

The OLLI Insider

News for OLLI members at The University of Alabama in Huntsville

December 2024



**NATURE, HARDWARE HISTORY,
TEACHER APPRECIATION,
FIGHTING WORLD POLIO,
TOURING A DISTILLERY**

Steve Jones, this month's profile subject, at Kings Chair in Oak Mountain State Park; his photo of a great blue heron in Flint Creek, shot during an OLLI hike in November; touring Harrison Brothers Hardware store; Teacher Appreciation Day; learning about Rotarians' visits to India in their battle against polio; Irons One Distillery tour, followed by a sampling.

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From the Editor

NO PROBLEM! IT'S 'SCHOOLTEACHER STUFF'



It was time for the 15- or 20-year reunion of my high school class. I was one of those still living in the hometown, so I thought I should help. Party planning is not my strong suit, but I thought maybe I could handle publicity and correspondence in those days before email.

Our small committee got together, and the discussion turned to how to decorate the foyer and ballroom of the community house where we'd attended many events since childhood. The decorating ideas daunted me — a lot of work that I did not know how to do — and I said so.

Kay, one of my classmates, assured us all that it would be easy.

"That's schoolteacher stuff!" she said cheerfully.

Kay and others were elementary school teachers, and they did this sort of thing all the time, making their classrooms inviting and educational. And, sure enough, they decorated superbly and made it look easy.

Since then I've had a little teaching experience myself with adult Sunday school students (supportive, especially those who had been my high school teachers), college students (fun) and OLLI members (rowdy). And I've been a student again, attending graduate school at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and OLLI classes here.

Teachers, including those who get paid \$0 by OLLI, do much more homework than students, and teachers acquire the versatility they need. Meanwhile, OLLI officers, board members, committee members and other volunteers contribute unique knowledge and talents to conquer tasks that would baffle many of us.

In this season of thanksgiving, celebration, looking backward and looking ahead, let's express appreciation to all of them. And if you can offer your own version of "schoolteacher stuff" to OLLI (teaching or some other work that you can do better or more easily than others), please do.

OLLI members soon will be electing up to 10 new members of the Board of Directors. Maybe you or someone you know can serve on the board, offering unique skills in educating, organizing, promoting, or other essential tasks. Watch for details about board nominations and elections.

Inside The Insider: The spring Course Guide will arrive later this month, but we scooped it here in articles by Clay Williams, listing some of the courses; Betty Koval, describing bonus events; and Chris Stuhlinger, telling about off- and on-campus tours and events.



(Illustration by Susan Lucille Davis)

"We have each other's backs," John Mason concludes from his recent contacts with friends and fellow learners. He writes about this in his president's column. In his history column, he reflects on what we can learn about healing the nation's wounds from the aftermath of the Civil War.

Speaking of the Civil War, David Sayre announces travel opportunities to its battlefields as well as to Costa Rica and the Dalmatian coast.

Glen Adams profiles Steve Jones, who is a forester, retired college CEO, blogger and OLLI teacher. Chris and Steve outline the Hiking & Biking Member Interest Group's spring schedule. In another article, Glen describes the opportunity to discuss books with fellow readers in the OLLI Reads MIG.

Nancy Darnall writes about the value of getting outside your proverbial comfort zone when you select OLLI classes — moving from the arts to the sciences or vice versa, for example.

OLLI slows down during the holidays but still offers opportunities to celebrate, socialize and pursue common interests. Read about them in columns by Leah Black and Marilyn Szecholda.

Enjoy the holidays!

Steve Stewart
Editor, The OLLI Insider

From the President



Do rainy days and Mondays get you down? Think of some Pointer Sisters lyrics.
(Photos from Manchester, England, by Stuart Grout and from Morristown, New Jersey, by Rick Kramer, via Wikimedia Commons)

REACHING OUT IN HARD TIMES



We all have those days, don't we? Those "rainy days and Mondays" that Karen Carpenter sang so soulfully about?

I had one the other day, and it's the response to that that led me to the thoughts for this column.

Like most of us, I suppose, I engage daily in some form of internet chat, via either email or text. Well, the other day, I was feeling a little overwhelmed by events around me, and forgot that expressions and emotions don't always translate well in that medium. In response to a question, I replied with what was for me, a throwaway line: "I may never be happy again."

Inside my brain, it wasn't a cry of desperation — just a screen-print of my thoughts about things going on around me at that particular moment.

I was wrong to do that so cavalierly.

But the responses were amazing.

For months here, I have written about the importance of family, and of caring, and of community, and within minutes of my post, responses full of caring and concern came flooding into my inbox.

I can't tell you how much that meant to me, both personally and organizationally. You all get it; you recognize how important we are to each other inside the OLLI family. Frankly, I was overwhelmed.

And the lesson I was reminded of by this whole scenario is that we are a unique community. We're a community of learners, which by definition makes us a community of critical thinkers. We listen. We learn. We process. We recognize uncertainty. And we come together.

Plus, we recognize the overarching importance of friendship and caring. We have each other's backs.

Lifelong learning and experience, and, yes, our being in a family of like-minded OLLI individuals give us the ability to adapt, to improvise, and to overcome any adversity. Together.

It's kinda like a Pointer Sisters mash-up: "We are family" ... and because we are, "I'm so excited!" Because I know I like it!

And you know what else? *That* makes me happy all over again.

And, lest I forget, let me wish you all the very best holiday season ever!

And with that, I'll bid you adieu. Till next time ...

John Mason

President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

Events Committee

SPRING SEMESTER EVENTS PREVIEW



Another semester and another year have flown by once again. Many thanks to the OLLI members who participated in our events and tours this year.

Listed below are the events and tours scheduled for spring semester. Mark your calendars, and make plans to participate! More details about each event will be provided in upcoming newsletters.

Event recaps

Huntsville Revisited Museum, Oct. 25 — Museum founder William Hampton provided OLLI members with fascinating stories about Huntsville's history. He included information about some lesser-known Huntsvillians who made significant contributions to our community.

Harrison Brothers Hardware store, Oct. 27 — Historic Huntsville Foundation Executive Director Donna Castellano led our tour group through the store that has operated on the courthouse square since 1897. We also had access to the basement and upstairs. Today the store functions mainly as a gift shop and museum.

Irons One Distillery, Nov. 9 — This small facility located inside Lowe Mill specializes in small-batch whiskey production using corn, rye and barley. Tour participants learned about the whiskey-making process, visited the barrel room where the whiskey ages for three years, and then sampled the final product.

Events for spring semester

- Friday, Jan. 31 — **Visitor center and bird spotting** (Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Decatur), 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Explore the recently renovated refuge visitor center, then visit the nearby boardwalks, blinds, and observation building to spot sandhill cranes, endangered whooping cranes, Canada geese, ducks, and numerous other waterfowl species. The refuge attracts thousands of migrating and wintering waterfowl each winter.
- Friday, Feb. 7 — **HudsonAlpha DNA extraction class** (Huntsville), 10:30 a.m. to noon. Join this hands-on class at the world-class HudsonAlpha research facility to learn about DNA and how to extract DNA from a strawberry. All materials will be provided.
- Saturday, Feb. 22 — **Sleep in Heavenly Peace** (bunk beds — Huntsville), 9-11:30 a.m. Founded in Kimberly, Ohio, in 2012, Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a nonprofit providing handmade bunk beds to children who don't have beds of their own. Not only do they deliver these beds to kiddos in need, but they also partner with organizations, churches, businesses and individuals to build them. After a brief tour, OLLI members are invited to help build the bunk beds. No carpentry skills are required.
- Friday, Feb. 28 — **Alabama Center for the Arts** (Decatur), 2-3:30 p.m. Join Kim Parker, executive director of the ACA and Calhoun Community College's dean of fine arts, for a fascinating tour of the Alabama Center for the Arts. ACA is a partnership between Calhoun and Athens State University. Learn about the various programs and classes offered at ACA, including music, studio arts, computer graphics, multimedia production and theater arts.
- Saturday, March 22 — **Historic Mooresville walking tour**, 9-10:30 a.m. Learn about the interesting history of Mooresville from a knowledgeable local volunteer tour guide as we stroll through the quaint streets and visit three of the remaining old structures (stagecoach tavern, post office and brick church). Hear fascinating stories about former and current residents. The entire town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Friday, March 28 — **Martin Stamping and Stove factory (aka The Stovehouse) tour** (Huntsville), 2-3 p.m. The guided tour of this vast complex will include the history of the building (operational since 1928), an explanation of how the vision of the current owners is progressing, and also insight into areas not open to the public.
- Friday, April 4 — **UAH Beekeeping Club apiary** (Huntsville), 2-4 p.m. The great spring inspection: Following a North Alabama winter, spring warmth energizes honeybee colonies for the summer ahead. The rewards of caring for bees and for harvesting the wondrous products of their labors are joyful. This hands-on tour at a local apiary will increase a participant's understanding for the importance of bees' health, the benefits that come from responsible bee husbandry, the threat to their existence, and the increasing need for beekeepers.



On Oct. 27 OLLI members toured Harrison Brothers Hardware, which opened 127 years ago.
(Photo by Chris Stuhlinger)

(continued on the next page)

Social Committee

SOCIALIZING, APPRECIATION AND CELEBRATION



On Nov. 8, we showed the teachers how much they are appreciated. We shared pizza, salad and a delicious cake.

Thanks to all the Social Committee members who helped with this event. It was good to see so many members there!

Something to look forward to is the OLLI Holiday Party on Dec. 3. We will have a banquet-style dinner at the Conference Training Center on campus. Festivities start at 5:30.

Our favorite DJ, Ted Cannon, will again keep us on the dance floor until closing at 8:30. The deadline to buy tickets has passed. Hope to see you there, enjoying holiday time with your OLLI friends.

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair



Get ready for another OLLI Holiday Party, like this one in December 2023. (Photo by Helen Crawford)

Events Committee

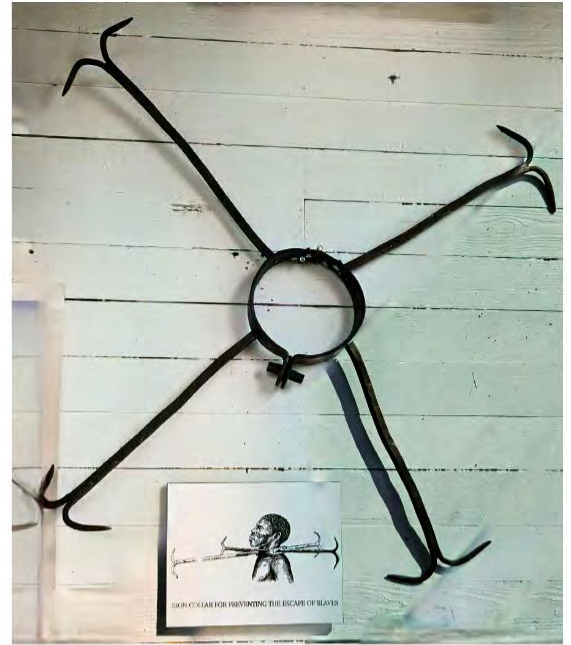
SPRING SEMESTER EVENTS PREVIEW, CONT.

- Saturday, April 12 — **UAH sports: lacrosse, baseball, softball** (UAH campus), baseball to be determined, softball at 1 p.m., men's lacrosse to be determined. Cheer on the UAH Chargers teams! Attend one (or all) of three sporting events at Charger Park: women's softball, men's baseball or men's lacrosse games.
- Friday, April 25 — **Indian Mound Museum** (Florence), 1:30-3 p.m. Visit an Indian mound built nearly 1,700 years ago by Native Americans in the Shoals. A presentation about the mound and its builders will be followed by a guided tour of the museum. We will be able to climb the mound as well. The museum is an excellent educational center presenting artifacts and displays of Native American cultural practices.
- **BONUS event** — to be announced, date and venue to be determined. We are pursuing a few options for one more spring event; however, some of the venues do not accept tour requests until 2025.

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

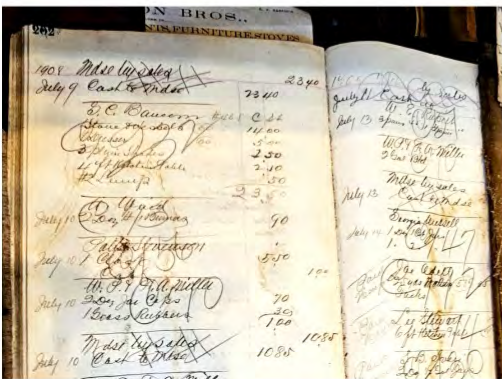
HUNTSVILLE REVISITED MUSEUM TOUR, OCT. 25

Museum curator William Hampton also gave a bonus presentation on campus Oct. 18. Photos from that event are on Page 32 of November's *OLLI Insider*.



(Photos by Patricia Haag and Chris Stuhlinger)

HARRISON BROTHERS HARDWARE TOUR, OCT. 27



(Photos by Patricia Haag and Chris Stuhlinger)

IRONS ONE DISTILLERY AT LOWE MILL, NOV. 9



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Coming Bonuses

A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE SPRING BONUS SCHEDULE

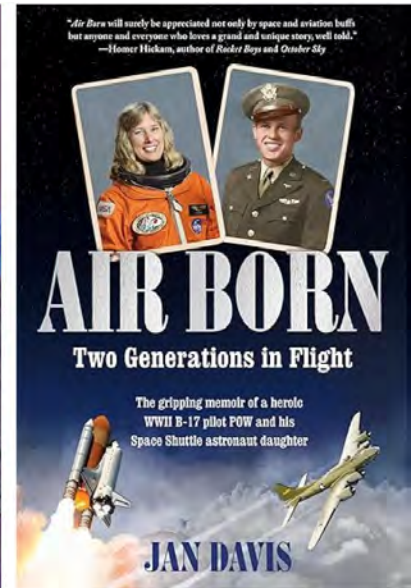


Another term has ended, and I believe we had some very good bonus speakers. I owe a huge "Thank you" to all who gave me names and connections to make these possible. Glen Adams helped a lot; I do believe he knows *everyone* in Madison County! Thank goodness for this.

So please, if you hear of a topic of interest to our age demographic, please reach out. If you cannot find me on the Nearpeer app, please send an email to olli.info@uah.edu, and they will forward to me.

Now, a sneak peek at what is coming for spring:

- Jan. 17 kicks off an extra, unplanned bonus: **saving the cranes** by Olivia Burkholz of the International Crane Foundation. (Festival of the Cranes 2025 will be held in Decatur on Jan. 10-12.)
- Jan. 31, Scott Shaw will tell us about the **North Alabama caves** (who knew there were so many?).
- Feb. 14, a few volunteers will tell us about the **Sleep In Heavenly Peace (beds for kids) project**. I heard a speaker of the Hartselle chapter talk about the experience of delivering the beds to children who may be sleeping three to a couch. The appreciation they express is overwhelming to some of the volunteers. We will also have an opportunity to sign up for a "build day," Saturday, Feb. 22, which the Events Committee has organized.
- Feb. 28, Ruhi Johanpour will again tear at your heart-strings speaking about her experiences with 10 women in an **Iranian prisoner-of-war camp**. Ruhi is one of only a few who survived. She honors these women by keeping their stories alive.
- March 21, Dianne Pierson, a health care professional, will give us insight into a subject closer to many of us than we may like to admit: understanding **Alzheimer's disease** and related dementias. Many of us know someone who has suffered or cared for someone.
- April 4, Dr. John Rodriguez-Feo will speak on **spine health and osteoporosis**. This is very personal to me; he treated me and gave me some semblance of a normal life with a rather simple procedure. I did not even know I had a problem — until I did. I highly suggest this for everyone!



Astronaut Jan Davis will speak during an OLLI bonus April 18. Her book "Air Born: Two Generations in Flight" is about her career as well as that of her father, a World War II B-17 pilot who became a prisoner of war. The book highlights similarities between crews in an airplane and a space shuttle. (2024 photo of Jan Davis is by Balon Greyjoy, via Wikimedia Commons.)

- April 18 (SUPER BONUS), **Dr. Jan Davis, an astronaut**, will tell stories from her book, "Air Born: Two Generations in Flight." Her story spans 50 years, beginning with her dad, followed by her vast accomplishments. This is a "bring friends" event!
- May 2, we will end the spring bonuses with Sara A. Harper, Ph.D., UAH kinesiology assistant professor. Sara will instruct us on **how to age better**. We can all use instructions to help in this process! After all, it is not for the faint of heart!

There you have it, and I hope you will keep sending great ideas for topics and fun suggestions to engage and entertain us. And there is always food in the lounge (thank you, ladies, for all you do) — plus the socializing we do while engaged in the process. I always love to hear the laughter coming from the lounge! These are all proven things to help us age better and longer.

See you in the spring in Wilson Hall, Room 168!

Betty Koval
Bonus Coordinator

Curriculum Committee



OLLI offers courses in many fields. Try some that are unfamiliar to you.
(Photo from fall 2024 open house by Patricia Haag)

TAKE A COURSE THAT MAY CHALLENGE YOUR VIEW



Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at The University of Alabama in Huntsville offers unique opportunities to members. Now that I have been a member for

about 10 years, I find that my attitude toward class selection has matured. I hope.

My original interest was in photography; I have taken at least four classes in photography. My skills have improved, but I discovered that OLLI offers so much more.

As a college student, I was an education major with emphases in English and social sciences. Any requirements outside those areas offered hours of drudgery and boredom — and not the best experience, as I decided before I entered those classrooms that I would not like the material and that I would never need the information. We learned in the education classes of

“self-fulfilling prophecies,” and I just provided an excellent example.

Not only did I not do well in the sciences and mathematics classes; I had little interest in learning what was on offer. I took the least demanding options in any of the disciplines.

Fast-forward to OLLI and the semianual catalog of delights each fall and spring. Yes, I took social issues, writing, art history courses; I still do. About three years ago, I stretched a tiny bit into a nutrition class by Barbara Johnson and a science class Ken Rex taught.

Since then, I ventured into physics and cryptography, drawing and other media, and military strategy. Maybe I’ll try yoga or dance someday. Every one of the classes outside my comfort zone changed me. Astrophysics in the most profound sense reoriented my view of the world.

If the classes I mentioned are already in your zone, maybe look at Dannye

Drake and Shakespeare; she teaches from “No Fear Shakespeare” and presents scenes from various video productions of the current play (spring 2025 is “Othello”). Or try your hand at Writing Your Life Story. And Vanitha Singh offers thought-provoking ethical, literary, and philosophical views on many subjects. These examples are just a few from the wealth of excellent instructors we have at OLLI.

When you look at the courses in the spring 2025 catalog, pause where you may have passed. Take a class to challenge your view or your skill set.

Your brain, body and spirit may soar to new heights. You will meet new friends. You may be inspired to teach, to travel, to create art, or to form a new member interest group. At the very least, you can be satisfied that you opened new doors.

Nancy Darnall
for the Curriculum Committee

GOODBYE FALL, HELLO SPRING



OLLI just concluded a successful fall semester with a large enrollment and a record number of courses that were full. We also had great attendance at Friday bonuses and for special events and tours.

Travel remains popular, as do our member interest groups. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves this fall and learned a few new things.

With the fall semester in the books, it is time to think about what is coming up in spring. Members will be able to choose from 65 courses — some online, some in person, and some a combination of the two. All the major disciplines are covered, such as literature, history, foreign languages, health and fitness, and social sciences.

Many popular subjects, such as tai chi, dance, quilting, beer and bridge, will be featured. Socrates Café, Great Books, You Be the Judge, and Writing Your Life Story are just some of the traditional favorites returning next semester.

The schedule also features several new offerings that are sure to be popular. Explore hundreds of years of female fashion with Petticoat Power. Get an inside view of Alabama politics with Inside the Alabama State House. Get spooky with Accused of Witchcraft.

Examine folklore and other common knowledge that might not be true with Things I Thought I Knew. And find out if we are alone in the universe with Looking for Life in Our Solar System.

These are just some of the numerous new courses being offered next year.

To get more details on the coming semester, join us for the spring open house on Friday, Jan. 10, in Wilson Hall from 10 a.m. to noon. This is your opportunity to meet instructors, learn about member interest groups (MIGs) and travel opportunities, and register for various courses and events.



Open house is an opportunity to meet teachers and other OLLI members, as well as to learn about classes and sign up for them and other activities. Tom Borchert (left) will be teaching “You Be the Judge” in the spring. This photo was made at fall open house; spring open house will be Jan. 10. (Photo by Steve Stewart)

Open houses are always great times to catch back up with your OLLI family and get excited about coming events and programs. We hope to see you there.

The spring Course Guide will be out this month, and registration will begin shortly. We advise you to register quickly due to so many courses getting filled up. The semester starts the week of Jan. 27 and runs through May 2. (Spring break is March 10-14.)

OLLI offices and UAH will be closed Dec. 23-Jan. 1. We hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season.

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

People of OLLI



Steve Jones at Kings Chair in Oak Mountain State Park; with his families in 1957 and more recently; and giving a 2018 commencement address at Fairmont State University. From left in the large family photo are Mallory Jones, Julie Jones, Hannah Jones, Matt Jones, Nate Jones, Steve, Judy, Katy Jones, Sam Disher, Jack Disher and Miguel Zambuzio.



JONES' LOVE OF FORESTRY, LEARNING, TEACHING HAS TAKEN HIM TO MORE THAN A DOZEN STATES

Steve Jones has had a love of nature since he was a boy, which has been a blessing for OLLI students.

Over the past six years, he has taught several OLLI courses about nature, especially local nature, and helped lead numerous hikes, which often turn into more learning experiences. Steve is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

Steve grew up in the Central Appalachian town of Cumberland, Maryland. His father had lied about his age so that he could join the Army Air Corps in World War II and fight in the Pacific. His mother worked in a factory then that produced war goods.

"Born in 1951, I loved the outdoors," said Steve. "I accompanied Dad and

my older brother fishing, hunting, hiking and experiencing the region's extensive wilderness. Our family, which included my brother and two sisters, enjoyed Sunday drives, frequent picnics and occasional camping.

"Dad rejected opportunities to rise into management and administrative positions. He elected to remain on the production floor at a tire manufacturing firm. We never owned a home. We celebrated each used car Dad purchased. We never had much, yet we had no perception of having little."

When it came time for college, Steve was blessed to find just what he needed.

"The local community college started a two-year degree in forestry during the

summer I graduated high school," said Steve. "This was the first of many times that serendipity and fortuity graced my life and career. Doc Workman, who launched and led that program, served as a friend, mentor and hero all my life." (Doc just died in October. You can read Steve's tribute to him at tinyurl.com/doc-workman.)

With Doc's help, Steve got a summer job with the Maryland State Forest Service, which proved to be an invaluable experience for his forestry education. After community college, Steve completed his undergraduate degree at State University of New York College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry in Syracuse.

(continued on the next page)

JONES' LOVE OF FORESTRY, LEARNING, CONT.

"I did not doubt that forestry was my passion," said Steve. "I loved the subject and excelled in my studies, graduating second out of more than 100 forestry majors. One of my two favorite forestry professors steered me in a direction contrary to immediately entering graduate school, a track that other professors strongly encouraged. Dr. Jack Berglund advised: 'Secure a position in your field. Gain traction and experience in forestry. Keep in touch with me. Let me know when you're ready for graduate studies.'"

A year before graduating in 1973, Steve married his high school sweetheart, Judy (52 years now and counting), and together they set out to southeastern Virginia to begin a 12-year, three-state adventure with Union Camp Corp. (UCC), a paper and allied products manufacturer purchased by International Paper Co. in 1991.

"I admit to being gifted with intelligence, limitless curiosity and parents who expected me to perform," said Steve. "I demanded a great deal from myself and from those who worked for me as my career evolved. Over those 12 UCC years, I held eight different positions, progressively advancing. Judy and I thought we would spend our lives in southeast Virginia. Instead, we spent 1979-81 in Savannah, Georgia, and 1981-85 in Prattville, Alabama! It seemed that every time I gained comfort, the company moved me into greater responsibility."

Then came 1985 and a life-changing decision: "My old professor Jack Berglund made a pact with me," said Steve. "He said, 'Enter a Ph.D. program under my direction, give it what I know you are capable of, and I'll get you out of here with a Ph.D. in three years.'"

So with two small children in tow, Steve and Judy moved back to Syracuse to begin the toughest, most stressful 36 months of their lives. What made it even worse was that at 24 months his mentor Berglund collapsed and died in a parking lot as Steve administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Another professor, Dr. Edwin White, stepped in to help with Steve's studies, and Steve earned his Ph.D.

Thus began a life in academia that in 30 years took Steve to eight universities, including being the CEO at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Urbana University in Ohio, Antioch University New England in New Hampshire, and Fairmont State University in West Virginia.

"We loved every place we've lived — 13 interstate moves," said Steve. "I never held a position I regretted. I learned from each one. Some have said I was lucky. I have responded that the harder I worked, the luckier I got!"

Steve retired in January 2018 and moved to Madison to be close to daughter Katy and her two children. Son Matt lives near Pittsburgh, Penn-

sylvania, with his three children.

Steve didn't retire to his recliner.

"I've stayed busy," said Steve. "I've taught at both OLLI and Learning-QUEST. I've taken a few courses, but I discovered long ago that I learn best by teaching and doing. My doing is publishing a weekly photo essay on what I term 'The Nature of North Alabama' (or wherever I happen to be). His blog is titled 'Great Blue Heron.'" (Subscribe to Steve's weekly email at tinyurl.com/jones-blue-heron-signup. The blog itself is at stevejonesgbh.com.)

"I serve on several nonprofit boards, eagerly speak to diverse organizations on nature-themed topics, occasionally consult on university leadership, and enjoy our five grandchildren," he said.

In the spring semester, Steve and Renee Raney will be teaching "North Alabama Naturalists and Their Special Places," and he and Chris Stuhlinger will be teaching Part 1 of "The U.S. National Parks," which is based on Ken Burns' series. Part 2 will be offered in the fall semester.

Thanks, Steve, for all you do for OLLI.

By Glen Adams

Member Services Committee



Pictures by Kathy Riggs (left) and Philip Flowers were among entries in the 2024 OLLI photo contest. The theme was “Reflections.” See winners and submissions in that contest, as well as details about the 2025 contest, at tinyurl.com/olli-photo-contest-25.

HOLIDAYS, INTEREST GROUPS, PHOTOGRAPHY



Hopefully, your holidays will have many joyful moments with family and friends. Remember that there are still things to do at OLLI during the break.

When UAH is open, the OLLI member interest groups will continue to meet, but check on any changes of times and dates. So, if you are into bridge, tai chi, mah-jongg, art, hiking or reading, continue to meet with the groups.

The time before classes start again late in January is a great time to get those cameras out and take some winning photos for the annual contest. Check online at tinyurl.com/olli-photo-contest-25 for more information, including winning photos and entries from the 2024 contest.

The topic for the photos this year is “Contrasts,” and the deadline is April 1, 2025.

Be sure to check the OLLI eNews on Fridays for more information on what’s happening during the break.

Leah Black
Member Services Committee Chair



**Did you know that at age 70.5,
you are eligible to make a distribution from your
IRA directly to support
OLLI?**

Benefits include:

- Your distribution will not be taxed.
- You may give up to \$105,000 annually.
- At age 73, your distribution will offset the Required Minimum Distribution.
- The distribution could lower your tax bracket.

Contact tammy.eskridge@uah.edu
to learn more.

Travel Committee

A frog and a rainforest in Costa Rica, which is an OLLI travel destination in August and September 2025. (Frog photo from Nanda Journeys; Rainforest photo by Kevin Casper)



TRAVELS TO SHILOH, COSTA RICA AND DALMATIA



We are continuing our planning for the rest of 2025 and 2026, and we have some great travel trips and leads to announce:

- Phil Graham has put together a wonderful trip for American history enthusiasts: **Shiloh National Military Park and Corinth Battlefield Unit** — March 10-11, 2025. What a wonderful

learning experience it will be to visit places where such difficult events in our country's history occurred! Go to a place where history was made, and reflect on its impact on our country's development.

- Chris Stuhlinger is putting together a fantastic trip: **Discover Costa Rica** — Aug. 30-Sept. 7, 2025. Explore the diverse rainforests, wildlife, culture and history of this small Central American country during a nine-day/eight-night adventure curated by Nanda Journeys. Visit a volcano, stay at a self-sustainable ranch, tour local farms, walk through the rainforest, meet the locals, see a Pacific beach, and more. The cost per person is estimated to be \$3,999 (double occupancy, land only). Nanda Journeys specializes in custom tours designed for clients (they also created the recent Iceland trip for OLLI members). For a detailed itinerary and trip registration information, contact Chris at olli.info@uah.edu.
- Steve Goodman has agreed to lead a wonderful **Cruise Along the Dalmatian Coast** — April 25-May 1, 2026. This trip will include Croatia (Zadar, Zagreb, Plitvice Lakes, Split, Dubrovnik), Montenegro (Kotor), Albania (Saranda, Butrint), and Greece (Corfu, Delphi, Athens). This trip is with Overseas Adventure Travel (part of Grand Circle travel), with whom we have had great experiences previously.

Our greatest thanks and appreciation to Chris, Steve and Phil for agreeing to lead these exciting travel adventures. Look for these to be put on the travel tab (tinyurl.com/olli-travel) of OLLI's website soon.

We are always looking to see where the wanderlust of our members is pointing. All members are encouraged to think about your own wish lists for travel. Make your ideas known to OLLI's Travel Committee — join it, in fact.

We need trip coordinators to make any trip come to fruition, and we need your ideas and experience with traveling to make OLLI travel even better.

Travel opportunities in 2025

- **Signature City Pittsburgh** — Sunday, May 25, to Friday, May 30, 2025, with OLLI at UAH-planned options for pre- and post-extensions. All issues for this trip have been resolved. We have a few possible openings still and invite you to have a wonderful time on this great American story of the rise of American manufacturing and the impact of a key industrial city. Find out what makes it "America's Most Livable City." See details at tinyurl.com/olli-pittsburgh2025. Please contact Michelle Laverty or David Sayre for more information at olli.info@uah.edu.
- **On the Road: Cuisine & Culture in Acadiana Louisiana** — Jan. 13-20, 2025. Registration for this trip closed Sept. 30. Any questions, please contact Claudia Pols at olli.info@uah.edu.
- **Two Worlds of Peru: The Inca Highlands & the Amazon** — This trip (June 13-27, 2025) is now full. We are looking forward to hearing all of the adventures and seeing all the happy faces from the pictures.

What's in the works

We are in the development phases of a few new adventures, including Santa Fe, New Mexico. If this one sounds exciting, please consider stepping out and having a hand in leading it. You won't regret it.

(continued on the next page)

Travel Committee

TRAVELS TO SHILOH, COSTA RICA, DALMATIA, CONT.

OLLI Travel Committee — continuing to explore

We welcome your feedback and areas of interest. We have collected the data from a few events and see that there are a few areas of great travel interest (looks like people are getting the travel itch for some wonderful places.)

A survey of OLLI members showed the most interest in traveling within the United States. Canada and Italy ranked next, followed by the Mediterranean, Scandinavia and Turkey. Next was Ireland. Other locations of interest were Asia, Australia, Austria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Japan, Scotland and South Africa.

Contact David Sayre or other members of the OLLI Travel Committee at olli.info@uah.edu.

All who wander are not lost!

David Sayre
Travel Committee Chair

Member Interest Groups

OLLI members who like books and, better yet, like talking about books need to check out the OLLI Reads Member Interest Group.

The MIG began at the end of last spring's semester. Betty Koval and several other members started pushing the idea and turned the project over to John Syster.

The group decided at its first meeting to get together every other month in Wilson Hall. At each meeting, they decide what will be the book for the next meeting and who will lead the discussion.

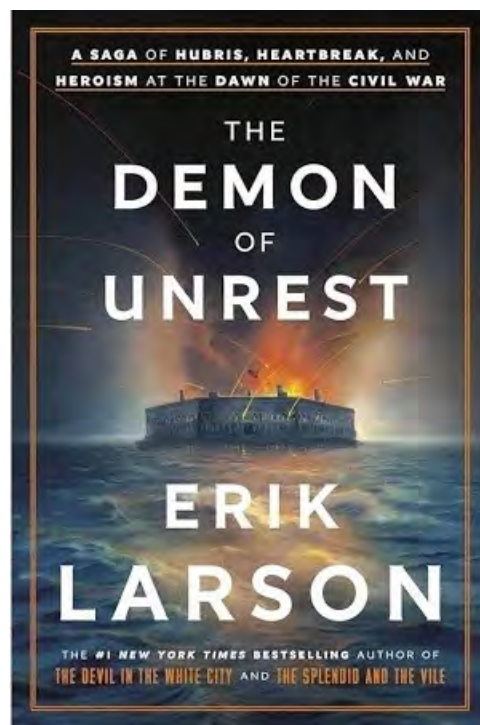
Thus far, the group has read and discussed "The Measure" by Nikki Erlick, "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride and "Furious Hours" by Casey Cep.

The MIG was slowed by the busy fall semester. Several members taught classes and all took classes, so it was difficult to find a time convenient for all to meet.

But they are forging into 2025 with a meeting Jan. 9 at 11:30 a.m. in 116 Wilson Hall. The book to be discussed is "The Demon of Unrest" by Erik Larson, describing the events leading up to the firing on Fort Sumter and the beginning of the Civil War.

If you would like to join the MIG, sign up through the Nearpeer app or contact the OLLI office (olli.info@uah.edu) to be added to the email list.

By Glen Adams



This book is the Jan. 9 discussion topic for the OLLI Reads Member Interest Group.

Travel Committee

SCENES FROM OLLI'S ICELAND TOUR, SEPT. 8-17



(Photos from Lisa Brunegraff, Bob Carroll, Bonnie Jane Peterson and Steve Stewart)

Travel Committee

LANDSCAPES AND CITYSCAPES OF ICELAND



(Photos from Rick Rodriguez, Steve Stewart, Chris Stuhlinger, Tilman Stuhlinger and Hafsteinn Thorolfsson)

Member Interest Groups

HIKING & BIKING MIG ACTIVITIES FOR THE SPRING

As fall semester comes to a close and we look back on a successful first year of the Hiking & Biking Member Interest Group, we thank everyone who has participated in our MIG activities.

We try to offer a variety of venues, degrees of difficulty, and scheduled activity times to give our MIG members a better chance to join us as we enjoy the great outdoors!

Below is a preview of MIG activities for the spring semester. We hope you find an activity that interests you, especially those of you who have joined the MIG but have been unable to attend so far. If anyone has ideas for future venues (for bike rides or nature walks), please let us know. MIG members will receive additional details about the spring activities.

If you have not yet joined this MIG and want to receive details about coming activities, sign up at the link below and agree to the blanket release/waiver form. You must have a valid OLLI membership to join the MIG and participate in MIG activities.

Join the MIG: forms.gle/6M5BoaWX9Z4TLugE9.

Recaps of recent events

Bradford and Mill Creek Greenways, Oct. 26 — Our bikers enjoyed a leisurely ride on these two greenways in Madison.

Flint Creek Nature Trail, Nov. 10 — Our walking group spotted great blue herons and egrets, learned about the trees and other vegetation, and welcomed several new OLLI and MIG members.

Spring semester MIG activities

- Sunday, Feb. 2, 2-3:30 p.m. — **Nature walk at Beaverdam Boardwalk** (near the Huntsville airport). Visit a section of one of Alabama's largest tupelo swamps.
- Saturday, Feb. 15, 10:30 a.m.-noon — **Nature walk at Tupelo Swamp Trail** (Hays Preserve). See two state champion trees: a water tupelo and a shellbark hickory.
- Saturday, March 1, 10 a.m.-noon — **Hike at Terry Trail** (Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve). Look for birds at the bird blind, and learn how to identify the large hardwood trees along this educational trail.



On Nov. 10, some of the Flint Creek Nature Trail hikers relaxed on the horizontal trunk of a tulip poplar tree, from which vertical trees had sprouted.
(Photo by Chris Stuhlinger)

- Sunday, March 23, 1-4 p.m. — **Nature walk at the Langlois farm** (Paint Rock River valley). OLLI members John and Marsha Langlois have invited MIG members to see the Virginia bluebells in bloom at their farm near Estillfork. They also have a beautiful waterfall and stream near their house. And we'll learn about what it takes to raise chickens.
- Saturday, April 5, 10 a.m. to noon — **Bike ride at Aldridge Creek Greenway** (south Huntsville). Ride to Ditto Landing on this south Huntsville greenway.
- Sunday, April 13, 1-3 p.m. — **Hike at Green Mountain Nature Preserve North**. Visit the "Halloween Forest" to see a grove of uncommon smoketrees.
- Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m.-noon — **Hike at Wells Memorial Trail** (Monte Sano State Park). See the towering hardwood trees growing in this cove forest.

See you on the trail!

Chris Stuhlinger and Steve Jones
Co-Leaders, Hiking & Biking MIG

Member Interest Groups

HIKING & BIKING MIG'S ADVENTURES

BRADFORD AND MILL CREEK GREENWAYS



FLINT CREEK NATURE TRAIL



(Photos by Chris Stuhlinger, Steve Stewart and Steve Jones)

This Moment in History

A political cartoon from 1865 shows Vice President Andrew Johnson and President Abraham Lincoln trying to put the Union back together after the Civil War. At right is the House resolution impeaching President Andrew Johnson in 1868. (These images from Wikimedia Commons and Wikipedia are also available from the Library of Congress.)



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

December: Does history repeat itself?

On March 4, 1865, only 41 days before his assassination, President Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office for the second time. Lincoln's second inaugural address previewed his plans for healing a once-divided nation. The speech is engraved on the north interior wall of the Lincoln Memorial.

This may well rank as one of the best political speeches ever presented. And for my topic today, musing whether history does repeat itself, I think his words show extreme prescience.

For example, speaking of how the country had lost the ability to communicate and compromise, Mr. Lincoln said, "Neither [side] anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other." Sound familiar?

But more importantly for the country then, and somewhat apropos for today, he ended the speech this way: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations."

Folks, *that's* how you start a healing process in a fractured nation!

After Lincoln's assassination, new President Andrew Johnson tried to continue the policies of reclamation laid out by his predecessor. And that's the rest of this story.

On Christmas Day, 1868, President Andrew Johnson issued pardons to all Confederate soldiers who fought in the American War of the Rebellion. The president extended "unconditionally, and without reservation ... a full pardon and amnesty for the offence [sic] of treason against the United States, or of adhering to their enemies during the late Civil War, with restoration of all rights, privileges, and immunities under the Constitution and the laws."

In so doing, Johnson was trying to carry out Lincoln's rebuilding wishes. This action, Johnson said, would "renew and fully restore confidence and fraternal feeling among the whole, and their respect for and attachment to the national [e.g., federal] government, designed by its patriotic founders for the general good."

Mr. Lincoln's goal as laid out in his December 1863 Annual Message to Congress envisioned bringing a fractured country back together, ultimately culminating with the pardon of all Confederate soldiers excepting for officeholders of the Confederate government or persons who had mistreated prisoners. Those pardons would, however, mandate that the awardees swear an oath of allegiance, and would not restore ownership to former slaves, or restore confiscated property that involved a third party.

(continued on the next page)

This Moment in History

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

Tensions were already high between the legislative and executive branches, and besides Congress objecting to Lincoln's plans as being too lenient, they were incensed by the fact that he had implemented them by presidential directives without consulting Congress. So Radical Republicans passed a more stringent measure — the Wade-Davis Bill — which required half of any former Confederate state's voters to swear allegiance to the United States and that they had not supported the Confederacy. Their bill also ended slavery, but it did not allow former slaves to vote. Lincoln pocket-vetoed it.

(On May 5, 1865, the paroles were further extended so that soldiers from the 11 Confederate states, plus West Virginia, would be allowed to return home, but "all who claim homes in the District of Columbia and in states that never passed the Ordinance of Secession [Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri] have forfeited them and can only return thereto by complying with the amnesty proclamation of the president and obtaining special permission from the War Department.")

Relations failed to improve after Mr. Lincoln's assassination, and in February 1868, the Radical Republicans impeached President Johnson, technically because he had violated the Tenure of Office Act by trying to fire Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who often sided with the congressional Republicans. In fact, it was because he was still trying to follow Lincoln's more-lenient plan. The Senate acquitted Johnson.

The impeachment did, however, have several important political implications for the balance of federal legislative-executive power. It maintained the principle that Congress

should not remove the president from office simply because its members disagreed with him over policy, style and administration of the office. It also resulted in diminished presidential influence on public policy and overall governing power, fostering a system of governance that future President Woodrow Wilson referred to in the 1880s as "congressional government." We have certainly seen that play out over and over again in the past few years.

Writer-philosopher George Santayana is credited with coining the phrase "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." And here we are, once again, standing on the precipice of repeating our history.

In the mid-19th century, America was undergoing another existential crisis, not unlike that which we have experienced this last decade or so. Then, too, we forgot how to communicate and how to compromise. In the end, perhaps simply because our forebears had no idea of what else to do, the result was a bloody, destructive Civil War.

It seems likely that shortly, another group of people, currently in prison or under indictment for once again trying to overthrow the Constitution of the United States, will receive presidential pardons. This time, however, the purpose seems to be not to heal a fractured country, but rather to improve the power base of a new regime.

I'm not complaining, really, because this is how democracy works. The people have spoken. But I wonder. Is it possible that because we no longer study history or remember the past, we are doomed to repeat it? It's up to us.

By John Mason

ROTARIANS TRAVEL TO INDIA, FIGHTING POLIO

Bill Petty of Tuscaloosa has participated in three of Rotary International's polio immunization trips to India, which he described during a bonus presentation Nov. 1.



(Photos from the speaker and by Steve Stewart)

EXPRESSING THANKS TO TEACHERS, NOV. 8

Teacher Appreciation Day at Trinity United Methodist Church included gifts to instructors and those (top left) who chair curriculum categories, as well as guitar music by Bob Carroll, vice president of curriculum.



(Photos by Steve Stewart)

LOOKING BACK AT IRELAND AND ICELAND TRAVELS

During a bonus presentation Nov. 15, Sue Farbman and Chris Stuhlinger reported on OLLI groups' travels in Ireland (July 8-27) and Iceland (Sept. 8-17). *The Insider* published other photos from these trips in August, September, October, November and this month.



(Photos by Steve Stewart, travelers and guides)

The Last Word

QUILTING TOGETHER



Members showed their work at the end of fall semester's "Once Upon a Quilt" course. Jean Greenwood was the teacher, and Cheryl Heeth and Marla Rex helped finish the course after Jean was injured in a fall. It was "a great example of our OLLI family stepping in," said Clay Williams, program manager. (Photo by Justin Clay)




PATTI PATRICK'S DONATION HONORS THOSE WHO HELP

Patti Patrick has donated funds to OLLI to honor various fellow members, including her brother Bill, who push her wheelchair and otherwise save her steps.

She said she greatly appreciates their kindness.

Patti mentions Bill dozens of times in her recently published book, "Ramblings of a Renegade Retiree: Memoir of a Nobody." She concludes a chapter about him by writing, "These threads of your life have wrapped around my heart as a soft yarn ball of a very lucky sister."

Some options and links for financially supporting OLLI are available at uah.edu/library/olli/donate. Another option is to donate to the 501(c)(3) fund that the Board of Directors uses for projects. You can find information, cards and envelopes in Wilson Hall.

		
OLLi at UAH Support Fund Help us nurture and grow OLLI at UAH while keeping our organization sustainable for generations to come. The Support Fund allows OLLI at UAH to offer members courses, field trips, travel opportunities, and social engagement.	OLLi at UAH Scholarship The OLLI at UAH Scholarship Fund provides support for deserving UAH undergraduate students. The scholarship assists in covering the cost of higher education to include tuition, books, housing, and other related fees.	OLLi at UAH Legacy Giving Leaving a legacy for lifelong learning is a meaningful way to help ensure the longevity of OLLI at UAH. By making a planned or estate bequest, you can ensure the program members care deeply about will be around through the ages.
GIVE TO THE OLLI AT UAH SUPPORT FUND >	GIVE TO THE OLLI AT UAH SCHOLARSHIP FUND >	GIVE TO THE OLLI AT UAH LEGACY GIVING FUND >