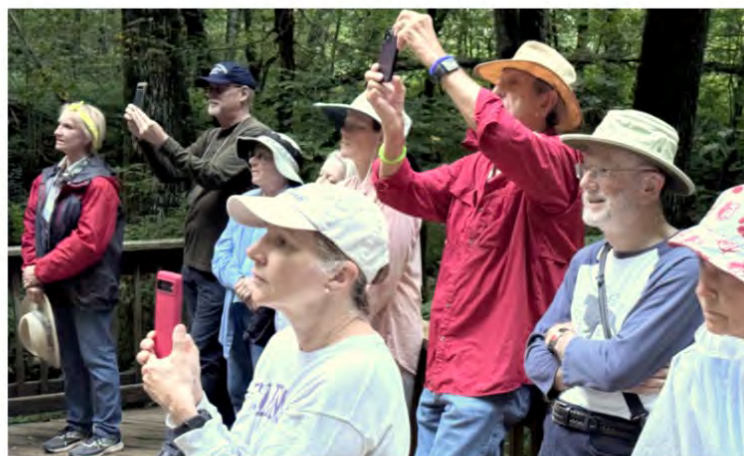


The OLLI INSIDER

August 2025

News for OLLI members at The University of Alabama in Huntsville



HORSES, TEAS, PITTSBURGH, PERU, BATS AND VOLUNTEERS

Lacey Simmons, who teaches financial courses for OLLI, is also a champion rodeo competitor. OLLI members toured Piper & Leaf Tea Co. at Lacey's Spring, as well as Pittsburgh (lower left) and Peru. Irene Garoppo recognized Chris Stuhlinger as Volunteer of the Year during OLLI's annual meeting. At Scottsboro, Sauta Cave's bats flew out on schedule at dusk when OLLI came to watch. T-shirts, polo shirts, coffee mugs, jackets, socks and caps are among the merchandise available in a new online store that helps publicize and fund OLLI at UAH.

uah.edu/olli

Wilson Hall – Room 105
256.824.6183
OLLI.info@uah.edu



From the Editor

EXPERT ADVICE ON LIVING LONG AND WELL



Plenty of people offer advice about living long and well, but few can speak with as much authority as my maternal grandmother, Orpah Nixon Hall of Bay Minette (1892-1996).

Orpah (whom we often call Bobo, a nickname coined by my younger brother, David) was the only grandparent I really knew. She lived to be 104. The other three died much earlier.

She was named after Orpah, who was not the most admired character in the biblical book of Ruth. As a young woman, my grandmother shamed a revival preacher who had said he'd never give a child that name: She became the champion fundraiser for his love offering. "This is from Orpah," she told him.

She was funny, persistent, generous, feisty and opinionated, and she loved her family. She was widowed during the Depression, raised four children and lost a teenage daughter to illness. At about 90, she fell and broke a knee while walking from her house to town. This led to her first hospital stay. She bounced back and soon made her first airplane trip to attend David's wedding in Iowa.

Some of my best moments with Orpah occurred over early morning breakfasts, just the two of us, in my parents' house in the 1980s. She insisted on cooking for me.

I once asked for her formula for long life. She gave a four-part answer that may have been more about living well:

- Hard work
- Worry
- Doing what you don't want to do
- Looking after other people instead of yourself

I know that seems dour, but you could say that Orpah advised us to be diligent, conscientious, disciplined and unselfish. In other words, be a good person.

We can learn much from family members, experts and friends. OLLI brings us together with people who can advise, empathize and set examples, and it offers opportunities to do things that keep us healthy and prolong life.

Inside The Insider: We haven't published since May, so this edition is big, containing summer memories as well as the fall outlook.

Phil Graham, our new board president, expresses gratitude and encourages us all to pay it forward. Irene Garoppo expresses appreciation to Chris Stuhlinger, who was recognized as Volunteer of the Year during OLLI's annual meeting. We have photos from the meeting.

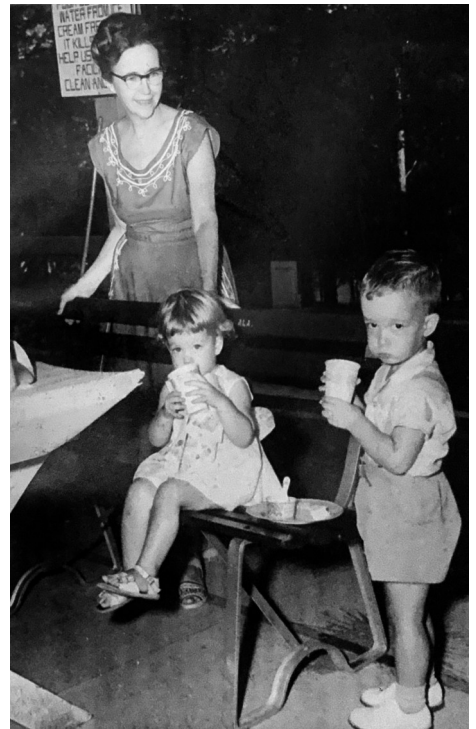
The Events Committee, which Chris chairs, has sponsored almost 100 events in recent years. They're still at it. In his events column, Chris lists 11 coming in the fall.

Richard Brooks, the new curriculum vice president, invites us to sign up for fall courses, share the schedule with others, and attend open house Aug. 8. Clay Williams tells about some of those 70-plus courses and other offerings. Betty Koval writes of the Aug. 29 presentation on music, philosophy and literature that will kick off the fall series of bonuses.

Glen Adams profiles Lacey Simmons, who teaches finance courses and will present a bonus about horses.

In his travel column, David Sayre outlines future trips near and far, including to Costa Rica, the Dalmatian coast, South Africa and New Mexico. Michelle Laverty and Nancy Darnall write about recent group trips to Pittsburgh and Peru, and we have pages of pictures from the travelers.

John Mason, immediate past board president who now chairs the Member Services Committee, writes about its expanded portfolio. John continues his monthly history column, explaining the checks and balances intended to help us "keep" our republic (Benjamin Franklin's word).



Orpah Nixon Hall enjoys a picnic in Monroeville about 1954 with grandchildren Orpah Ann and Steve Stewart.

Lee Roop's "Huntsville Then and Now" column is about the time that rocket science may have helped boys start a campfire — but certainly not a bigger fire.

We have the winning pictures from OLLI's annual photo contest. There are reports on member interest groups, including those for dining, hiking and biking, books, and art. Jill Stewart announces OLLI-themed merchandise available online.

Marilynn Szecholda invites you to enjoy her Social Committee's snacks during open house. In a separate article, Marilyn describes a local art studio for special needs adults that OLLI members will be visiting soon.

We are starting a new feature recognizing OLLI Elves — people who look after the rest of us when we aren't looking. Who's the first Elf? Turn the pages.

Steve Stewart
Editor, The OLLI Insider

Calendar

AUGUST 2025

August 8 | Fri | 10:00 am - 12:00 pm | In-Person

OLLI Open House

Wilson Hall

OLLI Members, family, friends, and the community are invited to join us to kick off the Fall 2025 semester. The open house is an opportunity to learn more about OLLI at UAH, discover upcoming courses, bonus lectures, special events, member interest groups, and much more!

- Meet instructors & OLLI board, and staff.
- Register for a selection of over 70 fall courses.
- Pick up your parking permit.
- Renew or purchase an OLLI membership.
- Explore the program and facilities.
- Make connections with people who share the love of life-long learning.

*Presented by OLLI at UAH.
No registration required.*

August 13 | Wed | 1:15 pm - 3:15 pm | In-Person

Game On!

Wilson Hall 152C

Come join OLLI and friends for a friendly and competitive game day or 3! We have 3 individual offerings for our free game days, with a different game on the table each time and offerings of other games you may have heard of from your kids or grandkids or their friends that you just haven't had a chance to try yet. Check the description for each day to see which games we're offering! Invite a friend, too. We're keeping it free and open to the public. Snacks and drinks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

Games of the Day: Telestrations, followed by Uno — other games will be available to peruse through to play, too!

*Presented by OLLI at UAH.
Sign-up on the OLLI website.*

August 19 | Tu | 10:30 am - 12:00 pm | In-Person

UAH Master Campus Plan Presentation

LIB 111

Christian Reed, UAH's Chief Facilities Officer and Campus Architect, will present the UAH Long-Term Master Plan to interested OLLI members. The master planning process provides a clear and compelling vision of a unique, attractive, and functional setting for all the activities that go on at UAH.

*Presented by UAH
Sign-up on the OLLI website.*

August 20 | Wed | 1:15 pm - 3:15 pm | In-Person

Game On!

Wilson Hall 152C

Come join OLLI and friends for the second friendly and competitive game day! We have 3 individual offerings for our free game days, with a different game on the table each time and offerings of other games you may have heard of from your kids or grandkids or their friends that you just haven't had a chance to try yet. Check the description for each day to see which games we're offering! Invite a friend, too. Remember! It's free and open to the public. Snacks and drinks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

Join us for a little electronic gaming with Jackbox games! Only a cellphone or tablet required. Quick setup and training at the start. Second offering will be Fishbowl — a great guessing game with hints of charades and deduction!

*Presented by OLLI at UAH.
Sign-up on the OLLI website.*

August 27 | Wed | 1:15 pm - 3:15 pm | In-Person

Game On!

Wilson Hall 152C

Come join OLLI and friends for our third friendly and competitive game day! We have 3 individual offerings for our free game days, with a different game on the table each time and offerings of other games you may have heard of from your kids or grandkids or their friends that you just haven't had a chance to try yet. Check the description for each day to see which games we're offering! Invite a friend. We're keeping it free and open to the public. Snacks and drinks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

Join us for our final offering of GAME ON! This session we'll play "It's my party and..." as well as Phase 10. Optional board games will be available as well!

*Presented by OLLI at UAH.
Sign-up on the OLLI website.*

The Trailhead

THE COST OF SAYING 'THANK YOU'



When I was growing up and having any opportunity to receive some item or assistance from another, my dad would tell me and continue to remind me, "It doesn't cost you anything to say 'Thank you.'"

Since those days, I find for myself that the corollary to my father's words is also true. That is, "If you don't say 'Thank you,' the cost to you will be high." During moments of reflection, I do wonder what my lack of thankfulness has cost me — a friendship, a family relationship, an opportunity, or an invitation to share. These costs have been astronomical, yet avoidable.

Saying 'Thank you' to someone who has provided a gift or bestowed kindness by word or deed, also, should not be a one-and-done expression. To be honest, I find for myself that I don't say 'Thank you' enough. This is especially true when one has freely given from time, talents or treasures.

Spanning my few years of volunteering at OLLI, instances occur for me to explain, when asked, why I'm involved with OLLI or what the benefits are for joining OLLI. My very simple, elevator-speech answer is:

"OLLI is distinctive from other lifelong learning offerings in northern Alabama. Our shared passion for continuous challenge and curiosity is through an attitude of gratitude."

In a November 2024 article in Florida International University's *FIU News*, Dr. Philip Lazarus, past president of the National Association of School Psychologists, is credited with observing that gratitude is intertwined with a higher purpose, acts of kindness and connection with others (tinyurl.com/gratitude-fiu). From my experience, this concept encapsulates the unique and permeating ethos that our OLLI community imparts.

In May, the OLLI Board of Directors elected me as its president. I am truly honored and humbled by their vote of confidence. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as your president.

We owe John Mason, the outgoing Board of Directors, and OLLI members ending their terms of board service a debt of gratitude for their selfless commitment to OLLI's values and mission. Collectively, they navigated OLLI safely through the rocks and shoals of pandemic and post-pandemic uncertainties. This successful voyage was no small feat. Please express your personal gratefulness to these volunteer leaders when you see them.

I count myself as being very fortunate to be collaborating with inspirational and energetic board members to achieve our primary task in increasing our OLLI membership. I



The new sign at the trailhead — the top of the walkway leading up to Wilson Hall from the parking lot — lists OLLI along with other services and attractions in the building.

thank each board member who has stepped up to take on roles of increased responsibility.

Lastly, the strength of OLLI lies in our collective spirit and willingness to give back. I appreciate how David Moore, our UAH liaison, and our professional staff of Clay Williams, Alice Sammon, Justin Clay and Anelisse Westmeyer enable OLLI volunteers to operate and perform at such high levels and support our learning.

Our shared passion for continuous challenge and curiosity will guide my leadership actions and decisions. Together, I believe we can accomplish a membership growth rate, building a social community encompassing both new registrations and renewals, that will result in a total of over 1,000 vibrant members. And I believe the quality of OLLI offerings will bring about even greater impact in giving back to our community and, perhaps, national recognition.

Your continuing participation, involvement and engagement with potential OLLI members, regardless of age, are vital to our shared success. Whether volunteering by facilitating a class, by venturing on a historical tour in a foreign venue, or by submitting your creative works of art for others to enjoy, each volunteer giving of yourself models the best of OLLI. Your contributions inspire me and excite me to what we can accomplish together.

Let's continue demonstrating OLLI's attitude of gratitude and pay it forward! To bring my first missive as your OLLI president to a close: "Thank you."

Phil Graham
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

Events Committee



Events in August, September and October include (from left), top row, Huntsville City Hall, NASA retiree Rick Chappell, the new weather exhibit at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center; and, bottom row, Fourroux Prosthetics, Fantasy Playhouse and the Biergarten.

SCHEDULE OF FALL EVENTS



I hope everyone had a good summer. Now it's already time to look toward the fall semester! Many thanks to all who participated in our summer events. See the recaps below.

Also review the fall event descriptions below and mark your calendars for the events you wish to attend.

Remember that registration for and attendance at OLLI events are increasing, so be sure to register early. We expect several events to reach capacity quickly. If you register and cannot attend, please let me know so that someone on the waiting list can attend in your place.

After you register for an event, you will receive a message confirming your registration. A few days before the event, you will receive a "details" message from me describing when and where to meet for the event, plus any additional pertinent information.

If you think you registered for an event but have not received a confirmation and "details" message, then your registration has not been successful.

Event recaps

Indian Mound Museum tour, April 25 — A museum educator in Florence provided us with a fascinating history of Indian mounds in the region, which were built up to 2,000 years ago. The nearby ceremonial mound was one of several mounds that had been built in the area.

Lucky Duck Scavenger Hunt, June 6 — Our OLLI group searched the downtown Huntsville area to find most of the 15 hidden bronze duckies during this fun event. Afterwards, participants received a special recognition prize from the Visitor Center.

Piper & Leaf Tea Co. tour, June 20 — OLLI members were given a thorough tour of the tea facility at Lacey's Spring, where they produce tea blends using local fruits and herbs as much as possible. Among the types of tea they produce are black and green tea blends, fruit tisanes and herbal infusions. Their products are marketed in 48 of the 50 states, with Louisiana and Hawaii being the exceptions. After touring their production and packaging operations, we were given the opportunity to sample three of their tea blends and also given a free glass of any tea on their menu. (Information submitted by Randy Boyette.)

(continued on the next page)

Events Committee

SCHEDULE OF FALL EVENTS, CONT

Solid waste disposal facility tour, July 8 — Joel Donelon from the city of Huntsville's Green Team provided our group with an overview of the Waste to Energy facility, which converts tons of trash into steam every day for use by Redstone Arsenal. This facility, the only one of its kind in much of the Southeast, extends landfill capacity by up to 50 percent. Afterward, we visited the control room where the conversion process is managed and two crane operators moved the trash from trucks to the incinerator.

Signals Museum of Information Explosion tour, July 11 — The museum founder, the executive director, and a docent led our three groups through the fascinating history of communication and information technology. The vast collection includes old telegraphs, telephones, phonographs, radios, televisions, computers and more, many of which are in working condition.

Sauta Cave National Wildlife Refuge, July 18 — Our group watched thousands of endangered gray bats emerge at dusk from Sauta Cave at Scottsboro. The medium-sized bats prefer to roost in caves near large bodies of water. They feed on flying insects during summer nights.

Coming events

- Friday, Aug. 1 — **Fourroux Prosthetics tour** (Huntsville), 3-4:30 p.m. Have you ever looked at someone with a prosthetic arm or leg and just marveled at the engineering feat that is the prosthetic? Prosthetics have indeed come a long way in the past 10 years. We will have the opportunity to learn about modern-day prosthetics when we tour the Fourroux Prosthetics business. Cost: none. Formal registration closed July 30, but there may still be room. If you want to attend, please phone 256-824-6183.

Registration for these five events opened Aug. 1:

- Friday, Sept. 19 — **How We Know the Weather** (Huntsville), 2-4 p.m. This exhibit at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center features over 30 fun, interactive displays, multiple live feeds, and unique sensory experiences for guests to explore, engage with, and learn about the fascinating world of weather. Explore the captivating history of weather instrumentation. Witness the awe-inspiring power of a tornado. Create your own mesmerizing wind patterns, or learn to interpret radar, satellite imagery and weather forecasts. Uncover the mysteries of lightning, observe the enchanting formation of clouds, and feel the raw energy of nature course through you. Experience the thrill firsthand at the Space Center's newest exhibit, "How We Know the Weather." Cost: none. Attendance limit: 50.
- Friday, Sept. 26 — **Fantasy Playhouse production and tour** (Huntsville), 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit the

Fantasy Playhouse's historic and recently renovated Merrimack Hall to see a one-act production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," followed by a tour of the facility. A Q&A session with the actors and creative team will be included. Cost: \$10. Attendance limit: 25.

- Friday, Oct. 3 — **City Hall tour and Q&A with the mayor** (Huntsville), 2-4 p.m. Join us for a visit to the new City Hall in downtown Huntsville. Our group will learn about the construction of the building, the city departments housed together, and some of the artworks exhibited by local artists throughout the building. If his schedule allows, we will also meet with Mayor Tommy Battle for a Q&A session. Cost: none. Attendance limit: 60.
- Monday, Oct. 6 — **Experiences in space exploration and astronaut training** (Huntsville Public Library downtown), 4:30-6 p.m. In recognition of October being proclaimed Space Exploration Month by the city of Huntsville, Dr. Rick Chappell (retired from NASA and Marshall Space Flight Center) will share his experiences planning space exploration missions and undergoing full training as an alternate payload specialist for the space shuttle Atlantis, STS-45. Throughout its history, America has encouraged exploration of all types across the spectrum of scientific disciplines and engineering accomplishments. This commitment has encouraged young people to consider careers related to exploration. Such a choice can lead to an exciting life related to discovering answers about things that have never been understood before. Cost: none. Attendance limit: 50.
- Thursday, Oct. 9 — **Biergarten under the Saturn V** (Huntsville), 5-7:30 p.m. Bring your family and friends to an evening of good food, live music, and fun under the Saturn V rocket at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. The beneficiary of this evening's charity fundraiser will be OLLI at UAH! Cost: Varies by meal. Attendance limit: none.

Registration for five other fall events will open Sept. 1:

- Friday, Oct. 17 — **National Speleological Society** (Huntsville), 2-4 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 24 — **Ivy Green and Rattlesnake Saloon** (Tuscumbia), 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 7 — **UAH physics lab class** (UAH Shelby Center), 10:30 a.m. to noon
- Friday, Nov. 14 — **Historic Weeden house tour** (Huntsville), 2-3:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 21 — **UAH College of Nursing tour** (UAH campus), 2-4 p.m.

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

Events Committee

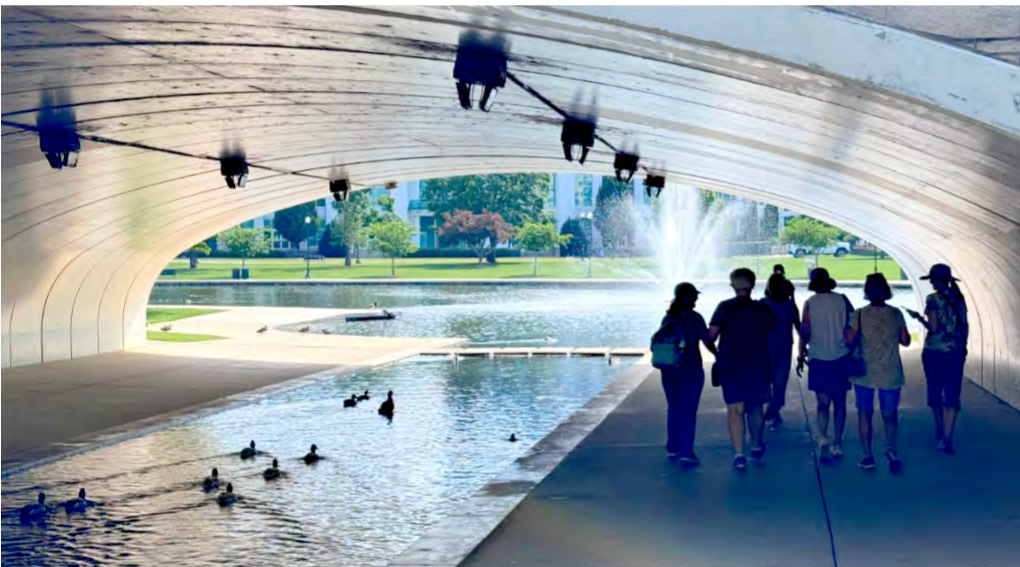
INDIAN MOUND MUSEUM TOUR, APRIL 25



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

LUCKY DUCK SCAVENGER HUNT, JUNE 6



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Anelisse Westmeyer)

Events Committee

TOURING PIPER & LEAF TEA CO., JUNE 20



(Photos by Marsha Langlois)

Events Committee

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY TOUR, JULY 8



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

SIGNALS INFORMATION MUSEUM TOUR, JULY 11



(Photos by Patricia Haag and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

WATCHING BATS FLY FROM SAUTA CAVE, JULY 18



(Photos by Betty Koval, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Curriculum Committee

STEP INTO THE SUN WITH OLLI'S FALL COURSES



The Parable of the Cave (also known as the Allegory of the Cave) is a story by Plato about prisoners chained in a dark cave who can see only shadows on the wall. These shadows are mistaken for reality until one prisoner escapes and experiences the true world outside, including the sun.

Continuing education is the OLLI way to step into the sun! Who wants to live

in darkness?

The Curriculum Committee is made up of two dozen dedicated OLLI members who initiate, screen, approve, and then offer courses for the more than 800 members of OLLI at UAH each semester. Due to their efforts, fall semester beginning on Sept. 15 will provide over 70 enlightening courses.

The fall semester will kick off with an open house on Aug. 8 from 10 to noon in Wilson Hall. The open house offers opportunities to meet instructors, renew fellowship, and sign up for courses.

Plan to attend. Invite a friend who would enjoy our fellowship and grow through the many courses offered. Email a link to the catalog to your friends unable to attend the open house.

Richard Brooks
Vice President for Curriculum
OLLI at UAH Board of Directors



Check out and share OLLI's fall course catalog at tinyurl.com/olli-fall-25. Paper copies are available in Wilson Hall.

Coming Bonuses

FIRST FALL SEMESTER BONUS WILL BE AUG. 29



Well, well, well! I simply cannot believe how quickly this summer has passed. We will soon be back in the classroom and/or on Zoom in learning mode at OLLI for another wonderful term.

Our first bonus will be Friday, Aug. 29, at 11 a.m. in 168 Wilson Hall — the usual time and place for existing OLLI members but new information for new ones.

We will be featuring Dr. Rolf Goebel, former philosophy instructor at UAH, giving us a preview of his course on music, philosophy and literature. I have taken his courses, and it is interesting to see how the three relate.

I hope to see you at the first of our slate of bonuses for the fall term. One of the best things about OLLI is seeing and spending time with OLLI friends.

Betty Koval
Bonus Coordinator



Dr. Rolf Goebel will speak about music, philosophy and literature during a bonus presentation Aug. 29.

(Art by Meta Artificial Intelligence)

News From UAH

FALL OFFERINGS ARE NOW AVAILABLE



The fall season is rapidly approaching, and registration has now opened for the coming semester. We are excited to offer over 70 courses on a variety of topics such as history, literature, science, foreign languages, and health and fitness.

ture, science, foreign languages, and health and fitness.

We feature favorites like Tai Chi, Socrates Cafe, Writing Your Life Story, and Intro to Bollywood but are thrilled to present new courses such as Those Horrible Stuarts, Stars, Pickleball for Beginners, The Play's the Thing, Getting Ready for Alzheimer's and Other Dementias, Let's Talk Banned Books, and many more.

We offer courses in person, online, and as a hybrid of the two. We are convinced there is a course for everyone — in fact, more than one course. Take advantage of our discount when you take four or more courses! Our growing membership means courses fill up quickly, so register today. Classes will start in September.

Mark your calendars for our fall open house, which will be Friday, Aug. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon in Wilson Hall. This is your chance to update your



Open house on Aug. 8 in Wilson Hall will give opportunities to learn about courses, meet instructors, obtain free parking permits, register for classes, join OLLI, and update memberships. These photos are from the August 2024 open house. (Photos by Glen Adams and Steve Stewart)

membership, meet instructors, register for classes, and, of course, acquire the all-important parking permit for the academic year.

Before the fall term officially starts, I do want to point out some special events we have in August.

Learn about future plans for UAH and its campus when university architect Christian Reed presents the UAH long-term master plan. This takes place on Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 10:30 a.m. in the Salmon Library, Room 111. This event is free but requires registration.



And please join us for some fellowship, fun and light competition with "Game On!," occurring on Wednesdays in August (Aug. 13, 20 and 27) at 1:15 p.m. Each day features different games to test your skills and knowledge. Play classics, and learn new games. Please also register online.

A reminder that OLLI offices will be closed for Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 1. We hope everyone had a great summer, and we look forward to seeing everyone again soon.

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager



UAH can help you select a gift for OLLI that perfectly suits your family's circumstances.

Get your complimentary guide:
Leave Your Legacy with One of These Ways to Give.

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

Course Spotlight

FALL IS HERE; REGISTER NOW!

It is time to register for Fall 2025 courses. You can register here: [UAH Registration!](#)



JOURNEYS TO THE END OF THE EARTH

9/15 - 10/6 • M • 10:30 - Noon • 4 sessions • Online • J. Sacken • \$40

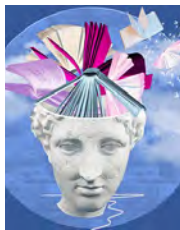
Join photographers Jeannee Sacken and Michael Briselli as they travel to such faraway places as Mongolia for the millennial-old Golden Eagle Festival, safaris in southern Africa, and Southeast Asia. See the eagles soar. Learn of Genghis Khan's continuing impact on Mongol culture. Discover the secrets of how endangered rhinos socialize. Listen to the intriguing saga of "Churning the Ocean of Milk." Hear photographers' experiences in the field and how Jeannee fictionalized them in her novels.



ART: WHEN SPAIN RULED THE WORLD

9/16 - 10/21 • Tu • 1:15 - 2:45 pm • 6 sessions • Live Virtual • D. West • \$40

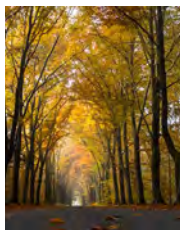
Experience great art that features the highlights of the Royal collection of the Museo del Prado in Madrid. Compare the world's most lustrous collection of Spanish paintings—the finest works of El Greco, Zurbaran, Velázquez, Goya, Sorolla and others. View these masterworks against the greatest of the Prado's extraordinary possessions of Flemish and Dutch masterpieces, confiscated in war or commissioned by aristocratic Spain.



SURVEY OF PHILOSOPHY: ETHICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, AND AESTHETICS

9/17 - 10/22 • W • 8:30 am - 10:00 am • 6 sessions • In Person • G. Young • \$40

Philosophy is the originator of all academic fields. Despite this status, it is often neglected by individuals as too abstract or inconsequential. In this course, we will survey the history of Western philosophy through three of its primary disciplines: ethics (the study of morality), epistemology (the study of knowledge), and aesthetics (the study of beauty and art). Thinkers will range from Greek antiquity to the contemporary period. No prior familiarity with the subject matter is required.



URBAN FORESTRY: MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF URBAN TREES

9/18 - 10/16 • Th • 3:15 - 4:45 pm • 5 sessions • Online • G. Arseniou • \$40

This introductory level course in urban forestry covers the main aspects of urban forest ecology, urban forest management, and urban forest inventories. Learn the details about tree care and maintenance (tree selection, tree planting, risk assessment of hazard trees, tree pruning, urban soils, urban forest health, and much more).

Save 20%

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

People of OLLI

LACEY SIMMONS USES REAL HORSE SENSE TO TEACH FINANCE COURSES FOR OLLI

By Glen Adams

Lacey Simmons has traveled a long road from her childhood in Hernando, Mississippi, to her present home in Killen, Alabama, and a remarkable amount of that journey has been spent on the back of a horse.

Lacey, who has taught financial planning classes at OLLI for 13 years, is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

Lacey grew up on a farm in Hernando where everybody worked: "My dad worked for a logistics company, was a farrier and also had racehorses. My mother worked in logistics, too, and owned her own business. When my father was finished with his racehorses, my mother would train them to run barrels. My sister and I spent almost every weekend traveling to horse events."

Lacey soon became part of the horse business.

"During summers of middle school, I had a summer camp at our farm for kids," said Lacey. "I taught them how to care for horses and about the parts of horses and saddles. For arts and crafts, we painted horseshoes. I saved money to buy ponies and then trained them for resale. When I was 15, I sold a pony to buy my first car."

All through high school, Lacey remained involved with horses. She rode barrel horses and rodeoed almost every weekend. She won many championships during middle and high school and at age 12 became one of the youngest to ever qualify for the International Finals Rodeo. At 16, she was licensed to exercise horses at race-tracks.

She didn't spend all her time with horses. She was in the National Honor Society, in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and on the chess team. She even won a Mississippi state chess championship.

Lacey Simmons and husband Adam have a farm in Killen, where they are involved in the cutting horse industry. Lacey grew up riding horses and caring for them. She has won many rodeo championships and still competes. She has taught financial classes for OLLI and soon will present a bonus about horses.



But Lacey and family did not escape misfortune. Seven horses died in accidents, in a barn fire and from health problems. Lacey herself suffered a serious head injury. But she made it back into the saddle after some recovery time.

When she was a senior, she asked her school board to let her miss classes so she could rodeo professionally. Because she was a straight-A student, they agreed and she spent most of her final semester competing professionally in rodeos.

She went to Tarleton State University, which is part of Texas A&M. It just happened to have the No. 1 rodeo team in the country. Because of her scholastic work and her horse prowess, she was given a full ride, so to speak.

She supplemented her income in college by riding, training and selling horses.

"I would buy a young horse that I could ride for 30 to 60 days and then resell it," said Lacey. "I also worked as a veterinarian assistant, ranch hand, barn manager and had my own business selling barrel horses. I would also broker hay sales."

Lacey graduated with a finance degree with a minor in animal industries.

After graduation, Lacey moved to Athens, Alabama, with the intention of starting a horse business. The terrible tornadoes of 2011 destroyed that dream. So she turned to finance and was accepted into the Edward Jones training program.

(continued on the next page)

People of OLLI

LACEY SIMMONS USES REAL HORSE SENSE, CONT

"Becoming a financial adviser not only changed my career path, but it changed my life drastically," said Lacey. "Edward Jones' business plan then was to knock on doors in the neighborhood where you planned to open an office. I spent a solid year knocking on doors almost every day. It seems crazy now, but the process worked. I was able to build a foundation for a fantastic business."

In 2013 she hired her administrative assistant Samantha Lemley, who is still with her today.

In 2019 they both transferred to Wells Fargo Advisors. Her co-workers there were shocked that Lacey had never married. They decided to fix that. And they did!

"Long story short, I went on a blind date with an amazing man who became my husband in November 2020," said Lacey. "He was a breath of fresh air

that I didn't even know I needed. We prayed together, laughed together, grew together and ultimately chose each other."

Adam owns a construction company in Decatur. After they married, Lacey moved to their farm in Killen, where they have become involved in the cutting horse industry. Lacey still competes in horse events.

Now about Lacey and OLLI. An OLLI member came to Lacey's office in 2012 and said they needed someone to teach finance classes. Since then she has taught classes in investment strategy, understanding Medicare and Social Security, tax-efficient strategies in retirement, and (this semester) "Understanding Financial Planning in Retirement."

"I have come to love OLLI and everything it stands for," said Lacey. "Over

the years, I've developed such meaningful relationships with so many members ... I'm a huge advocate for OLLI.

"I am so fortunate to be able to have a career where I am truly fulfilled in helping families navigate their financial plans while also having the ability to maintain a great work/life balance. I feel like being a financial adviser is my calling in life. I feel like I was given a gift to resonate and educate others on investment matters.

"Through deeper conversations, it helps me understand what's important to people so that I can best provide advice and guidance on creating the best financial plan for them."

Lacey will give a bonus class this fall on her experiences in the horse industry.

Thanks, Lacey, for all you do for OLLI.

OLLI BOARD LEADERS



Phil Graham (second from left) succeeded John Mason (left) in the spring as president of the OLLI at UAH Board of Directors. John had served two one-year terms. Nancy Darnall is vice president for administration and finance; Bob Darnall is treasurer. Not pictured are Richard Brooks, vice president for curriculum, and Randy Boyette, secretary. The board elects its officers. (Photo by Mitzi Summers)

People of OLLI

OLLI AT UAH BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2025-26



Phil Graham
President



Nancy Darnall
VP, admin. & finance



Richard Brooks
VP, curriculum



Randy Boyette
Secretary



Bob Darnall
Treasurer



John Mason
Past president



David Moore
UAH representative



Lisa Brunegraff



Bob Carroll



Keith Cromartie



Danye Drake



Peter Finzel



Steve Jones



Renate Kump



Marsha Langlois



Michelle Laverty



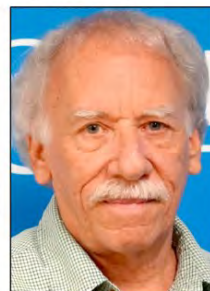
David Sayre



Steve Stewart



Ed Stone



Chris Stuhlinger



Mitzi Summers



Silvia Summers



Marilynn Szecholda

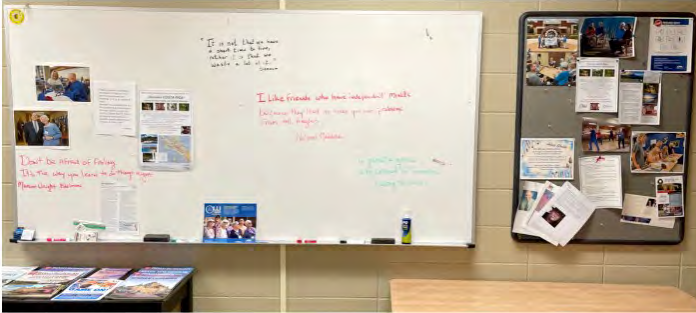


Mark Tenhundfeld



Alison Toney

Member Services Committee



The Member Services Committee staffs the volunteer office (151 Wilson Hall) and maintains bulletin boards, among other functions. Here, Jill Stewart sits at the desk where you could sit if you volunteer. The top two bulletin boards are in the lounge (152D Wilson Hall), and the third one is in the hallway opposite the volunteer office.



NEW TERM, NEW BEGINNINGS



A new academic year is about to begin, and as the title implies, along with it is coming a new beginning for your Member Services Committee. I think it bodes well for the life of the organization.

First, let me say goodbye to the two people who have for so long overseen all the services we provide our members: Irene Garoppo and Leah Black, both of whom are moving on to new adventures in their lives.

They both deserve our utmost thanks for all they've done along with our well wishes for their new endeavors. Thank you, ladies!

Second, the committee will be changing its function ever so slightly as leadership continues to redefine and redirect our resources to ensure they provide the best benefit for all of us.

To keep in step, Member Services will also make some modifications in its operations. Not to worry, though, because for the most part, those changes will be invisible.

The one big change is that the part of our charter that used to be responsible for coffee and snacks in the lounge will transfer over to Social Committee so that the overall logistics of making the lounge a first-class social hangout can be better managed. In addition to the remaining Member Services functions, we will also subsume the functions of the OLLI volunteer office.

Office volunteers are needed! A sign-up sheet will be available soon. We will still have an annual photo contest (soliciting potential topics now!); still recognize our Volunteer of the Year; still have a small grants program; still update and monitor the bulletin boards; and still be ever present to answer your questions.

In short, we'll be here to provide the services you've come to expect in making your OLLI experience ever more enjoyable.

And finally, I'll be the new chair for the committee, trying, hopefully with some success, to fill the huge shoes previously occupied by my predecessors. I'll need your help to do that.

I'm seeking a few volunteers to serve. It won't impose much on your time — a few emails or maybe a brief Zoom call now and then — but it will provide a sounding board and a feedback loop of ideas, and ideas are always the lifeblood of a healthy organization.

I'll be contacting some of you in the coming days who helped Irene and Leah previously to ask for your assistance. But I am also asking for those of you who may not have served the organization before, but enjoy what it provides and want to ensure its continued success, to wade in and test the waters. Because it's you, the members, who make the organization feel like family. And families working together can achieve anything.

John Mason
Member Services Committee Chair

Volunteer of the Year

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: CHRIS STUHLINGER



This year's Volunteer of the Year is Chris Stuhlinger.

Chris is a very deserving, hard-working person who has been a part of OLLI since early 2020. Even though he's a short-timer, Chris jumped in enthusiastically and has been the chair of the Events Committee and an active Board of Directors member since 2021.

Chris has been very active in getting tours, visits and other events arranged for OLLI members — almost 100 events since early 2022, after the COVID pandemic eased. Seems like there's something every week, which is a slight exaggeration, but we have events scheduled most months. The greatest part of the schedule is that most of the time the event is full and wait-listed. I'm sure we'll be seeing various opportunities for outside tours, so watch the weekly *eNews* for events.

Events are diverse. Past events include things like bird-watching, tours of various places, hands-on DNA collection at HudsonAlpha, attendance at UAH sporting events, and many others. In fact, my first lacrosse exposure was an OLLI event. One of the favorite and most-attended events is the Biergarten at the Space and Rocket Center. This year it will be Oct. 9.

Chris' monthly column in this *Insider* details several recent and coming events.

He also serves on the Public Relations, Travel, Administration & Finance, and Member Services committees. He led OLLI tours to Alaska and Iceland. Later this month, he will lead a trip to Costa Rica, and he is organizing one to South Africa in 2026. He has co-led the Hiking



Irene Garoppo speaks after presenting the 2025 Volunteer of the Year award to Chris Stuhlinger during OLLI's annual meeting May 6 at Burritt on the Mountain. (Photo by Steve Stewart)

& Biking Member Interest Group with Steve Jones since early 2024. Chris has taught at least 11 OLLI courses.

So, you see, Chris continues to work very hard to bring us a diverse list of things to do.

If you see Chris in the hallways or have access to his email, please take a few minutes to congratulate him.

And by all means, continue to sign up for the extraordinary events. Remember, sign up early because they are frequently wait-listed. In fact, on Page 4 of the March 2025 *Insider*, Chris listed several hints to help avoid being wait-listed. (You can find back issues of *The Insider* at tinyurl.com/olli-insider.)

Irene Garoppo
Former Chair, Volunteer Support Committee

Social Committee

CHEESE, CRACKERS, FRUIT, DESSERT AT OPEN HOUSE



OLLI open house on Aug. 8 is fast approaching. I'm looking forward to selecting the classes I want to take and meeting our instructors.

Be sure to stop by the lounge (152D Wilson Hall) and enjoy the Social Committee's free snack offerings. We'll have cheese and cracker plates and fruit plates. Finish up with delicious cookies and desserts.



Free food is available in the OLLI lounge during open house. And there are usually plenty of people to chat with.

(File photo by Steve Stewart)

There is plenty for all, and we hope to see you there.

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair

Travel Committee



South Africa offers a rich experience in nature and wildlife as well as unique culture and history. You can see an elephant herd and a statue of Nelson Mandela, a human rights activist who became president. OLLI's trip there will take place Aug. 21-Sept. 3, 2026.

ON THE MOVE — IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD



We are an on-the-move group of people.

As we announced in May, Chris Stuhlinger has put together another awesome trip. This time it is to South Africa on Aug. 21-Sept. 3, 2026. Please see the explanation below.

We continue to be spoiled to have Chris take the lead on so many outstanding travel opportunities.

Where they just went

During the summer break, we just completed the following two trips and got great reviews by the participants. Some of their pictures and comments are on the *Insider* pages that follow this column.

- **Signature City Pittsburgh** — May 25-30
- **Two Worlds of Peru: The Inca Highlands & the Amazon** — June 13-27

Coming adventure for 2025 travel

- **Discover Costa Rica** — Aug. 30-Sept. 7. Our travelers will 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. Chris Stuhlinger is the point of contact. If you want to go but haven't signed up, he may be able to get you in. See tinyurl.com/olli-costa-rica25.

For 2026

- Steve Goodman is leading a wonderful **cruise along the Dalmatian coast** — April 24-May 11, 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. Contact Steve Goodman for details, or visit tinyurl.com/olli-dalmatia-greece2026.

- **Explore South Africa** — Aug. 21-Sept. 3, 2026. Join us for another exciting Nanda Journeys adventure as our OLLI travelers learn about the local history, culture and wildlife conservation efforts in and near Johannesburg, George and Cape Town. Visit Soweto, the Cradle of Humankind, Cradle Nature Preserve, Pilanesberg National Park, the Garden Route, Table Mountain and more. Mingle with the locals and participate in several safaris. The cost per person is \$4,699 (double occupancy, land only). For a detailed itinerary and registration information, contact Chris Stuhlinger. Soon you should be able to find a link to the details at tinyurl.com/olli-travel.
- **The Best of New Mexico: Santa Fe, Taos and Albuquerque** — Nov. 9-16, 2026. Explore the best that New Mexico has to offer: the cosmopolitan heart of Albuquerque, the state's largest city; the Old World charm of Santa Fe; and the frontier spirit of Taos. From history and culture to cuisine and the arts, compare and contrast these unique cities and see how they evolved into the jewels they are today. To express an interest or request information, contact Jane McBride or go to tinyurl.com/olli-nm-2026.

And now we are continuing to look at new and different travel opportunities. During OLLI's open house on Aug. 8, we will be soliciting more destinations (both near and far) for travel in 2027 and 2028. (Yes, these plans are needed this far ahead.)

Contact David Sayre, other members of the OLLI Travel Committee, or coordinators for the various trips at olli.info@uah.edu.

All who wander are not lost!

David Sayre
Travel Committee Chair

Travel Committee

OLLI TRAVELERS LEARN ABOUT PITTSBURGH'S HISTORY, PHILANTHROPY, ART AND CULTURE

By Michelle Laverty

Twenty-one OLLI-ers toured Pittsburgh in May, and Jane McBride declared it the “most educational” trip she had participated in. All in the room who heard this declaration spontaneously agreed. Our expert tour guide was similarly declared to be better than Mark Twain. Oh, the things we learned on this trip!

(“OLLI-ers” is a hybrid word combining the Southern “y’all” and “Yinzers” — Pittsburgh residents who sometimes use “yinz” as a synonym for “y’all.”)

I asked folks for their observations. Specifically, did Pittsburgh live up to the hype (the OLLI editors gave me lots of latitude in the length and number of articles published advertising this trip)? The consensus was that the trip did live up to all my hype (thank goodness!) and that the folks were generally glad they came on the trip. Upon returning, I was asked how the trip went.

“We learned a lot and had fun together,” I said. “Everyone got along really well.”

The worst drama or hardship we had to overcome was that one of two hotel elevators was broken on a holiday weekend (Memorial Day) and that the lobby was not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. But everyone helped each other, and no one was endangered or left behind. The bar didn’t open until 5 p.m., but the little store behind the desk would sell you a split of fine Prosecco at a reasonable price.

One of the points we heard about at both the Heinz History Center and the Rivers of Steel tour was how incredibly dangerous steel mill work was. During one of the talks, we heard that fathers and uncles didn’t want the next generation of male family members to work in the mill. It was brutal work.

But once you got a union job, you were making enough to start a family in a brick house. Even as late as the 1960s, you had to be sponsored by a



OLLI travelers saw Pittsburgh’s historic steel industry and its many modern attractions, including the Randyland art museum. See more photos on the following pages.

(Photos from Larry and Debbie West [left] and Michelle Laverty)

family member to be invited into the steel workers union.

There was also overwhelming pride in the products that you and your team at your mill manufactured: “I helped make the steel that’s in the Brooklyn Bridge” or “I helped roll out the rails of the transcontinental railroad” or “I probably worked on the steel in that jeep in the war newsreel.”

Yup, Yinzers, we at United States Steel manufactured what made this country great! It gave a man great pride to be able to contribute to the church windows and to be able to beam with pride at how beautiful his daughter and wife looked in their new fine department store dresses at the daughter’s first Holy Communion.

Another thing about the men of that generation whom we learned about was how generously they gave their wealth to the community. Carnegie libraries are legendary. Not as legendary are the contributions of Henry Clay Frick and A.W. Mellon.

H.J. Heinz provided day care for his employees and their children, and currently the John Heinz Child Development Center has open enrollment and provides \$100 credit to each child.

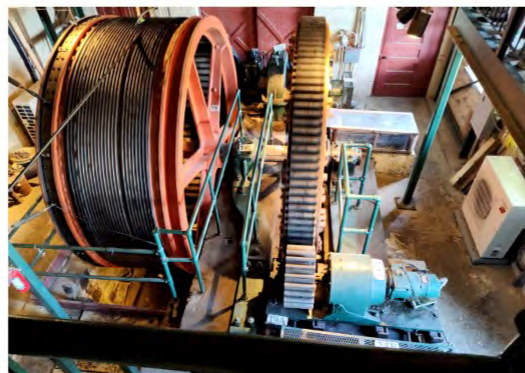
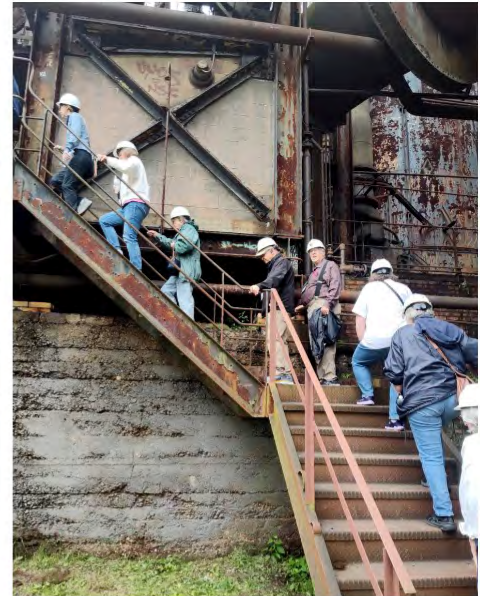
I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that the hard work of the steel workers in brutally inhuman conditions provided the wealth for all this astonishing philanthropy that we OLLI-ers were able to benefit from by viewing and touring. We saw remarkable architecture (Phipps Conservatory, Cathedral of Learning, National Aviary, Carnegie Hall of Architecture). We heard lectures by extraordinarily competent docents at various museums and facilities.

Steve Goodman got us remarkable seats on the shoreline for a most grand brunch at the Grand Concourse of the opulently restored Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad station. Another highlight was unplanned side trips to view Tiffany church windows — oh, my! This dovetailed perfectly with an OLLI docent-led tour of a Tiffany exhibition at the Huntsville Museum of Art.

Randyland, an art museum, provided whimsical evidence that simple acts and wise words can indeed transform the worst of neighborhoods. A Randyland sign reminded us that brains are overrated and unreliable, break often, and must be driven because they are not automatic.

Travel Committee

PITTSBURGH: STEEL HISTORY AND TIFFANY GLASS



(Travelers who contributed photos for these two pages include Bill Confer, Jim Chamberlain, Michelle Laverty, Alison Toney, Jane McBride, Debbie West and Larry West.)

Travel Committee

PITTSBURGH: CONSERVATORY, MUSEUMS, DINING



Travel Committee



A monkey along the Amazon River; Sue Farbman and Claudia Pols feeding llamas at a sanctuary; 10 travelers sample the cuy, served with potatoes and sauce. (See more Peru photos on the following pages.)

2-WEEK TOUR OF PERU: CHILDREN, BUTTERFLIES, GARDENS, HANDICRAFTS, FOOD ADVENTURES

By Nancy Darnall

From June 13 till June 26, seven OLLI at UAH members participated in a Road Scholar trip to explore the Peruvian Amazon River and the Peruvian highlands.

Claudia and Marty Pols, Sue Farbman, Barbara Johnson, Sam Campbell, and Nancy and Bob Darnall joined a friend of Barbara from New York City to travel with 12 others on this "Let's Go"-rated RS journey.

For future reference, the "Let's Go" category indicates more physical activity than some other offerings from the company. I can verify that this was at times challenging. Peru, even at sea-level Lima, is full of ramps, stairs and step-overs to enter buildings. Once we made it to the Andes, these natural and man-made structures to bridge vertical distances combined with the high-altitude effects on our breathing and endurance. No one in our larger group developed any significant issues with the altitude. Some of us took medication, but all managed to move about with that complication.

About our travel group: In the true OLLI spirit, within a matter of days, we were one cohesive group. Our fellow travelers from all over combined as excellent travel companions: friendly, timely, and willing to share over-the-counter medications, stories, foods, and whatever else occurred over our two-week tour.

We had three domestic flights on Latam Airways and a tour of Nauta in a local tuk-tuk, plus the expected coach and water excursions. All went as well as a traveler could expect.

Peru was, as expected, breathtaking. Not just the altitude, but also the views, history, and flora and fauna. We ate cuy (look it up), alpaca, cherimoya, passion fruit, home-

made breads, strawberries, watermelon, and more varieties of potato than I can name.

We saw a harpy eagle that had our naturalist so excited that he will forever be a highlight of my trip.

Lima was a gorgeous, historic and modern city full of museums, a gorgeous Pacific coast, lush gardens and interesting architecture. The Larco Museum and Huaca Pucllana showed how deeply history and culture affect the city.

The villagers along the Amazon, a ride in a dugout canoe, a hike into the rainforest, full-out rain on our first skiff adventure, and complete lack of mosquito bites for each of us were also highlights of the lowlands.

We visited a village that raises butterflies as a commercial enterprise and met students from the primary/elementary school there. The leader of the village gave us a detailed explanation of the life cycle of the butterfly with physical examples of each phase. The schoolchildren moved their chairs so we could sit and visit. We shared the song "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and learned about the education system along the Amazon and in the more remote, less-populated areas of Peru.

Many villages have small schools for their local children, who may number from 10 to 20 or more. High schools are consolidated. This means the children who live away from the school may travel by dugout canoe or rarely a motorized skiff daily, or they may board in the village of the high school. Both of these options are expensive in terms of time, cost, and perhaps loss of labor to the village. Often, students do not go to high school; this is much more likely for the girls. This same system occurs in the highlands; see below.

(continued on the next page)

Travel Committee

2-WEEK TOUR OF PERU, CONT

High in the Andes, thanks to medication, we were able to endure the altitude without the sickness but still with significant reductions in lung capacity. By the last day, my feet were tingling intermittently. Among the sites were Machu Picchu, the Sacred Valley, a girls dormitory (formerly partially funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development) that allows girls to attend high school from as far as 11 hours away through a comprehensive housing and living plan, a farmers market, and a small village where we played homemade tetherball, played hopscotch, and tried rolling slender tires with a forked stick.

We also visited an animal sanctuary with llamas, huancos, alpacas, and a pair of Andean condors. They also featured a gift shop with certified knit products and art.

Machu Picchu was a vast complex. We self-selected into three groups for our tour: the cautious, the moderates and the overachievers. I chose this terminology, as I do not remember the tactful terms our trip leader assigned each group.

Each group consisted of six or seven individuals. The network of paths to view the site lends itself to dozens of places to observe this incredible series of buildings and terraces left by the Incan Empire. Characterized as a citadel and a private sanctuary for the elite, the “Lost City of the Incas” dates to the 15th century, not that old in terms of antiquity.

For the Darnalls, this was a significant check on the bucket list. And it did not disappoint: The grandeur, the scale, and

the technology and artistry in the structures cause a reconsideration of the advancement of human knowledge and innovation before our modern times.

All along the way, we had an option to purchase handicrafts made by locals. Never any pressure to buy. I say this because that is not always the case. The range of carvings, woven items, and naturally sourced materials was mind-boggling. Many items were quite intricate, yet inexpensive. The marketplaces in the villages limited the number of items offered for sale — no overwhelming displays of mass-produced goods. Our trip leader often reminded us that the souvenir shops in the larger towns might well stock “Peru” merchandise sourced from other countries.

In the market in Nauta, we were given 10 Peruvian soles (about US\$2.50) and an item to find and purchase. Once our searches were complete, we gathered to donate our purchases to locals. Bob and I had soles left; when we found out the plan, we went to the churro/doughnut booth and spent the rest for the project. We could not believe how many pastries 7.50 soles bought. While we were apprehensive as to the local response (didn’t want to appear as the privileged people we are), we were cheered by how the people gathered, smiled, and lit up with extras for their children and grandchildren.

Road Scholar and our tour leader, Lucho, revealed to us life and history in Peruvian highlands and the Amazon within a compact two-week window.

Member Interest Groups



The Dine Out Member Interest Group chose the Hound and Harvest bistro on Whitesburg Drive as its place to eat on April 24. The restaurant was popular, but it shut down in July after about two years in business. “We have made the tough decision to close because of the physical building and parking lot were not sizable enough to sustain or scale our business model,” owner Bobby Jordan told AL.com. (Photo from Sandra Dabrowski)

Travel Committee

PERU: OLLI MEMBERS EXPLORE AMAZON REGION



(Photos on these two pages were contributed by trip participants, including Sam Campbell, Bob Darnall, Nancy Darnall, Sue Farbman and Barbara Johnson.)

Travel Committee

PERU: HISTORY, CULTURE, FOOD AND ANIMALS



Member Interest Groups



Coming locations for walking, hiking and biking: top row (from left), Monte Sano State Park, Madison County Nature Trail on Green Mountain, Blevins Gap Nature Preserve; bottom row, Indian Creek Greenway, Elgie's Walk Greenway and Goldsmith Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary.

HIKING AND BIKING MIG, SUMMER AND FALL

We have one more summer semester activity scheduled for early August (see description below).

Several MIG activities are planned for this fall (see the list below). We're trying to offer activities on both Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate members' schedules.

If you want to join the Hiking & Biking MIG to receive details about upcoming activities, sign up at the link below and agree to the blanket release/waiver form. You must have a valid OLLI membership.

Join the MIG: forms.gle/6M5BoaWX9Z4TLugE9

Recent activities

Hays Nature Preserve, June 1 — Our nature walkers enjoyed an easy stroll along the Flint River and the Tupelo Swamp Trail. Recent rains had supplied plenty of water to fill the two tupelo swamps.

Richard Martin Trail, July 13 — Bikers pedaled the northern end of the trail to the Tennessee state line, while the rest of our group walked to the site of the Civil War's Battle of Sulphur Creek Trestle and learned about the vegetation along the way.

Coming MIG activity

- Sunday, Aug. 3 — **Madison County Nature Trail on Green Mountain** (nature walk), 1-3 p.m. Look for waterfowl on the lake, discover the covered bridge and old cabin, and explore the woods during this 1.5-mile easy walk along a mostly flat, mostly shaded crushed gravel trail.

Fall MIG activities

- Sunday, Sept. 28 — **Monte Sano State Park** (nature hike), 1:30-3:30 p.m. Hike the Wells Memorial Trail and see the towering hardwood trees growing in this cove forest. Trail length is 1.75 to 2 miles, with an elevation change of about 250 feet.
- Saturday, Oct. 11 — **Goldsmith Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary** (nature walk), 10 a.m.-noon. Enjoy a leisurely walk through this 375-acre city-owned wildlife sanctuary near the Flint River and discover these unique wild habitats situated among the many nearby subdivisions. The level trail will lead us through bottomland hardwood woodlands and retired agricultural fields, by small ponds and swamps, and along the Flint River's riparian area.

(continued on the next page)

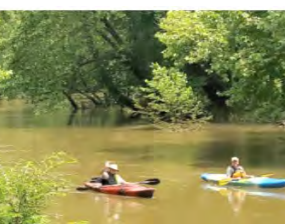
Member Interest Groups

HIKING AND BIKING MIG, SUMMER AND FALL, CONT

- Sunday, Oct. 26 — **Blevins Gap Nature Preserve** (hike), 1:30-3:30 p.m. Hike the 2-mile (each way) Bill and Marion Certain Trail to scenic overlooks along the ridge top. The first half-mile is uphill (a few hundred feet elevation change); the rest of the trail is easy and flat along the ridge top.
- Saturday, Nov. 8 — **Indian Creek Greenway** (bike ride), 10 a.m.-noon. Enjoy an easy 6-mile round-trip bike ride along Indian Creek with a short side link to Creekwood Park (restroom facilities).
- Sunday, Nov. 16 — **Elgie's Walk Greenway** (nature walk), 1:30-3:30 p.m. Join us for a leisurely walk on this greenway between Bell Mountain Park and Grissom High School. The 2-mile paved walking trail leads through fields and woods and has an optional loop around a lake. This greenway will become part of the 70-mile Singing River Trail between Huntsville and Decatur.

See you on the trail!

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



HAYS NATURE PRESERVE, JUNE 1



RICHARD MARTIN TRAIL, JULY 13



(Photos by Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger)

Member Interest Groups

CHOOSE THE BEST PAPER FOR YOUR ART

Are you aggravated trying to select paper: types, brands, textures, weights? Are you confused about what paper you should use with your medium? Four basic questions you should answer are:

1. What medium are you using?
2. Do you need a surface textured or smooth?
3. Do you need paper absorbency to be porous or impermeable?
4. What weight of paper do you need (heavy or light)?

Bristol paper is intended for technical drawing, fine line, detail illustration. The weight is heavy and thick (i.e., light watercolor washes won't warp, and the paper can withstand repeated erasures). Bristol has two surfaces: One is "smooth-plate," which is good for pen and ink, colored pencil and markers (ideal for fine lines and detailed drawings); the other is "toothed-texture," which is good for graphite, charcoal and pastels.

Mixed media paper is intended for both wet medium (watercolors, acrylics and gouache) and dry medium (graphite, colored pencil and markers). Mixed media paper is ideal for artists combining different methods. The weight is heavier, and the paper is thicker than sketch or drawing paper. Mixed media surface has the quality of watercolor paper (sizing keeps pigment from bleeding) and the quality of drawing paper (smooth texture for detail work).

Drawing paper is intended for graphite, markers, pen and ink, and detailed work that needs to be preserved (acid free — archival). The quality is higher than sketching paper because the weight is heavy. **Sketchbook paper** is intended for practicing, experimenting and quick studies because the surface is smooth. The weight is light, but it's more affordable. **Newsprint paper** is intended for "refrigerator art" — children's coloring, drawing and craft projects. The paper is smooth, inexpensive and low quality because it is made from wood pulp (i.e., nonarchival and not acid free — it will yellow over time,



Left: Alluvial Image by Kalidas Karmaker, photographed by Faizul Latif Chowdhury (mixed media, Creative Commons, tinyurl.com/alluvial-image). **Right:** Wailuku Falls, Hilo, by Jules Tavernier (pastel drawing).



Left: Arum lilies in the stream by Annie Pressland (watercolor). **Right:** Portrait by Lucas van Leyden (pen and ink).

and it's not intended to last). **Recycled paper** is a blend of new and recycled fibers (the recycling process shortens the fibers and weakens the final product). The paper is lower quality and not the best artwork choice for even "environmental green" artists.

Pastel paper is intended for soft and hard pastels, oil, chalk or wax pastels (and charcoal). Most are acid-free and archival. Pastels must have a textured surface (pebbled, sanded, velour). The number of pastel layers depends upon the texture (depth of the tooth). The paper can also be toned or untoned (blue, gray, tab — any color). The best brands are UArt for sanded, Hahnemühle for velour, and Canson Mi-Teintes, which has one side with a honeycomb surface and the reverse side with a fine grain.

Charcoal paper is intended for natural vine or pencil charcoals, pastels and graphite. The weight is heavier, 64 pounds. The surface has a "textured tooth" to grip powdery charcoal. If you want the best, it's Strathmore's 500 Series (100% cotton fiber, acid-free, laid pattern for precise shading).

Rice, Xuan and mulberry papers are intended for detailed, delicate painting and brushwork such as sumi ink painting and calligraphy. These papers are very thin, light and usually semi-opaque with visible fiber texture. The term "rice paper" is a misnomer, as the paper is made from the pith of the Tetrapanax papyrifer tree found in China, Japan and Korea. Mulberry paper

(continued on the next page)

Member Interest Groups

CHOOSE THE BEST PAPER FOR YOUR ART, CONT

is stronger and is made from different types of mulberry trees, which produce different papers (Gampi, Mitsumata and Kozo). Xuan paper is traditionally made from the bark of the *Pteroceltis tatarinowii* tree from China. **Lokta** (aka **Nepali kagaj**) paper is intended for gel pen fluid inks, brush-tipped markers, gouache, watercolors and even print-making. Lokta is handmade, from the bark of the *Daphne Panachea* shrub, native to Nepal. The paper is heavy and strong with an archival surface resistant to humidity and insects — it can last as long as 500 years.

Tracing, vellum and parchment papers share translucence, but differ in their composition and intended uses. **Tracing paper** is intended for transferring images, drafting, design work and overlays. The weight is light, and the surface is a smooth, translucent matte (the milky white appearance is because of wood pulp or cotton fibers — treated with chemicals). **Vellum paper** is intended to protect artwork or to be printed with decorative

elements — it's a modern paper. The surface is essentially the same as tracing paper — semitranslucent, nonporous and smooth but more durable.

Parchment paper is intended for formal documents, certificates, diplomas and historical records. The weight is heavy and the surface durable. It can withstand long-term preservation. Parchment is a historic paper, originally made from thin animal skin (lamb, sheep, calf) used in medieval manuscripts and books.

Watercolor paper is intended for “wet mediums” — watercolor, acrylics and gouache. The surface is thick and heavy (it does not allow for fine details) and has two weights: 90-pound and 140-pound (best overall). There are two surfaces: (1) cold press, which is the most common and has a textured, loosely compressed surface to allow watercolors to deeply penetrate, resulting in an even tone; and (2) hot press, which has a smooth, tightly compressed surface to allow watercolors to dry fast, with patchy, uneven results.

There are also two basic materials: (1) cellulose, a wood pulp mix that is cheaper but has a coarse and rough surface, better for beginners; and (2) cotton, usually a pure rag that is expensive but has a fine, smooth surface and can handle a lot of water for an even finish.

If you would like to know more about selecting paper, please join the Artist Studio Member Interest Group on Friday, Aug. 1, at 2 p.m. in 152 Wilson Hall. Jean Krieger will be giving a PowerPoint on the different types of paper plus a demonstration show-and-tell. There is a lot to know about selecting paper, including the best brand manufacturers, and even more important details for selecting the best paper for your medium. Don't let your detailed ink portrait drawings become an abstract monster because you used watercolor paper!

Jean Krieger
*Leader, Artist Studio
Member Interest Group*

Public Relations Committee

SHOW YOUR OLLI PRIDE

Those of us who are fans of sports teams often show our support by sporting branded gear and accessories.

Are you looking for items to show that you are part of the OLLI at UAH team? Welcome to the grand opening of an online store just for OLLI members where you can find a variety of merchandise, clothing and other accessories to identify you as an OLLI lifelong learner.

We have recently partnered with Printify to make custom-branded items — like T-shirts (both short- and long-sleeved), polo shirts, jackets, travel mugs, notebooks, hats and more — on a made-to-order basis for our members. Just click tinyurl.com/olli-store or the link on the OLLI website, and start shopping.

This current batch of merchandise was selected for both appeal and affordability. An extra bonus is that OLLI at UAH will get a percentage of each purchase, which will go toward our other activities and needs. We are looking at items to add in the future, and we welcome suggestions!



These are two of more than a dozen items for sale in the OLLI Merch Store, available now at the direct link in this article or through the OLLI website at uah.edu/olli.

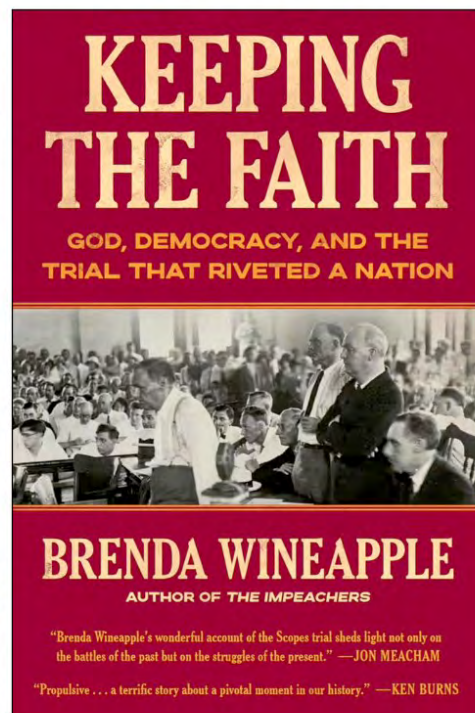
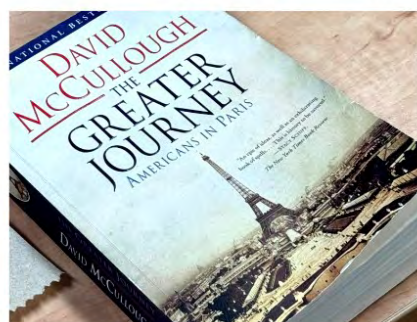
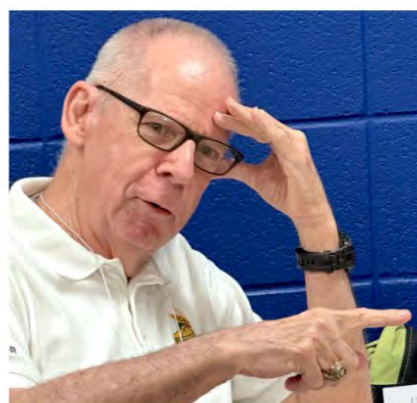
OLLI members have always been our best ambassadors in the community. Now, when you are sporting an OLLI T-shirt or carrying an OLLI travel mug, it may be a conversation starter with a potential member. Show your pride!

Jill Stewart
For the OLLI Public Relations Committee

Member Interest Groups

EVOLUTION BOOK IS MIG'S NEXT SELECTION

The OLLI Reads Member Interest Group discussed "Educated" by Tara Westover on May 7 and David McCullough's "The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris" on July 15. The next meeting will be Sept. 10 at noon in 152 Wilson Hall, and the book is about the Scopes monkey trial 100 years ago in Dayton, Tennessee, which fueled debate about evolution and education. The title is "Keeping the Faith: God, Democracy, and the Trial that Riveted a Nation" by Brenda Wineapple. OLLI members are invited to participate.



Huntsville Then and Now

STARTING A FIRE ISN'T ROCKET SCIENCE (IS IT?)



By Lee Roop

If you were a Huntsville kid in a camping and hiking club in the 1960s, like me, you probably experienced some quirky leaders. I mean no disrespect because any man willing to take 20 boys on a camping trip so his son can have that experience is a giant in my eyes.

In those days (and maybe still today), groups would often do at least some of what interested their leaders. Fair enough, in my opinion. For example, I have hiked many Civil War battlefields in the South because my leader at the time was fascinated by the war.

For that leader, we walked from battlefield statue to statue answering questions about “what happened here.” That qualified us for the Shiloh medal, for example, which was interesting, but perhaps not as helpful as cooking or first aid. Then again, I remember Shiloh better than the secrets of cooking in foil. And we did master foil when qualifying for a cooking award.

One of my strongest memories is a campout on a mountain in northwest Huntsville just outside the city limits. It was coincidentally not far from my home, and on that night it was cold.

We desperately needed a fire, and traditional starting methods weren't working. So our leader — not the same one as the battlefield hiker — produced a small square of gray, rubbery material and placed it among the sticks and twigs.

A simple match started that square like a New Year's Eve sparkler, and it burned hotter and brighter than anything we'd ever seen. We had our fire in minutes, and we survived.

My memory is that we learned (or believed we learned) that fiber square was from rocket fuel research at nearby Redstone Arsenal. If that isn't true, I don't want to know. I think it is true, and it is certainly possible.

I have no evidence beyond a boy's imagination, but something not wooden started a wood fire that cold night. And now, you can buy fire-starting squares by the dozens. I have some in my grill drawer.



Sometimes a campfire won't start in the usual way, but adult leaders have ideas and resources.
(Art by Meta Artificial Intelligence)

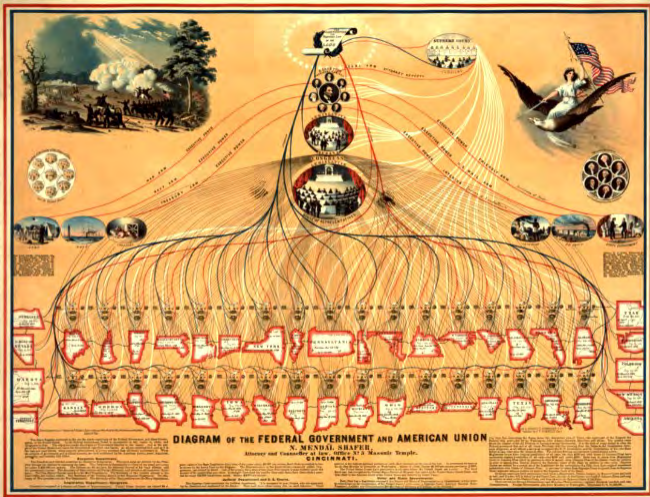
That wasn't the end of the outing's surprises. The following evening, I was riding in the back seat of my parents' car as we passed the mountain on a distant road. It was on fire. The mountain, not the road. Seriously on fire. It looked to me to be very near to where we camped the night before.

I would have sworn then and swear now that we covered that fire bed with dirt and rocks like no fire bed in history. We were campers. We are still. Campers led by the smartest men in America — men who would later send other men to the moon and bring them home. We did not leave a fire hazard on that mountain.

Or did we? It's hard to dispute a burning mountain.

So hard, in fact, that I remember these events today and have made a minor hobby of suggesting (to myself) potential explanations. Current leading explanation: The Russians did it — trying to get hold of Huntsville's secret space knowledge. It's either that or sticking with “Fire? What fire?”

An Insider's Look at History



At left, attorney N. Mendel Shafer's diagram of the federal government, published about 1862.
At right, George Washington at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, painted with oil on canvas in 1856 by Junius Brutus Stearns. (Images from Wikimedia Commons)

IS THE FOUNDERS' PRESCIENCE STILL VIABLE?

By John Mason



When the Founding Fathers gathered in Philadelphia between May 25 and Sept. 17, 1787, they were planning to institute a new form of national government never before seen by humankind. It was a bold and innovative step that required bold and innovative men to envision, and would require the same characteristics of the governed if it were to be maintained.

When Elizabeth Willing Powel, the wife of Philadelphia's mayor, asked Benjamin Franklin what kind of government the delegates had created, he replied, "A republic, if you can keep it." This response is key because it highlighted the idea that while they had established a new system of government, its survival depended on the active participation and responsibility of its citizens.

By abandoning much of the weak foundation of the existing Articles of Confederation then binding the original colonies together, the Founding Fathers set out to establish a new system of government to prevent tyranny and ensure a balance of power. This system was deliberately composed of three distinct branches of co-equal power, dividing governmental responsibilities among the legislative, executive and judicial branches. It aimed to limit the potential for any one branch to become too dominant while, at the same time, creating a system of checks and balances that would promote cooperation and prevent the abuse of power.

Why was this new train of political thought so important to the Founders? Essentially, they had four major concerns.

First, and likely foremost, the new system was designed to prevent tyranny. Having just broken free from British rule, they were acutely aware of the dangers of concentrated power. They believed that vesting all governmental authority in a single individual or body would inevitably lead to oppression. This was not to be a repeat of a land ruled by kings, but rather one ruled by the will of the governed.

Second, and going hand in hand with the first, they intended that by sharing powers, they could prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful and ensure that each branch could function independently while also interacting for the good of the nation with the others. In so doing, they provided each of the three distinct branches with its own, constitutionally defined, specific powers and responsibilities. (In the next three months, I'll focus on those responsibilities that the Constitution specifically grants each branch in turn, beginning with the legislative.)

So what, specifically, did separating those powers serve to accomplish?

Well, it provided a system of checks and balances further limiting the power of each branch by giving any one the ability to limit the power of the other two. For example, the legislative branch (Congress) can pass laws, but the executive branch (the president) can veto them, and the judicial branch (the Supreme Court) can declare them unconstitutional. In the system envisioned, leaders of character would monitor each other.

(continued on the next page)

An Insider's Look at History

IS THE FOUNDERS' PRESCIENCE STILL VIABLE?, CONT

And finally, why was this so important for our new nation? It was of the utmost importance to the Framers that limiting the power of government and ensuring that no single branch was preeminent meant that the independent branches would safeguard the individual liberties of citizens. This was the crux of their concern — the one shining ideal they sought to achieve to make this new nation *the* shining example of government by the people and for the people. It was truly a beau idéal!

But maintaining this monument to man's ideals is no easy task. Dr. Franklin was entirely prescient in adding the warning "if you can keep it."

Doing so requires work and dedication, but most of all, it requires character in those chosen to lead. Absent character, absent the will for each branch to fight for those they

represent and for the precepts defined by the Constitution and intended by the Founders, those dreams simply evaporate into time. A bright shining star, burning briefly, then winking out.

So in framing our Constitution — the backbone of our republic — the founding fathers were adamant about one simple precept. They fully understood the answer to one very simple question, and so focused their attentions to ensure it would never darken the American public landscape.

What was this question? What does one call a republic with only one functioning branch of government? The answer is "a dictatorship"! The founders understood this. Today's question has become "Do we?"

OLLI Life

ARTISTS RELAX AND CREATE AT INSIDE OUT STUDIO

By Marilyn Szecholda

Lowe Mill Arts and Entertainment Center is home for more than 150 artists in many studios. Studio No. 2028, located on the second floor, is a unique and special place.

Inside Out Studio is a welcoming place for special needs adults. Here the artists can find guidance and acceptance to pursue their creative interests. All art materials and supplies are here, and there is no cost to the artists.

For three hours each week, I have been taking two amazingly talented young guys to this studio. Will and Zane, roommates at 8th Street Community, both love going to the studio, and so do I. The time flies as we relax and create.

Let me introduce you to Will. He can name every Disney movie character. He realistically draws these characters and puts his special touch on them with his artistic shading. With a smile on his face, Will flawlessly draws Ariel, Snow White, Cinderella, and many others of his favorites. For a change, he has also drawn three cartoon cars at "Andy's Used Cars" lot.

Will has dozens of spiral-bound books full of a year's worth of his work. He keeps them all in his fully stuffed shopping bag. He proudly shows his drawings when asked.

Zane likes sharks and whales and draws them doing unexpected things. For example, one of his whales plays a tuba, while another is outfitted in scuba gear.

A blue whale with a patriotic hat and stars for eyes is a favorite. Zane draws the figures and adds color to them on his computer. Small-town water towers also appear in



Will, Zane and two volunteers — Marilyn and Jan — at Inside Out Studio.

Zane's artwork. He has drawn towers from Alabama and Florida.

Welcoming us every Wednesday is the studio manager, Lavie Penuelas. She offers guidance as needed in any project Zane or Will shows an interest in.

Lavie has encouraged the guys to participate with other artists in the downtown library's 2026 display of the studio's work.

Lavie is an artist herself whose work I really like, and I'm happy to say she will have a class for OLLI members at the studio in October. I can't wait!

‘CONTRAST’: 2025 WINNERS OF PHILIP FLOWERS MEMORIAL PHOTO CONTEST

**First
place:**
*Untitled,
Kathy
Riggs*



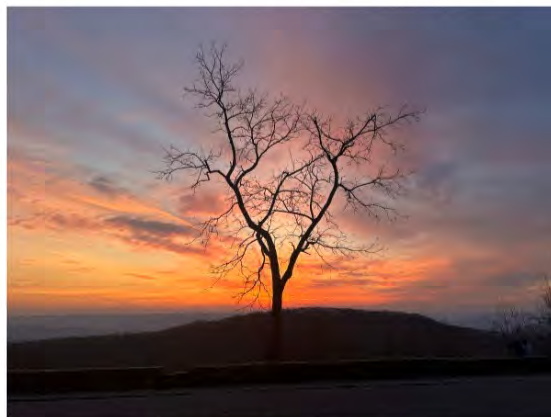
Second place: *Untitled, Bill Carswell*



Third place: *Yellowstone, Alice Searcy*



Honorable mention: *Kylemore Abbey,
Ireland, Sue Farbman*



Honorable mention: *Untitled, Dale Clem*

OLLI Life

EXERCISING AND STAYING HEALTHY AS WE AGE

Dr. Sara A. Harper, assistant professor of kinesiology at UAH, spoke about exercising and avoiding falls while aging during a bonus presentation May 2. She also offered a tour of the lab in Wilson Hall where she studies these subjects.



Fall risks (and solutions)

1. Physical inactivity risk

Solution = keep moving

- Exercise, tai chi, water aerobics
- Improve strength, balance, and coordination

2. Not aware of health status

Solution = visit your healthcare provider

- Medications - side effects and interactions
- Any previous falls?
- Your health conditions



Fall Risks (and solutions)

3. Home risks

Solutions =

- Move any **cords** out of traffic areas
- Install **handrails** on stairways
- **Grab bars** in bathrooms
- Wear sensible **footwear**
- Never stand on items with wheels
- Arrange furniture to create open paths
- Maintain good **lighting** indoors and out



(Photos by Steve Stewart)

OLLI Life

ON THE MOUNTAIN: OLLI ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 6

During the 2025 annual meeting and dinner for OLLI at UAH, Mike Ball entertained, outgoing board President John Mason presided, and guests included UAH President Charles Karr and Jason Greene, dean of the College of Business. The meeting was May 6 at Burritt on the Mountain.



(Photos by Steve Stewart)

The Last Word

HAVE YOU SPOTTED AN OLLI ELF IN THE ACT?



Bob Darnall

Did you know we have resident Elves among us at OLLI? Keep your eyes peeled — you just might catch one zipping around, quietly keeping things cozy and tidy.

One was recently spotted in the lounge, straightening chairs, returning items to their rightful places, and brewing that beloved pot of coffee that fuels our conversations and classes.

If you happen to see him — our very own Elf extraordinaire, **Bob Darnall** — be sure to thank him for all his magical handiwork. His behind-the-scenes care makes OLLI feel like home.

Sue Chatham, George Melochick and Phil Graham are working together to identify and recognize OLLI Elves. If you have a nominee, email OLLInewsletter@uah.edu.



OLLI Life

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES



Phil Graham and Clay Williams (left photo) joined Bernard Osher and OLLI representatives from The University of Alabama and Auburn University at the 2025 Osher Institutes National Conference on April 28-30 in Chantilly, Virginia. Bernard Osher is a businessman and philanthropist whose donations support lifelong learning on 124 U.S. campuses. He is in the middle of this picture, with Clay standing next to him. Clay is the OLLI program manager for UAH. Phil, who has since become the UAH board chair for OLLI, is on the right.

Five representatives of OLLI at UAH (right photo) attended the Southern Regional Conference for Learning in Retirement, hosted July 21-23 by Emory University in Atlanta. From left are Bob Darnall, Nancy Darnall, Anelisse Westmeyer, Alison Toney and Lisa Brunegraff. Anelisse is the registration office coordinator here, and the others are board members. Bob is OLLI at UAH treasurer, and Nancy is vice president for administration and finance.