annual value). A common complaint pre-COVID was the paucity of parking at certain times of the day. And that was true, but the combination of fewer student vehicles currently on campus and the reopening of Morton Hall and its parking lots gave us more spots. And *whether we paid for parking or not*, the number of parking places would not change. Hint: Take an 8:30 class. You will find fewer cars, more parking places. There are fewer cars in the afternoon, too, but you do limit your course options this way.



OLLI's member benefits include all-you-care-to-eat lunch for \$6.54 in Charger Cafe.
(Photo by Steve Stewart)

- ♣ Free food. Who can turn this down? We have pre-bonus snacks, Early Bird Breakfasts on selected days, and special events like the Souper Bowl, open houses, and Teacher Appreciation Days. Some days members bring treats: seasonal goodies like Halloween or Valentine's Day candies; bags or bowls of fruit; or cakes, bars or pastries. Occasionally, a cooking class will share their class products.
- ♣ Discount lunch. Show your OLLI badge at the Charger Cafe in the Conference Training Center building and get an all-you-care-to-eat buffet for \$6.54. This includes a grill, hot bar, allergy-sensitive selection, soups, sandwiches, salad bar, pizzas, baked potato bar, desserts and beverages. Be careful of decision fatigue!
- ♣ OLLI lounge. *Why do we not say more about this?* Members gather in the lounge Monday through Friday from early morning to mid-afternoon or later. Seating 16 members at four square tables is the typical layout, but it is not unusual to see tables with five to seven members squeezed together for breakfast, lunch, snacks or conversation. Free coffee is always available. (*Caution:* The hot water begins to flow before all the cold water goes in. It's a two-pot operation, one with the cold water and the other under the brew basket. *Every time!*) The bridge member interest group plays in the lounge every Friday that UAH is open. Art or cooking classes sometimes meet here. I'm pretty sure that a romance or two and certain that dozens of friendships have their origins in the OLLI lounge. There is a free zone for magazines, books, DVDs, CDs, and anything else a member might want to share. If an item lingers too long, it is donated to an appropriate organization or chucked, depending on condition.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, CONT.

- ♣ Friendships. Every OLLI member meets individuals at OLLI functions or in Wilson Hall. When you join OLLI, you are assured to meet curious individuals willing to leave their abodes and come to campus to learn. The enduring legacy of OLLI and lifelong learning is comradery. Decades-long friendships began in our program. There have evolved breakfast and lunch groups of members who discovered a common interest or social compatibility. These friends become like family. During COVID, many of us established Zoom or FaceTime groups to stay connected. This was critical to many of us during the pandemic and continues as a connection thereafter.
- ♣ Assistance. We do not always remember how relationships begin, but when an OLLI member needs help, it is available. Whether it is a need to relocate on short notice, a medical emergency, an ongoing health condition, a ride to/from the airport, or a generous hand to open a door or carry a bundle, OLLI members are there. Sometimes, the acts are spontaneous, and others are planned.
- ♣ Member scholarship program. There is limited assistance to help with membership, registration and course fees. When members know of these needs, they can assist. Details are online or in the catalog.
- ♣ Amazing UAH staff. Most of us see Program Manager Clay Williams and Program Coordinator Alice Sammon as they materialize wherever we need them. They are also on call. We have Jacob Bruce, our talented and personable information technology wiz. Soon, we will have our own marketing professional. We transitioned from the College of Professional Studies to the Salmon Library in January 2023. David Moore, library director, is excited to have us join his operation. Our goals and mission have much in common. (There are no plans to move OLLI to the Salmon Library building.)
- ♣ Member interest groups.
- ♣ UAH Salmon Library access.
- ♣ Weekly *eNews*.
- ♣ Ten issues annually of *The OLLI Insider*.
- ♣ Discounts to the University Fitness Center, UAH performances and sporting events.
- ♣ Free weekly movies on campus during the academic year.
- ♣ Extensive DVD/CD lending library, including selections from Great Courses.
- ♣ Volunteer opportunities to teach, coordinate a course, or serve on the Board of Directors and/or its committees.
- ♣ And much more!

OK, I admit I stretched some items into individual bullet points because each of the items is important. The member interest groups (MIGs) include Dining Out, Let's Play Bridge, Mah Jongg and Tai Chi. New groups are easy to establish when a group of members makes the request. There are rules, but not many. In the past, we have also had tennis, investment and hiking MIGs.

So that's my dissertation on the value of OLLI at UAH. I concede that I probably missed some things.

About Bernard Osher

Bernard Osher started his work life in the family hardware and plumbing supply business in Biddeford, Maine. He graduated with a B.A. from Bowdoin College. He ultimately owned the company as well as Palace Playland, a summer amusement park, in Old Orchard Beach. That park has been in operation since 1902, on the same site. But I digress.

Bernard Osher eventually sold those businesses, worked for Oppenheimer & Co. in New York, then moved to California, where he became a founding director of World Savings, which became the second largest savings institution in the country. Together with his sister Marian Osher Sandlin and her husband, Herbert, at World Savings, Osher became a multimillionaire, then a billionaire. He and his foundation support a number of philanthropic specialties.

For more information about the family, check their names on Google, Bing or any other search engine. All three were successful and generous people. Marian Sandlin died in 2012; Herbert Sandler died in 2019; Mr. Osher is 96.

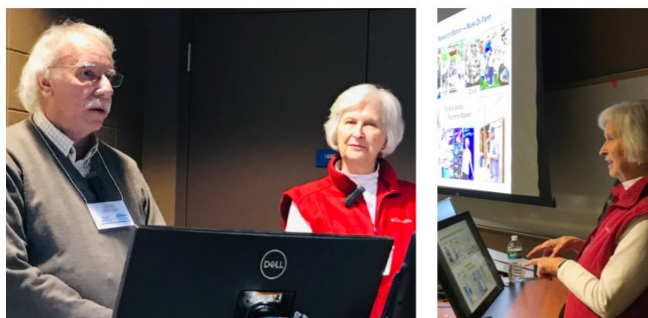
By Nancy Darnall

According to our catalog and website, members are entitled to the following:

- ♣ Courses offered online and/or in person from OLLI at UAH.
- ♣ Selected courses offered online from Auburn University or UA-Tuscaloosa.
- ♣ Cultural and social events.
- ♣ Travel excursions.
- ♣ Day trips.
- ♣ Local tours.
- ♣ Bonus presentations online and/or in person.

ALASKA: GLACIERS, WILDLIFE, HOT SPRINGS

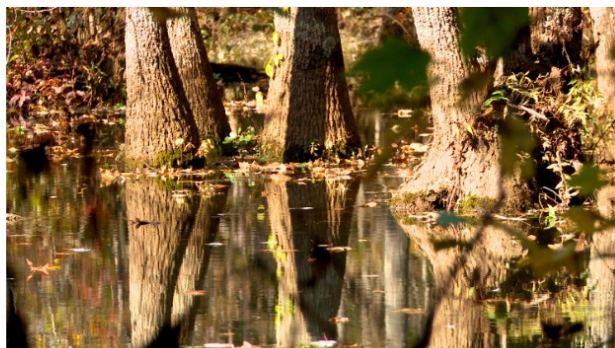
Chris Stuhlinger and Betty Koval described 25 OLLI travelers' 10-day "Alaskan Adventure" during a bonus session Feb. 3, using slides prepared by Chris and Steve Stewart. The land tour, conducted with help from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, took place in August 2022.



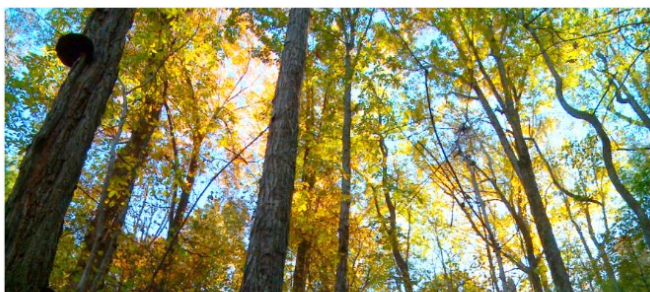
(Photos by Howard Carr, Marsha Langlois, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

STEWARDS OF NATURE IN MADISON COUNTY

Videographer Bill Heslip and forester Steve Jones presented two videos during a bonus session Feb. 17 showing nature scenes and people involved in ventures “highlighting selfless stewardship of nature in Madison County.” These videos and others from North Alabama are available at youtube.com/posterboyz.



Goldsmith-Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary



William Arthur Wells CCC Memorial Trail



(Photos by Glen Adams, Bill Heslip and Marian Moore Lewis)

LEARNING THE ART OF BELLY DANCE

Tomoko “Amal” Johnston is teaching “The Art of Belly Dance” on Tuesday mornings in Wilson Hall. Students learn a performing art and get low-impact exercise. Amal has taken extensive lessons and workshops from top teachers from around the world.



(Photos by Steve Stewart)

DON'T READ THIS TOO SOON

Before you read this answer, work the puzzle on Page 2.

If the portrait were in the gold casket, both the gold and silver inscriptions would be correct. If the portrait were in the lead casket, both the silver and lead inscriptions would be correct. With the portrait in the silver casket, only the lead inscription is correct. So silver is the answer.

By Bob Darnall