

The

November 2025

OLLI INSIDER

News for OLLI members at The University of Alabama in Huntsville



MOUNTAINS, SPACE, ART, MUSIC, COMEDY, CAVES

UAH's Sara Harper, who studies human movement when not mountain-biking; art in Huntsville's new City Hall; Dolomites photo by Barbara Staggs; Rick Chappell discussing space travel; Microwave Dave with OLLI's Phil Graham; visiting Fantasy Playhouse and seeing Shakespearean comedy (left); and touring the National Speleological Society headquarters.



uah.edu/olli

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From the Editor

SLOGANS CAN BE MEMORABLE AND MOTIVATING



Slogans can last a lifetime and beyond. If we take them to heart, they can shape our lives.

I was a Boy Scout (not a stellar one, acquiring only seven merit badges out of 21 required for the rank of Eagle). We Scouts were asked to memorize a motto, a slogan, and the Scout laws.

The motto, probably the best-known of these to the public, is “Be prepared.” The slogan is “Do a good turn daily.” And the Scout laws tell us that a Scout is:

- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Helpful
- Friendly
- Courteous
- Kind
- Obedient
- Cheerful
- Thrifty
- Brave
- Clean
- Reverent

(Our adult leaders added a 13th adjective: “hungry.”)

Scouting has changed: About 20 percent of the million-plus members are now girls, and Boy Scouts of America now calls itself Scouting America. The organization has become more inclusive in other ways and has dealt with scandals and controversies.

But I don’t know anyone who disputes the merits of the Scout motto, slogan and laws. As a song says, life gets complicated when you get past 18. Maturity brings a better understanding of the nuances of these values. They remain relevant. Our society would be better off if all leaders modeled them and citizens adhered to them.

All this came to mind when Phil Graham, OLLI board president, initiated a contest for a T-shirt slogan. The deadline to enter is Nov. 28, and the entry form is at tinyurl.com/olli-t-shirt. Think about entering, and remember that a good slogan can nudge people in the right direction.

Inside The Insider: Glen Adams profiles Sara Harper, the UAH assistant professor who interacts frequently with OLLI as she studies human movement, including healthy aging.

Dannye Drake describes the joys, anxieties and rewards of being the Huntsville Ballet’s “props master and general flunky” for over three decades.



Scouting can instill values in children.
(Art by Karen Arnold, via publicdomainpictures.net)

Nancy and Bob Darnall are missing fall OLLI classes while educating themselves through an international cruise. They share what they’ve learned about Alaska and Japan.

Phil Graham, as OLLI board president, reflects on the amenities that attract new OLLI members. In another article, Phil pays tribute to military veterans.

We have reports from member interest groups for tai chi, hiking and biking, dining out, and books. Jean Krieger, writing for the Artist Studio MIG, explains copyright laws that protect intellectual property.

Have you ever been annoyed by persistent rudeness? Then you can sympathize with Lee Roop’s column about a motorcyclist who roars frequently through his neighborhood.

Marilynn Szecholda reminds you of free lunch available for two more Thursdays. Read about past and coming events, bonus lectures and travel in articles by Chris Stuhlinger, Betty Koval and David Sayre, respectively. Clay Williams’ column includes reminders about course evaluations, Teacher Appreciation Day and the annual holiday party.

Mark Tenhundfeld and John Mason are alternating monthly writers for “Constitutional Corner.” This month, Mark explains the commerce clause, which has shaped civil rights law, among other things.

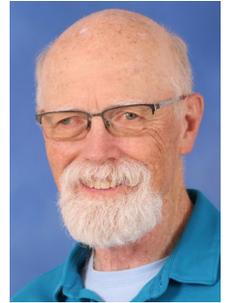
John Mason calls attention to the new plaque honoring volunteers, which is mounted outside the OLLI volunteer office, which needs volunteers to run it.

Steve Stewart
Editor, The OLLI Insider



The Trailhead

OLLI MEMBERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT THE NUMBERS



If you ask my close friends, past business associates and family members, they will likely tell you that I'm a "numbers guy." But please bear with me while I cite some important OLLI data.

Like the other 123 OLLI programs composing the Osher Foundation network of higher-education institutions across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, OLLI at UAH is purpose-driven, offering lifelong learning opportunities designed for adults aged 50 and older.

OLLI at UAH is distinctive, however, in that our OLLI is only one of three programs in the Osher network that are incorporated as 501(3)(c) nonprofit volunteer organizations. Thus, the OLLI at UAH business model depends upon membership numbers.

So membership growth stagnation, in whatever form it appears, threatens the continuing survival of OLLI at UAH as it competes with other lifelong learning options (perhaps with lower out-of-pocket costs) in Huntsville, Madison County and north Alabama.

When the 2024-25 academic year closed, there were 843 members. For our Board of Directors last June, a Target Growth Rate Goal of 3.0 percent growth over the 2024-25 business year (total members: 868) and a Stretch Growth Rate Goal of 5.0 percent growth (total members: 885) for the current academic year had been established.

During the October board meeting, Program Manager Clay Williams reported OLLI membership standing at 904. The current membership number is the largest since the

2020-21 academic year, and time will tell whether OLLI will retain this number through the upcoming spring term.

The point of this missive, however, is not about numbers. It's about the quality of what OLLI at UAH delivers to, and the value that OLLI places on, each individual member.

There's an undeniable correlation between a person's perception of what OLLI delivers, whether in the classroom, events, travel opportunity, or cross-generational activity, and OLLI membership numbers. By meeting and overcoming the challenges over the past 32 years, previous OLLI at UAH boards and OLLI members like you have placed OLLI at UAH on an upward trajectory of continuous quality improvement in a thriving, engaged membership family.

Elders are attracted by both the breadth and the quality in the learning options OLLI offers and by being valued as individuals with untapped talents and experiences. Elders and past-work-life adults are also interested in establishing new or different connections while actively participating with individuals in their same life stage.

We want to invite older adults to share the "OLLI experience" by visibly introducing ourselves to diverse elder communities, including those marginalized. And we want you to be an integral part of our dynamic growth.

Phil Graham
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

The breadth and quality of learning options at OLLI — including events, travel and social connections as well as courses — attract prospective members. (Photo by Marsha Langlois from open house on Aug. 8, 2025.)



Events Committee



November events: Physics lab class, the Weeden House and the College of Nursing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERING FOR EVENTS



The OLLI Events Committee offers about 10 events each fall and spring semester, and we have been trying to allow higher attendance when possible. However, complications arise when someone shows up at an event without having registered in advance, or if a member who registered cannot attend and fails to cancel.

By following two simple procedures, everyone can help our events run even more smoothly and give us all the best experience possible.

There are two important reasons why *everyone* wanting to attend an event offered by the OLLI Events Committee *must* register in advance.

First, UAH requires that every attendee sign a release/waiver form (included in the registration process). The other reason is that a venue will often set a strict limit for attendance due to space limitations, and they must plan and prepare. When people don't cancel, and actual attendance is significantly lower than expected based on registration, our venue host must make last-minute adjustments. Additionally, those members on the waiting list miss a chance to attend.

Please keep in mind:

1. **Register in advance**, signing the release/waiver form.
2. If you need to **cancel** your attendance, please notify me or OLLI staff as soon as possible.

Thank you for supporting our events!

Event recaps

Fantasy Playhouse, Sept. 26 — OLLI members were given a tour of Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theatre and Academy, which moved into the historic Merrimack Hall this summer. The highlight was the 45-minute presentation by players from the Alabama A&M theater department of

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Members were introduced to the cast, and Executive Director Karen Mockensturm shared the history of Fantasy Playhouse, which is in its 65th season.

City Hall tour, Oct. 3 — About 50 OLLI members toured the recently constructed City Hall, which replaced a 60-year-old building. City offices have been consolidated into this much bigger building, which currently accommodates about 380 employees. Our group visited many of the artworks exhibited throughout City Hall, most of them produced by local artists. Mayor Tommy Battle gave us updates about the city, which gains more than 7,000 residents each year. He also answered questions from our group.

Experiences in space exploration and astronaut training, Oct. 6 — Dr. Rick Chappell shared fascinating stories about his space science career, which included planning scientific space missions for NASA and undergoing full training as a backup astronaut for the 1992 mission of the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Biergarten at U.S. Space and Rocket Center, Oct. 9 — A large group of OLLI members attended Biergarten to enjoy food, drink and live music, and to help support OLLI's night as the featured charity. Many public attendees stopped by our display table to learn about OLLI, and OLLI Board of Directors President Phil Graham gave a brief presentation about OLLI to the more than 500 Biergarten guests.

National Speleological Society, Oct. 17 — Interestingly enough, Huntsville is known not only for being the Rocket City due to its role in the exploration of outer space, but also as the site of the headquarters for the National Speleological Society. NSS promotes the exploration and mapping of caves (underground space). North Alabama has one of the highest concentrations of caves in the USA, and the Huntsville Grotto (one of 250 caving groups in the country) was formed in 1955. Our OLLI members were given a presentation about caving and the NSS, followed by a tour through the extensive caving artifact collection.

(continued on the next page)

Events Committee

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERING FOR EVENTS, CONT

Coming fall events

- Friday, Nov. 7 — **UAH Physics lab class** (UAH Shelby Center), 10:30 a.m. to noon. Members will have the opportunity to experiment with a variety of hands-on lab exercises, spanning Newtonian mechanics and the rotating candle, electromagnetism with generating sparks in a vacuum and Faraday's law, and optics with laser diffraction patterns and how these are explained both by classical and quantum physics. Cost: none. Attendance limit: 25.
- Friday, Nov. 14 — **Historic Weeden House tour** (downtown Huntsville), 2-3:30 p.m. Join us for a guided history tour of the Weeden House Museum and Garden, built in 1819 (the year Alabama became a state) and located in the Twickenham Historic District. The two-story brick house is an example of Federal architecture and features 19th-century furnishings, an outstanding leaded glass entrance fanlight, a spiral staircase and hand-carved mantels. During the Civil War, the home served as the living quarters of Federal officers. The Weeden House was also the home of poet and artist Maria Howard Weeden. She spent her entire life there. She is known as being one of the first artists to paint African Americans true to life during the years following the Civil War. Cost: \$10 (cash or PayPal). Attendance limit: 30
- Friday, Nov. 21 — **UAH College of Nursing tour** (UAH campus) 2-4 p.m. Discover the UAH College of Nursing's degree programs, diverse fields of study, and advanced graduate opportunities on this interactive tour. Visit the state-of-the-art Simulation & Learning Center, where nursing students master patient assessment and bedside skills. Explore the mock hospital suites — including obstetrics, pediatrics, and medical-surgical care units — equipped with high-fidelity manikins for realistic clinical simulations. Depending on group size, participants may even engage in hands-on or live simulation activities. The tour also includes an introduction to the standardized patient program, designed to enhance clinical learning. Cost: none. Attendance limit: 50

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

Social Committee

THERE IS SUCH A THING AS A FREE LUNCH



Fall term ushered in a new addition to the Social Committee's "food feasts."

Free Leisurely Lunch is served every Thursday from noon to 1 in OLLI's lounge. We serve casseroles, crock pot meals, sandwiches, salads, fruit, veggies, and lots of sweet treats. Members stop by, have a delicious lunch, and enjoy the company of friends.

So stop by before or after your next class and meet some new friends. Lunches will continue until Nov. 13.

Looking forward to Nov. 7 and the Teacher Appreciation event. We will meet at Trinity United Methodist Church, 607 Airport Road SW, Huntsville, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Lunch will be served by the Social Committee. We'll have pizza, salad and dessert. So mark your calendars and join us to honor our instructors for their hard work in preparing classes. Look for a surprise performance by some OLLI members.

See you very soon!

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair



Leisurely Lunches are served weekly on Thursdays in the OLLI Lounge (152D Wilson Hall). The last one will be Nov. 13. The food is free for OLLI members.

(Photo by Justin Clay)

Social Committee

ENJOYING LEISURELY LUNCH IN OLLI LOUNGE



(Photos by Justin Clay)

Events Committee

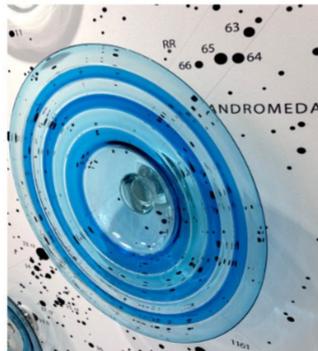
FANTASY PLAYHOUSE TOUR AND SHOW, SEPT. 26



(Photos by Patricia Haag, Chris Stuhlinger and Fantasy Playhouse)

Events Committee

SEEING CITY HALL, ART AND THE MAYOR, OCT. 3



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

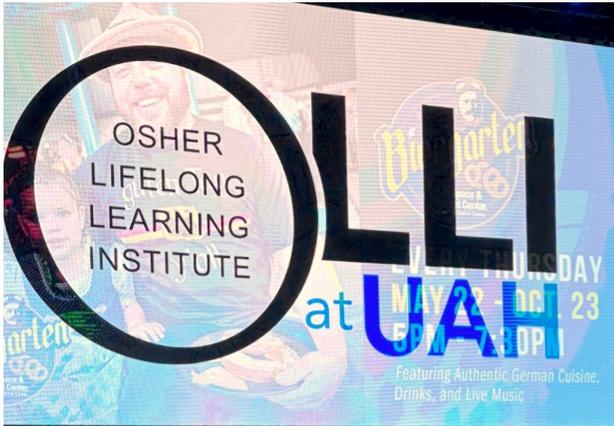
LEARNING OF SPACE AND ASTRONAUTS, OCT. 6



(Photos by Steve Stewart, by Chris Stuhlinger and from speaker Rick Chappell)

Events Committee

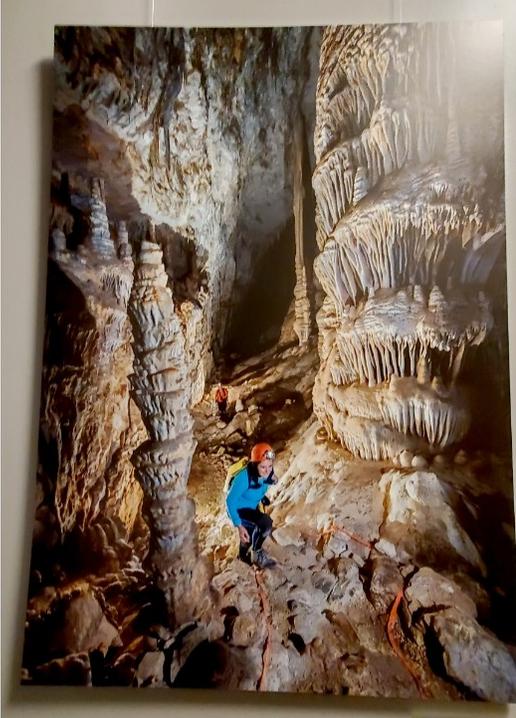
BIERGARTEN ROCKETS, MUSIC AND FOOD, OCT. 9



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, OCT. 17



(Photos by Glen Adams and Chris Stuhlinger)

Coming Bonuses

CONSERVE THE BIRDS; PROTECT YOUR BONES



I cannot believe we have almost completed another term! *That went fast!* Before you know it, the holidays will be over, another New Year will have rung in, and a new OLLI

spring term will be underway. My mom always said the years flew faster when you were older. As always, she was right!

As for the three October bonuses:

Dave Gallaher, aka “Microwave Dave,” gave a stellar performance. If you missed it or just want more, he plays at The Nook, 3305 Bob Wallace Ave. SW, every Thursday from 6 to 9 p.m. He also entertains at The Open Bottle, located at 7061 Hwy 72 W, on Sundays from 6 to 9 p.m. Go out and support this local artist and business. During the super bonus event on Oct. 3, OLLI Board President Phil Graham presented a check to support the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation.

Barbara Staggs delivered a talk about the Italian Dolomites on Oct. 17. With her amazing photography, she is always a popular speaker. Those who have not been to the areas she features are always tempted to explore it for themselves. Who knows? This



November bonus topics are birds and conservation on the 14th, and keeping your bones strong and avoiding injuries on the 21st.



presentation could lead to another OLLI travel destination!

Misti Potter gave us an update on the Singing River Trail. I can see the Hiking & Biking MIG using this as a future venue for adventures. I hope to travel along the trail one day.

The November bonuses are both in 168 Wilson Hall at 11 a.m., and this month we are talking birds and bones.

- Nov. 14 — **Alabama’s Amazing Birdlife** by Scot Duncan, Ph.D., executive director at Alabama Audubon. Scot will give us an introduction into the importance of bird conservation in Alabama. Scot is also the author of *Southern Wonder: Alabama’s Surprising Biodiversity*.

- Nov. 21 — **Make No Bones About It** by Brent Pittman and Edie Hermes. Brent and Edie will give us an information-packed lecture on fracture prevention and how to protect and strengthen one of our most valuable assets: our bones. We will learn about exercises and nutrition to help keep our bones strong.

Don’t forget to enjoy the snacks in the lounge and spend some time with OLLI friends before and after each presentation. I look forward to seeing you!

Betty Koval
Bonus Coordinator



Mark your calendar!

Join the fellowship over lunch
(pizza, chicken salad, dessert)

Friday, Nov. 7 — 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church

607 Airport Road SW, Huntsville

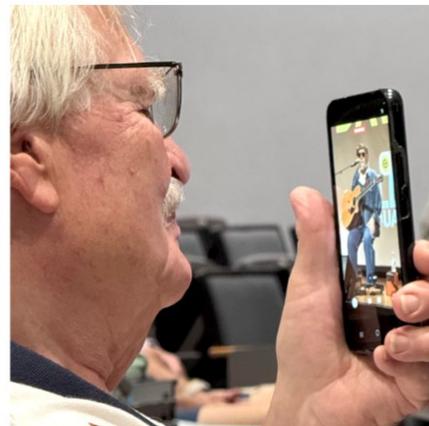
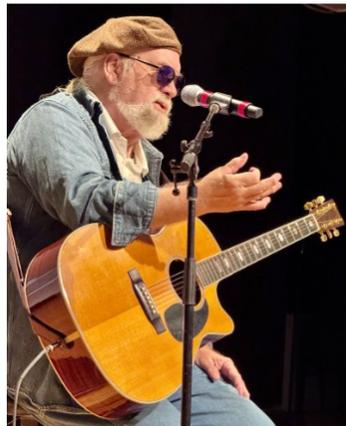
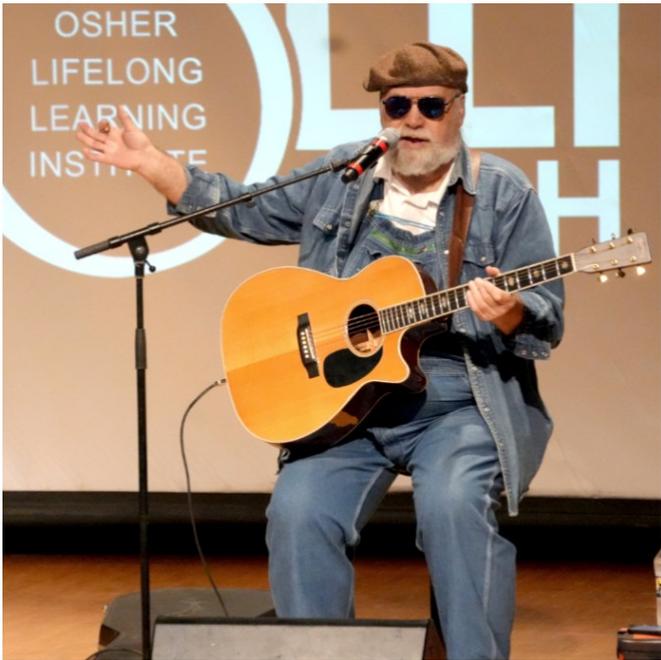
Sign up at tinyurl.com/olli-event-signup

All fall instructors will be recognized

Teachers, you make us — thank you!

OLLI Life

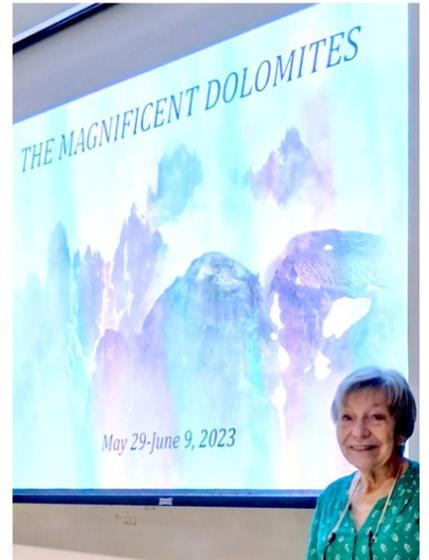
MICROWAVE DAVE'S SONGS AND YARNS, OCT. 3



(Photos by Justin Clay, Michael Mercier and Steve Stewart)

OLLI Life

BARBARA STAGGS' DOLOMITES PHOTOS, OCT. 17



(Photos by Barbara Staggs, Glen Adams and Sue Chatham)

Member Services Committee

THE PLAQUE'S THE THING



Fall is in the air, and that means our fall term is in full swing. There are lots of good things happening around campus, and I hope you're all partaking.

First, I wanted to show you all the new plaque hanging outside our volunteer office (151 Wilson Hall), celebrating all of our Volunteers

of the Year. If you haven't seen it, stop by and take a peek. Our volunteers do great things every day and deserve to be celebrated and thanked.

Even though the term is nearly half over, we still need volunteers to staff the volunteer office during class times. A

signup sheet is taped to the desk there, and I hope some of you will stop by and pick a time to help out.

There really are a lot of people who stop by during the course of the day needing assistance, and every time we can provide some, it raises our visibility and good will within the OLLI and the UAH communities.

And finally, the annual Philip Flowers Memorial Photo Contest for OLLI members is up and running! This year's subject is **NIGHTLIGHTS**: exploring both the literal and abstract interpretations of light after dark. You can submit your photos now at olliphotocontest@uah.edu. The contest will be open for entries until March 31.

John Mason
Member Services Committee Chair



A new plaque honors Volunteer of the Year and Legacy Volunteer award winners. The plaque is beside the door of the volunteer office, 151 Wilson Hall. On the door is a reminder that more volunteers are needed to keep the office open.

News From UAH

ODDS, ENDS AND COMING EVENTS



The OLLI fall semester is winding down. We hope everyone has enjoyed their courses and events. There are still some Friday bonus lectures and special events

left on the schedule, so register today.

Please remember to complete course evaluation surveys that are emailed to you. These are important for instructors and the Curriculum Committee in planning.

Speaking of instructors, join us on Friday, Nov. 7, at 12:30 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church for our annual Teacher Appreciation Day event. Our instructors are the backbone of OLLI, and this is our time to thank them for their work in preparing their classes and sharing their knowledge with us. You can register for this event on our website, and we hope to see you there. Lunch is provided.

One of the highlights of each fall semester is our end-of-the-year holiday party. This year's event will be on Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m. at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. Tickets are on sale now for \$35.



Teacher Appreciation Day and the holiday party will be Nov. 7 and Dec. 10, respectively. These photos are from the 2024 events.

Your ticket gets you a buffet meal featuring grilled chicken and carved beef, as well as access to a cash bar (the first drink is free). Plus, after dinner, enjoy the tunes of DJ Ted Cannon as he plays music guaranteed to get you on the dance floor. As an added bonus, your holiday party ticket gets you free access to the Botanical Garden that day.

It is an event you do not want to miss. There is a limited capacity, so buy your tickets now. Deadline to purchase is Nov. 30.

Staff is busy preparing for the spring semester. A wonderful selection of course proposals has been submitted, along with great events and bonuses. The spring 2026 course guide should be ready by mid-December, and registration will start at that point.

We are planning new training sessions for our registration system in December so you can access your account and register for all the exciting events and courses. Details on this training will come in November.

And, to officially kick off the spring semester, mark your calendars for Friday, Jan. 9, as our spring open house. Record numbers attended our fall open house in August. Don't miss out on the excitement.

A reminder that OLLI offices will be closed for Thanksgiving break on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27-28. I hope everyone has a great Turkey Day!

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

Don't miss OLLI's annual

HOLIDAY PARTY

Fun, food, music and dancing!



Wednesday, Dec. 10 — 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Huntsville Botanical Garden

4747 Bob Wallace Ave. SW (party ticket price includes access to the Botanical Garden for the day)

Get details and tickets (\$35) now at tinyurl.com/olli-party-25. Deadline: Nov. 30.

News From UAH

UAH PRESIDENT CHARLES KARR TO RETIRE IN MAY

Charles Karr will retire as president of UAH in May 2026 and move to Florida with his wife, Jodie, the university announced Oct. 13.

Dr. Karr has attended many OLLI events, including open houses and annual meetings, since coming to UAH as interim president in 2021. He was named president in September 2022. He previously spent 26 years at The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa), serving as dean of its College of Engineering.

“Throughout his term as UAH president, Dr. Karr’s visible support empowered OLLI to successfully navigate through COVID-induced challenges,” said Phil Graham, president of OLLI’s Board of Directors. “Today, because of Dr. Karr’s example of resilient leadership, OLLI at UAH is on an unprecedented upward trajectory of membership growth.”

In a news release, UAH said Karr has had “a transformative tenure defined by visionary leadership, deepened community engagement and the creation of a dynamic campus atmosphere.”

“Serving as president of UAH has been one of the greatest honors of my life,” Karr said. “Together with our faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners, and supported by the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees and UA System leadership, we have elevated UAH’s impact across research, academics and public service. The Charger spirit is strong, and the future of this university is brighter than ever.”

Under Karr, the university broke ground and is nearing completion of the Raymond B. Jones Engineering Building, and renovations will soon begin on the Beville Center, enhancing the Center for Cybersecurity Research, Education, and Advanced Training. The campus will also start construction of a new Track and Field Complex, and critical funding was secured to develop the former Executive Plaza site.



UAH President Charles Karr (right) talks with John Fix, an OLLI instructor and UAH emeritus dean and professor, during OLLI’s open house on Aug. 16, 2024. (Photo by Steve Stewart)

UAH achieved top-10 federally funded national rankings in four research areas for the 12th consecutive year. The university became home to the largest mobile weather radar facility in the United States. The UAH and UAH Foundation’s endowment crossed the \$100 million threshold.

Freshman classes in fall 2024 and 2025 had average GPAs of 3.97 and ACT scores of 27. The Colleges of Business, Engineering and Nursing achieved national recognition.

The UA System trustees and leadership will conduct a national search for Karr’s successor. A search advisory committee will be supported by an executive search firm.



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.

People of OLLI

SARA HARPER STUDIES HUMAN MOTION, AGING

Sara Harper mountain-biking on Antelope Island, Utah; coaching Dave Kostowny in a test of grip strength during OLLI's Aug. 8 open house; with parents Sharon and Don Harper at a favorite amusement park in Sandusky, Ohio; and with Nick Barnes and Molly in front of their house in Toney, Alabama.



By Glen Adams

Kinesiology is the study of human movement. It involves components of exercise physiology, biomechanics, anatomy, biology, chemistry and health sciences.

This definition is provided by the woman who has become OLLI's resident kinesiologist, Dr. Sara Harper, who is an assistant professor of exercise science in UAH's Department of Kinesiology in the College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences. In her three years at UAH, Sara has taught an OLLI course and given a bonus lecture. She describes herself as "the unofficial president of the OLLI-UAH Fan Club."

Sara is the subject of this month's Insider profile.

Sara grew up in Strongsville, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. Her dad was a project engineer and her mom a preschool teacher. She has an older brother, Chris.

"I was a total tomboy growing up," said Sara. "I like all sports and exercise. My favorite class was gym. My favorite

sports were soccer and softball. In middle school, I began running cross country and track and field. When I was 16, I bought a road bike, which quickly became my sport of choice.

"I was also quite accident-prone, which led to much physical therapy. Without those injuries, I don't know if I would have found my passion for optimizing healthy movement."

Sara began her college studies at Kent State University as an athletic training major. "While I enjoyed that, I was more interested in the research that shaped training and performance," said Sara. "This led me to change my major to exercise science."

Sara did not waste time at Kent State. She earned a B.S. in exercise science in 2012, an M.S. in exercise physiology in 2014, and a Ph.D. in exercise physiology in 2016.

Education didn't stop there. She did her first post-doctorate at The University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2018-19, followed by a second at Utah State University 2019-23. Mixed in were periods of study at Northern Colorado Uni-

versity, at Appalachian State University and back at Kent State.

From August 2016 to May 2, 2017, Sara was a visiting assistant professor at Tiffin University in Ohio. She followed that with a stint in 2017 as a research assistant at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio.

It was during these years that she met her partner, Nick Barnes, at, of course, a mountain bike trailhead in Michigan. Nick is a mechanical engineer at Lockheed Martin.

Why did she choose UAH?

"UAH had everything we wanted when we considered options for a tenure-track position," said Sara — "a vibrant and growing Kinesiology Department, a great university environment, and Huntsville itself, which has so much to offer. One of our favorite activities is still cycling, primarily mountain biking. You can often find me on the trails at Monte Sano State Park or Redstone Arsenal.

(continued on the next page)

People of OLLI

SARA HARPER, CONT

“Since joining the Kinesiology Department two years ago, I have taught exercise physiology, research in exercise science, and measurement and evaluation. My research involves the Healthy Age-Related Physical Function and Ergonomics/exercise Research (HARPER) Lab, focusing on slip, trip and fall prevention, specifically stairway fall prevention for the aging and visually impaired.”

Sara discovered OLLI during her UAH interview in fall 2022. She taught her first OLLI class, Stair Safety Steps, in spring 2024; was a guest speaker for

another course, Fourth Quarter Decisions; and gave a bonus lecture, Importance of Exercise Science Research, last May.

She now has lab space in Wilson Hall and during the last open house tested OLLI members’ grip strength. It’s safe to say Sara will do more OLLI teaching in the coming years.

What are Sara’s impressions of OLLI?

“To me, OLLI brings joy and excitement to lifelong learning with a positive energy that permeates the entire build-

ing,” she said. “From special member interest groups like mah-jongg to learning about the new music, philosophy and literature, OLLI provides a welcoming social and learning environment for all.

“Healthy aging encompasses opportunities to learn, engage, socialize and stay physically active through exercise.”

Well said, Sara. Thank you for all you do for OLLI.

BTL
BROADWAY THEATRE LEAGUE

2025-2026 SEASON

BROADWAYTHEATRELEAGUE.ORG

BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE MUSICAL
shucked
HADESTOWN
THE SOUND OF MUSIC
THERESA'S LIFE AFTER ROMEO
Jubilee
Helloooo, Huntsville!
Mrs. Doubtfire
THE BEST NEW MUSICAL ON BROADWAY
WATER FOR ELEPHANTS
PlayStation
THE CONCERT
GOD OF WAR
THE LAST OF US
HORIZON
RICHARD THOMAS
MARK TWAIN TONIGHT!
THE CHOIR OF MAN

WHERE WE'RE GOING,
WE DON'T NEED ROADS

256-518-6155

People of OLLI

CONFESSIONS OF A PROP TART

By **Dannye Drake**

Presenting the Huntsville Ballet's annual performance of *The Nutcracker* is always a challenge.

Among the difficulties: a cast of thousands (many under the age of 13), limited dressing room space and a parking lot much too small to accommodate the vast number of cast, crew and musicians who wish to park there. Add countless traffic complications resulting not only from our performance, but also from the annual production of *The Christmas Carol*, numerous Christmas festivities, and, on at least one occasion, Ringling Brothers' Three Ring Circus.

Finish with the annual marathon and the perennial construction in and around the Von Braun Center, and the result is chaos. Yet, for over 30 years I returned to the VBC each season to scurry through the backstage shadows as props master and general flunky.

I spent those years creating, mending, refurbishing, unpacking and repacking the numerous props required by the various ballets, and none was more "props intense" than *The Nutcracker*.

I learned quickly that the mastery of glue and staple guns was a necessity and became known as the "two-gunned prop tart." I set up prop tables and labeled them to assign each prop a designated space. A glance told me if a prop was missing.

All dancers were warned yearly that personal items placed on these tables would be immediately confiscated and buried in an undisclosed location. Seasoned dancers had learned. Unseasoned dancers often forgot. Each year I confiscated numerous items, placed them in dark corners, and watched as the guilty novices searched for them.

It was also a strict rule that props were to be handled only by me and the dancers who used them. Everyone else was to keep hands off. Nevertheless, props such as toy rifles, swords, dolls and drums were unbelievably tempting for little hands.

Then there were the props themselves. Some required incredibly high maintenance. Foremost in this category were the candles that the little angels carried in the opening dance of the second act. They were powered by batteries, which frequently lost connection or just died. (That rabbit lies!)

During intermission, the little heavenly host were given the carefully checked candles while they lined up onstage to begin as the curtain opened. It was not unusual to see at least one angel standing in the stage fog, shaking, or even beating on her candle because its light had failed. More than once, and seconds before the curtain opened, I galloped onstage through that fog to grab an offending candle



Oh, the stories this improvised hobby horse could tell about the life of a props master!
(Photo by Dannye Drake)

and thrust another one into a startled angel's hands.

The loss of props and/or costume pieces on stage presented a special problem and usually resulted in my lying on my stomach in the wings to receive the item as a dancer kicked it in my direction. That move took finesse on the part of the dancer. On my part, I became adept at prop catching, but getting off the floor took increasing effort.

Often, I found myself in the position of set dresser. The first act of this ballet centered upon the Christmas tree. The tree was enormous and usually required much fluffing as well as ornament adjustment and replacement. For this purpose, I had to ascend a stage ladder to a dizzying height. I think there may have been bets among fellow stagehands concerning how high I would bounce if I fell. I must note that they took every precaution to ensure that I did not do so. They carefully held the ladder steady, and a couple of them stood helpfully below me with their arms outstretched and shouting, "I gotcha!" Really????!!!

The opening tableau of the tree and presents lasted only about 20 seconds, but it was the first thing the audience would see, and it was important. Yet, I had to fight for it. Since the company warmed up on the stage prior to every performance, I would have limited time to accomplish setting the stage before curtain.

Unfortunately, as soon as the dancers left the stage to dress, the school students who played party children, toy soldiers, etc., would swarm onstage, together with dotting relatives who wanted to photograph them in front of the tree.

(continued on the next page)

People of OLLI

CONFESSIONS OF A PROP TART, CONT

I had to work around numerous family photographers and their subjects as I attempted to place items around the tree. I shudder to think how many family albums likely have my backside in the background of cherished Christmas photos.

Naturally, I would have to replace props that such frenzied activity often scattered, sometimes several times. On more than one occasion, I suffered heart palpitations to find a prop missing. Generally, a mother had taken it so that her child could pose holding it. (I refer you to the “no touching props” rule.) Yet, a wise prop person doesn’t yell at mamas or their little dancers, no matter how stressed she is.

In addition to patience and diplomacy, I suppose flexibility is one of the most important qualities a props master must cultivate. It was amazing how many things found their way into the purview of the props master. Anything that broke or was lost was immediately classified as a prop, and I had to figure out how to fix or find it. I have scoured dressing rooms and back hallways for unreturned props. I have refurbished sleighs, decorated carriages, patched flying nutshells and even backdrops.

On one occasion, I was approached by a panicked snowflake only a few measures before her entrance. She handed me her point shoe, from which half of the sole flopped forlornly. I grabbed the glue gun, and she made her entrance on time. As I held my breath, the shoe miraculously made it through the entire snow scene without disintegrating.

Possibly, my most dramatic creation of a prop occurred during an out-of-town performance when Huntsville Ballet took *The Nutcracker* to Arab, Alabama.

As I placed the props under the tree, I realized that the hobby horse had been left behind. It was an important prop, since it had been incorporated within the choreography of the first scene.

With a terrified glance at my watch, I bolted into the unknown to find a Walmart. I set out in what I thought would most likely be the right direction, and the god of fools and props masters was with me.

Rushing into Walmart, I asked a confused clerk if they stocked hobby horses. He had no idea to what I was referring but was pretty sure they had none. I asked if there might be another store that stocked them. He suggested Toys“R”Us. I asked where I could find that store. He grinned and said helpfully that there was one in Huntsville.

Keeping reasonably calm, I grabbed some pillow stuffing, fabric, decorative cord, brown duct tape, buttons and a broom. Returning backstage, I began cutting something somewhat resembling a horse’s head from the fabric. As I stuffed it and attached button eyes, a yarn mane and a harness of cord, the tech guys sawed off the broom handle. We wrapped it in the tape, which we also used to attach the horse’s head.

I placed the makeshift hobby horse under the tree seconds before the curtain opened. I then went backstage and collapsed.

Surprisingly, that emergency prop was used for several years, but as the party scene changed over time, the hobby horse was discarded. It now decorates the wall of my study.

My days crawling around the darkened backstage armed with glue and staples are now over. I, too, retired. I decided that it was time to bow out before I became the crazy old lady hobbling around in everyone’s way. I *think* I left before that situation occurred.

Now, I attend the performances, recognize the props, applaud, congratulate the dancers and crew, and go home. The hobby horse and I ... well, we have our memories!

OLLI DISCOUNT ON *NUTCRACKER* TICKETS

The 55th annual performance of *The Nutcracker* by Huntsville Ballet Company is scheduled for Dec. 12-14: Friday at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday at 1 p.m.

All performances will be at the Von Braun Center in the Mark C. Smith Concert Hall. OLLI members can use the code OLQ to receive a discount when ordering tickets.

People of OLLI

A SEMESTER AT SEA: FIRST 30 DAYS

By Nancy and Bob Darnall

First of all, we miss you: the classes, the lounge, the member interest groups, the social activities, and the everyday friendship OLLI gives us. When we decided to go away for the entire fall semester, we did not consider the impact of missing so much and so many.

That said, however, there is much about our journey now that in several ways replicates our OLLI experiences. But it isn't the same.

We thought we'd just highlight a few of our experiences during our first 30 days.

Enriching our semester at sea on the Viking *Orion* are a resident historian, a resident astronomer, a professor and a wildlife expert. They provide lectures, forums and narrations to enhance the scenic cruising, the coastal birds and mammals, the glaciers, the history, and the night sky with its mysteries through the ages. This particular ship, along with one other Viking ship, offers a domed theater that features astronomical and nature documentaries.

Alaska

Many of you have traveled to or lived in Alaska. While from a cruise ship perspective these small towns may seem similar, each has a personality and history that differs from its neighbors. Some of the towns started as entryways to the Klondike Gold Area; not all met that expectation, but they found another path to success.

From our origination in Vancouver, Canada, we set sail via the Seymour Narrows and Pine Island to Ketchikan, the first port of call when you travel north along the Pacific. On the bridge with our captain and navigation crew traveled a pilot to maneuver through the Narrows. Canada and the U.S. require pilots on cruise ships along all coastal waters.

We followed on to Juneau because the



Bob and Nancy Darnall at Sakurajima Volcano, Kagoshima, Japan; Alaska scenes from a Valdez museum, Ketchikan and the Mendenhall Glacier.



weather made our scheduled stop at Sitka unsafe. Here we took a rainy trek to the Mendenhall Glacier, then on to up-close views of the Johns Hopkins Glacier in Glacier Bay.

Valdez offered a different kind of history. Twenty-five years before the Good Friday 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, Valdez suffered an earthquake on Good Friday in 1964 that resulted in the nearly complete destruction of the town and a decision to relocate it four miles west; the original site was deemed unsafe by engineers. We also visited their Oktoberfest and a local brewery.

Among our stops, we did a behind-the-scenes visit of the SeaLife Center in Seward, saw bald eagles circling around Homer (which reminded us somehow of *Northern Exposure*), and visited The Salty Dawg, a historical dive bar on the Homer Spit.

Japan

Our primary motivation for this trip was the inclusion of Japan. We spent 13 days seeing cities on Hokkaido, Honshu and Kyushu islands. Between Hokkaido and Honshu, dramatic divisions of weather, animal life and plants attest to how important geological activities over the millennia affect geography and biology as well as

climatology. Japan counts over 14,000. Kyushu is home to Beppu (plentiful hot springs) and Nagasaki.

The history of Japan is long, but we were reminded that one need know only three dates: **1603**, when the Shogunate was established and the emperor was advised (ruled) by the shogun; **1868**, when the emperor was restored to power and assumed godlike authority; and **1945**, when the two U.S. atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union invaded Manchuria with 1.5 million troops intent on retaking Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands, and taking Hokkaido.

Post-World War II Japan remade itself into a Westernized version. Manufacturers, engineers, scientists, artists and merchants all played roles to bring "made in Japan" from cheap goods and trinkets to advanced electronics, automobiles, manufacturing practices and fashion that rank among the top in the world. The bullet trains are but a blur on the countryside. The Tokyo subway has "pushers" who physically press people into the crowded cars to maximize occupancy during rush hours.

(continued on the next page)

Travel Committee

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO IN '26 AND BEYOND?



OLLI members are on the move!

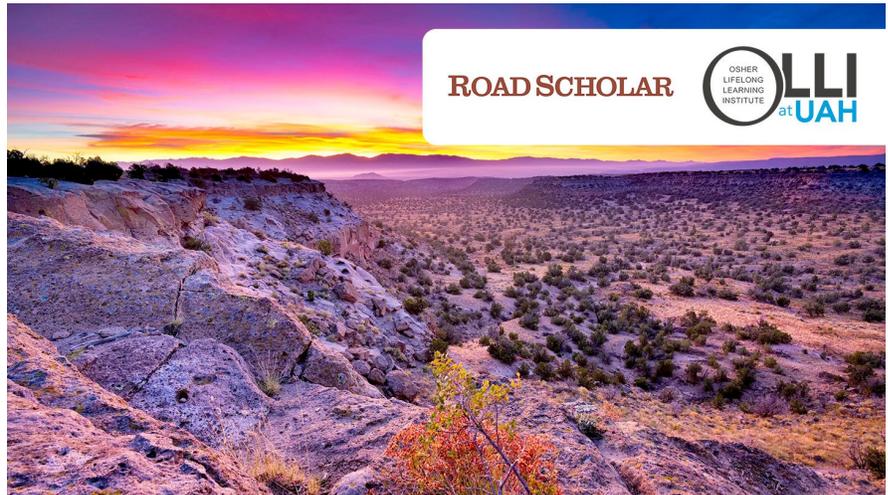
For 2026

- 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. Steve Goodman is the contact, but this trip is now fully booked. Details are at 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



Visit New Mexico with OLLI in November 2026.

per person is \$4,699 (double occupancy, land only). For a detailed itinerary and registration information, contact Chris Stuhlinger or visit tinyurl.com/olli-south-africa-2026.

- **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.

Looking to the future

We are continuing to look at new and different travel opportunities. We are soliciting more destinations (both near and far) for travel in 2027 and 2028. *Never let your curiosity fade.* 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

A SEMESTER AT SEA: FIRST 30 DAYS, CONT

And not to be omitted is how clean Japan and its people are. With virtually no litter and high standards of personal and institutional cleanliness, the Japanese are proud of themselves and their country. The outward standards on no litter arose from a terrorist bomb placed in a streetside trash container. Now, one must go into a convenience store to find such a necessity.

People are admonished to return their lunch trash back home at the end of the day. The public baths (segregated here by gender) attract residents and tourists by the thousands. The hot springs, which are plentiful, are enjoyed by children and adults.

As U.S. citizens, we learned how the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki recovered after the bombs. Both cit-

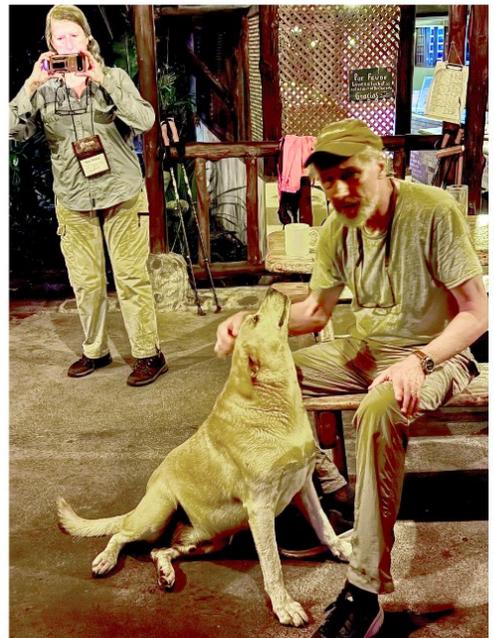
ies have museums and peace parks to commemorate the devastation and rebirth after the blasts: Hiroshima through leaving a bombed-out shell near the epicenter of the blast and Nagasaki through a new park featuring statues from around the globe and religious monuments dotted along the path to the hyper center of the blast.

Sayanora and mata ne.

Travel Committee

COSTA RICA'S BEACHES, RIVERS AND FORESTS

Twenty-six OLLI members toured Costa Rica on Aug. 30-Sept. 7. Two pages of photos were published in the October *Insider*; this issue contains two more. (Photo contributors include Margrit Carr, Marsha Langlois, Jorge Monge, Sallie Robinson, Phil Smith, Helmut Stahl, Steve Stewart, Chris Stuhlinger, Tilman Stuhlinger, Alison Toney, Robert Toney, Bryan Walls and Diane Walls.)



Travel Committee

OLLI'S TROPICAL ADVENTURES IN COSTA RICA



Member Interest Groups



Enjoy Indian Creek Greenway (first two photos) on Nov. 8 and Elgie's Walk Greenway on Nov. 16.

3 MORE HIKING MIG ACTIVITIES IN NOVEMBER

The Hiking & Biking Member Interest Group has only three more activities scheduled for fall semester, all in November.

Two of the activities, a nature walk and bike ride (take your choice), will take place on the same date at the same location near Madison. The third activity will also be a nature walk and take place in south Huntsville.

Reminder: Everyone who attends a MIG activity must register for that activity. If you register for a MIG activity but find that you will not be able to attend, please let me know as soon as you can!

To join the Hiking & Biking MIG and 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 to join the MIG and participate in MIG activities.

Join the MIG:
forms.gle/6M5BoaWX9Z4TLugE9

Coming fall MIG activities

- Saturday, Nov. 8 — **Indian Creek Greenway** (nature walk and bike ride), 10 a.m. to noon. Explore this streamside paved and flat greenway for a leisurely walk, or bring your own bike to enjoy an easy 6-mile round-trip bike ride along Indian Creek with a short side link to Creekwood Park (bathroom facilities). Meet at the Greenway Trailhead parking area off Old Madison Pike between Jan Davis Drive/ Diamond Drive and Slaughter Road (west Huntsville).

- Sunday, Nov. 16 — **Elgie's Walk Greenway** (nature walk), 1:30-3:30 p.m. Join us for an easy walk on this flat greenway between Bell Mountain Park and Grissom High School. The 1.25- to 2-mile (one way) paved walking trail leads through fields and woods and has an optional gravel loop around a lake. This greenway will become part of the 70-mile Singing River Trail between Huntsville and Decatur. Meet at Bell Mountain Park in south Huntsville.

See you on the trail!

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

Member Interest Groups

HIKING & BIKING MIG VISITS PARK, SANCTUARY



**MONTE SANDOZ
STATE PARK,
SEPT. 28**



**GOLDSMITH SCHIFFMAN
WILDLIFE SANCTUARY,
OCT. 11**

(Photos by Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger)

HANG YOUR NAME TAG ON AN OLLI LANYARD

Bright blue lanyards bearing the OLLI logo are available to replace the strings previously used to hold OLLI name tags. Members can pick up lanyards free in the OLLI registration office, 103 Wilson Hall.

(Photo by Steve Stewart)



Member Interest Groups

TAI CHI MIG, NOW IN 4TH YEAR, MEETS WEEKLY

The Tai Chi Member Interest Group meets every Friday from 9 to 10 in the Wilson Hall atrium. The MIG was born in the summer of 2022 with a handful of folks who wanted to practice tai chi outside of class. From just a few OLLI members, it now has 20 to 25 who show up regularly. They do Yang-style tai chi, including the 10 and 24 movements. Any OLLI member is welcome, no matter what your tai chi knowledge level — whether you want to hone your skills, enjoy practicing tai chi with others, or just see what tai chi is all about. If you have questions or need more information, contact Candi Holcomb through olli.info@uah.edu. (Text by Candi Holcomb, photos by Sue Chatham)



Member Interest Groups



American Gothic (left) and *Nighthawks* (right) are in the public domain because their copyrights were not renewed. The question mark in the middle is available for publication under a [Creative Commons license](#).

COPYRIGHT PROTECTS CREATIVE WORKS

The history of copyright starts with early privileges and monopolies granted to printers of books. In 1710, the British enacted the first copyright: “Statute of Anne” or “An Act for the Encouragement of Learning,” by “vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned.”

Modern copyright law was influenced by older legal rights, including the moral rights of an author who created a work; the economic rights of a benefactor who paid for a copy; and the sovereign’s right to regulate (censor) the printing industry.

For artwork created before 1976, research the publication date of the artwork to determine copyrights. Prior to 1909, if an artwork was published anywhere in the world (regardless of when the artist died), the work is no longer protected by copyright in the United States. For artwork published between 1909 and 1921, the initial 28-year term could be renewed for an additional 28 years (total 56 years). Artwork published between 1922 and 1963 had the initial 28-year term that could be renewed for an additional 67 years (total 95 years). Two paintings that are in the U.S. public domain (usable without restrictions) because artists did not file renewal applications are Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*, 1942; and Grant Wood, *American Gothic*, 1930.

Under the 1976 Copyright Act, the following changes came into effect: The U.S. eliminated a “renewal” copyright term and initiated a “statutory” copyright owned by the artist as soon as the work was created in physical form. In the U.S., copyright protection lasts for the author’s entire life, plus an additional 70 years after death. While most countries follow the “life plus 70” or “life plus 50” standard, there are exceptions with both longer and shorter terms throughout the world.

You must register your copyright electronically with the U.S. Copyright Office (eCO) to sue for statutory damages and attorney’s fees in federal court. Once your application is approved, the Copyright Office issues a certificate of registration. You should then display your artwork with a copyright notice: ©. After these steps, if anyone uses or profits from your work without permission, you can file in federal court, but lawsuits are a lengthy process.

To prevent copyright infringement, you should also use technical deterrents. Place a visible watermark (like your logo or signature) over your artwork to make it harder to use without permission. Present your artwork in lower resolution to make it unsuitable for downloading and printing. Disable right-click saving (some websites use code to prevent users from right-clicking and saving images). Use reverse image searches to look for your artwork online and see where it is being used (some platforms offer built-in monitoring tools). If you have a website, use written conditions that specify how your art can and cannot be used to establish clear terms.

There is no copyright for AI-only works. Art created solely by artificial intelligence is not eligible for copyright protection. Copyright law is based on “original works of authorship.” Human authorship or sufficient human input is required. However, if a human significantly modifies, arranges, or uses AI as a tool in the creative process, the human’s contributions may be copyrightable. If you use AI to modify images, consider tools like Glaze and Nightshade to deter AI copying.

In conclusion, you do not need to do anything for your artwork to be protected by copyright, but to legally enforce a copyright (file a federal lawsuit) you should register it electronically with the U.S. Copyright Office. If you are

(continued on the next page)

Member Interest Groups

COPYRIGHT PROTECTS CREATIVE WORKS, CONT

using artwork images, factors that influence copyright duration are (1) artwork's country of origin, (2) artwork's date of creation or date of first publication, and (3) artwork's "status of the artist" — famous, anonymous, or work for hire. If you are using artwork images, check the sources of any modern photographic or digital reproductions of artwork because these are copyrighted. However, some institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago have "open access" policies that allow users to freely copy, modify and distribute images from their collections.

Licensing agreements are essential for artists who collaborate or permit their work to be used by others. Licensing grants permission for specific uses while allowing the creator to retain ownership.

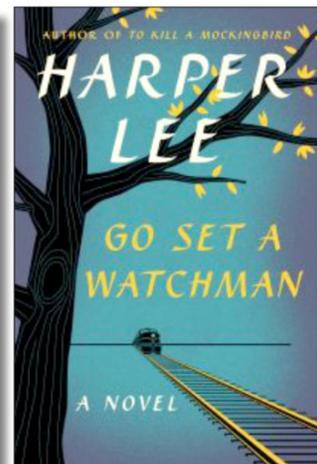
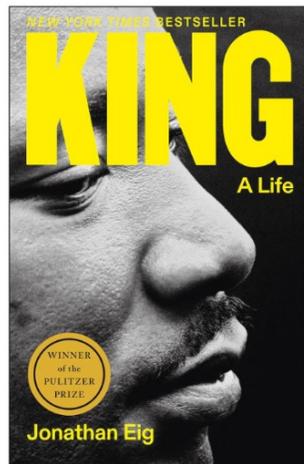
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Trademark protects business and product names, logos and slogans. Key benefits are that no one else can use your trademark to sell related products or services. Trademark allows you to use the ® symbol and notify the public of your ownership, and you can file a federal lawsuit for infringement. It can last forever, but you must file maintenance forms at five years, at 10 years, and every 10 years after that.

Jean Krieger
Leader, Artist Studio Member Interest Group

NOVEMBER AND JANUARY BOOK DISCUSSIONS

The OLLI Reads Member Interest Group invites all OLLI members to its book discussions, including those in November and January. Jonathan Eig's biography of Martin Luther King Jr. titled *King: A Life* will be discussed on Nov. 12, and Harper Lee's novel *Go Set a Watchman* on Jan. 14. Both sessions will start at noon in Wilson Hall. The January discussion will compare *Watchman* with Lee's more-famous *To Kill a Mockingbird*. (A new book by this late Alabama author, *The Land of Sweet Forever: Stories and Essays*, was published Oct. 21.)



MIG DINES AT ROCKET CITY TAVERN

The Dine Out Member Interest Group had dinner at the Rocket City Tavern, 2100 Rideout Road SW, on Sept. 25. (Photo from Sandra Dabrowski)



Huntsville Then and Now

HOW TO TELL MOTORCYCLIST (S)HE'S A JERK?



By Lee Roop

I'll admit it. My thinking and ranting about the Whitesburg Drive motorcyclist is close to an obsession. I'm not all the way gone. I haven't capitalized "motorcyclist" in that description to give him (or her) full *Scarlet Pimpernel*-level recognition. Yet.

A motorcycle missing a muffler and as loud as a jet flyover is clearly a cry (or bid) for attention. Our rider's toy can be heard hundreds of yards in any direction roaring up and down both Whitesburg Drive and Drake Avenue. It seems to get louder each ride, but that can't really happen, can it?

My assumption that he's male seems to be another kind of sound. Sound analysis. Women frequently have more sense and better things to do, I think, although many do enjoy motorcycles.

Women can also make noise and be jerks. But this biker just feels like the classic male jerk, *sui generis*, the kind of showoff we've known since middle school. You know, let's repeat whatever cool — or stupid — thing gets attention until it gets us attention.

Again, we're talking *seriously loud*. Louder than any car radio, even ones with box speakers on the back seats. Louder than any truck's air brakes. Louder even than the emergency medical helicopters that regularly pass overhead.

I knew I was obsessed with motorcycle boy when I found myself off the front porch and walking up to the main road hoping to see him after a fly-by. Hoping to see how closely my mental picture resembled reality. Also hoping to grab a few photographs, yell and flip the universal middle finger sign for "jerk."

No luck. No motorcycle ... person. Nowhere in sight.

I was left on the street to mull what I'm missing and why I care. Is his performance merely "look at me" fun? A way to annoy a nearby ex or former boss? Payback perhaps to an old school principal?

Or is this just a celebration of speed — the freedom and power many people think only bikes can bring? I had a taste of that freedom myself riding a much smaller bike when younger and wouldn't quit until I had to "lay it down" and slide under a car in an intersection.

Many bikers have a story like that. Oncoming driver turns in front of us because he hasn't seen us. Or believes he can beat us through the intersection.



A mysterious rider roars up and down Whitesburg Drive and Drake Avenue, seeming to get louder on every ride. (Image by [Mickey Mikolauskas](#) from [Pixabay](#))

If you ride a motorcycle, odds are you have slid or will slide into whatever fate awaits. That's what leather motorcycle jackets were made to protect against to the degree they can.

Meanwhile, days went by with no motorcycle noise. We'd begun not exactly to miss him but to wonder. Was he injured? Out of town for work or fun? Why were we noticing? Did we really care?

And then, last night came. We were outside in the porch swing when the chainsaw scream of a motorcycle straining for speed on Whitesburg Drive took over the night's other sounds. We looked at each other, and I smiled. She did not smile. Concern for his safety and anger at his selfishness had sealed her opinion.

And yet, the neighborhood seemed somehow ironically full again. Bad full but not horribly full. It was a rolling reminder of our (my) own youth and worth a prayer. "Universe, keep him/her safe and break his/her engine on a regular basis."

Please and amen.

Constitutional Corner

6 MAGICAL WORDS

This is the third of monthly “Constitutional Corner” columns, to be written alternately by John Mason and Mark Tenhundfeld.

By Mark Tenhundfeld



“Let’s gather ’round and tell our favorite stories about regulating interstate commerce,” said no one ever. And yet, there are some pretty good tales to tell, including one from the Heart of Dixie.

Last month, John Mason expertly summarized the powers of Congress. This month, I want to focus on one of them: the power to regulate interstate commerce. That may

seem like a nerdy topic (OK, it is) but, without the commerce clause, we would be living in a very different country.

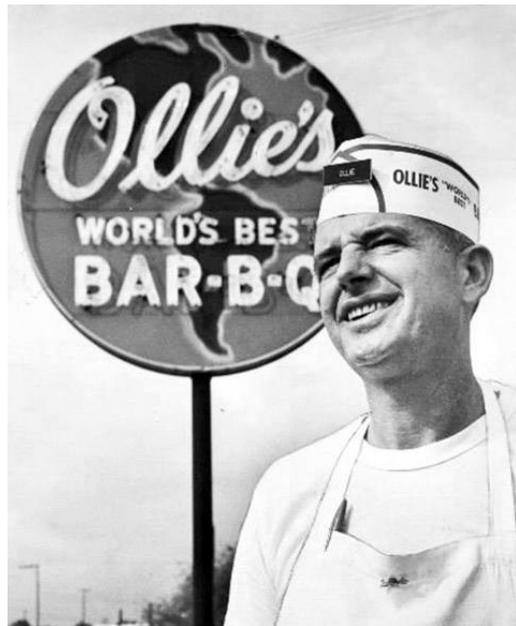
Before the Constitution, the Articles of Confederation said that states retained every power that was not “expressly delegated” to the national government. Because the Articles expressly delegated so few powers, Congress couldn’t keep the states from fighting with each other as they tried to gain advantages for their own citizens.

The Constitution fixed that by giving the new national government the power to “regulate Commerce ... among the several States ...” Those six magical words transformed the government from feckless to formidable.

John Marshall, the fourth chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, made sure of that. In *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), Marshall interpreted the commerce clause about as broadly as possible, writing that the power to regulate commerce “is complete in itself, may be exercised to its utmost extent, and acknowledges no limitations other than are prescribed in the Constitution.”

See any limitations in the commerce clause? Me, either. After *Gibbons*, Congress was free to regulate all sorts of things once it could make a credible case that a problem involved business that crossed state lines. Congress, with the Supreme Court’s imprimatur, has used that superpower to govern (among many other things) minimum wages, the stock market, labor unions, food and drug safety, environmental protection, backyard marijuana plants, and even racial discrimination.

Let’s pause on that last one for a minute. Did the drafters of the Constitution, back in 1787, really intend for Congress to ban racial discrimination in hotels, restaurants and other “public accommodations” when they gave Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce? Nah. But remember John Marshall’s sweeping interpretation of the clause: If something affects interstate commerce, Congress can regulate it.



Ollie McClung Sr. at the Birmingham restaurant that became part of a Supreme Court case defining Congress’ authority to regulate racial discrimination under the Constitution’s commerce clause.

(Photo from [Bham Wiki](#))

Congress found such an effect in the 1960s when it came to racial discrimination. Here was the idea: When a hotel or restaurant refused to serve Blacks, it hurt interstate commerce because Blacks wouldn’t travel or eat out as much. That opened the door for Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (CRA), which, among other things, banned racial discrimination in public accommodations.

“Wait,” you may be thinking, “wouldn’t it make more sense to ban such discrimination under that part of the Constitution that guarantees us equal protection of the laws?” Well, yes, but Congress tried that and failed several decades before. In an opinion called *The Civil Rights Cases* (1883), the Supreme Court said that the equal protection clause protects us only from unequal treatment by a state government, not unequal treatment by a private individual or business. This freed hotels, restaurants and other public accommodations to discriminate at will. So Congress tried a different approach 80 years later, relying on the commerce clause to stop such nonsense.

Segregationists thought this gave them an opening to challenge the law, at least as it applied to small, local businesses. They approached Ollie’s Bar-B-Q, a now-defunct rib joint in Birmingham that served a very local and very white clientele, about being involved in a test case over whether Congress could ban discrimination in local businesses like Ollie’s.

(continued on the next page)

Constitutional Corner

6 MAGICAL WORDS, CONT

Ollie McClung (the restaurant's owner) asked his employees what he should do. Every employee — including the 26 who were Black — voted to keep discriminating, lest Black diners drive white ones away and lead to smaller paychecks for Ollie's employees. So Ollie acted as if there were no CRA, and the U.S. government promptly sued.

Ollie won at trial. If that had been the end of the story, the CRA would've been severely weakened. But on appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously agreed that even little ol' Ollie's engaged in interstate commerce and thus had to comply with the law. The court noted that the restaurant bought much of its food from out-of-state vendors and that, while those purchases by themselves were insignificant, they, along with purchases by other small busi-

nesses, added up to a big impact on interstate commerce. Thus, after *Katzenbach v. McClung* (1964), Ollie had to serve whites and Blacks just the same.

Did integration kill Ollie's Bar-B-Q? Nope. *The Anniston Star* reported that after the court's decision, "five Negroes entered the restaurant, were seated and served without incident" (quoted in Frye Gaillard's book *Cradle of Freedom: Alabama and the Movement That Changed America*).

There you have it. Six magical words that transformed the nation in ways the founding fathers never could have imagined. So the next time the conversation turns to tales of the commerce clause, you'll be all set!

OLLI Life

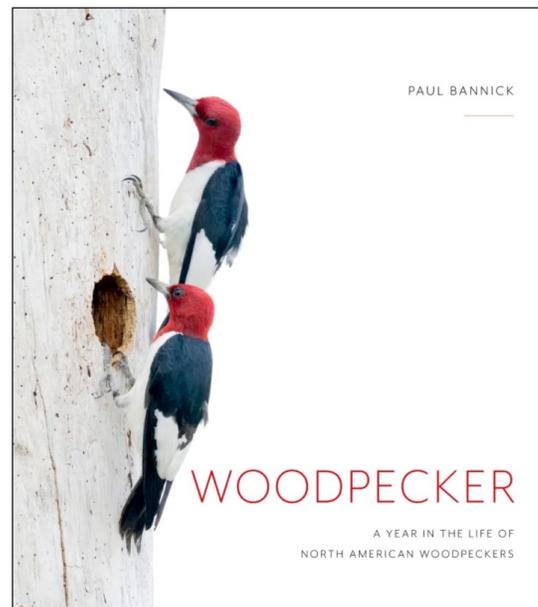
NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER TO SPEAK IN JANUARY

Paul Bannick, an award-winning nature photographer and author, will speak twice in Decatur in January. He also wants to meet fellow photographers of owls and woodpeckers.

His presentations will be Jan. 10 at 11:30 a.m. in the Alabama Center for the Arts recital hall and Jan. 11 at 10 a.m. in the Princess Theatre. Both locations are on Second Avenue Northeast in downtown Decatur. He will be one of the speakers at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge's annual Festival of the Cranes, Jan. 9-11.

"While Paul is in the area, he would love to meet up with fellow owl and woodpecker photographers in the northern Alabama area so you can take him out to your special places to shoot photos," said OLLI member Suezy Proctor. If interested, you can reach her through olli.info@uah.edu.

Information about Bannick and his books — including his latest, *Woodpecker: A Year in the Life of North American Woodpeckers* — is available at paulbannick.com.

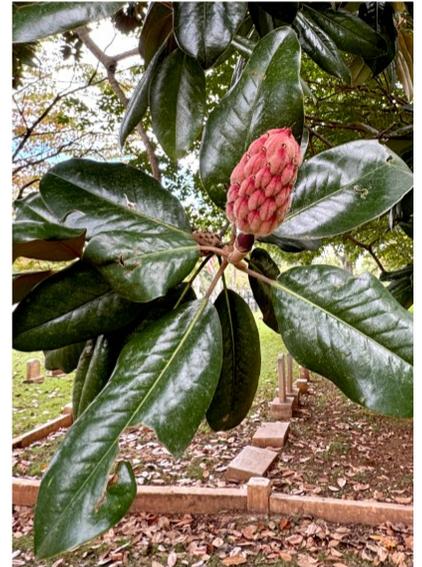


SHOW YOUR OLLI PRIDE

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

MAPLE HILL'S TREES AND HISTORIC GRAVES

Chris Stuhlinger and Marc Byers taught a fall course about the Tree Trail and historic gravesites in Maple Hill Cemetery. Chris put together a tree identification guide booklet, available at tinyurl.com/maple-hill-trees.



(Photos by Marsha Langlois and Jill Stewart)

NATIONAL OLLI NEWSLETTER ARTICLE ON UAH

This article — containing information by Glen Adams and a photo by Patricia Haag, both members of OLLI at UAH — appeared in the October edition of the *Osher Network Newsletter*. The National Resource Center for Osher Institutes at Northwestern University produces the newsletter. You can subscribe to it and see back issues at tinyurl.com/olli-resource-center.

INNOVATIVE COURSES AND CONTENT DELIVERY Curriculum Corner



Osher Institute at University of Alabama in Huntsville "OLLI 3D Printing"

Course Length: One session

Course Instructor: Experts at The Salmon Library at the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH)

Course Delivery: Demonstration and Lecture

Course description: How does a printer build an object you can hold in your hand? This course introduces the basics of 3D printing, from creating a digital model to slicing it into layers and watching the printer bring it to life with melted filament. Participants will learn about the mechanics behind the process and see the printer in action.

Of Note: OLLI at University of Alabama in Huntsville has a **partnership** with the Salmon Library, the University's main library, where members can take classes in emerging technologies including 3D printing and artificial intelligence. As OLLI member Phillip Graham notes, "More and more OLLI members are attracted to hands-on technology skills courses, such as 3D printing, because they are curious about the future and its emerging technologies."

The Last Word

VETERANS KEEP OLD GLORY FLYING FOR ALL

By Phil Graham

Being a retired military veteran, son to a World War II veteran, half-brother to another retired military veteran who served in Korea and Vietnam, and married to a military veteran (Mary), I'm humbled this Veterans Day when considering that which our two eldest sons and one daughter-in-law in uniform confront daily.

In 2002, Andrea Brett wrote the poem titled "I Am a Veteran." Each line of the poem is symbolic and reflects experiences of all veterans.

"You may not know me the first time we meet," she wrote. "I'm just another you see on the street. But I am the reason you walk and breathe free. I am the reason for your liberty."

The poem goes on to tell snippets from the stories of veterans from all walks of life: grocers, bankers, teachers, plumbers, barbers, preachers and more. You can read the entire poem at iamaveteran.net. Veterans Day will be Nov 11.



Image by [kalhh](#) from [pixabay](#)

"When Old Glory waves," the poem concludes — "I stand proud, I stand tall. I helped keep her flying over you, over all."

OLLI T-SHIRT CONTEST IS OPEN UNTIL NOV. 28

OLLI at UAH needs your help in writing a T-shirt slogan that encapsulates the pride and enjoyment of being a member.

An "Unleash Your OLLI SWAG" contest began Oct. 1, with a deadline of Nov. 28.

The contest is open to both OLLI members and nonmembers 50 and older, and each entrant can submit one or two slogans. The slogan should be creative and memorable, reflecting respect for elderhood and the value of life-long learning.

Selection criteria include:

- Conciseness — two to eight words, with each number and each symbol counting as one word
- Amount of SWAG — distinctiveness and differentiation from other slogans
- Memorability — bringing to mind a compelling image of elderhood and joyful connection

What are your ideas for an OLLI T-shirt slogan?



Judges will not know who submitted the entries. If you win, you get bragging rights, a certificate you can frame, and a T-shirt with your slogan on the back. *The Insider* will publish an article about you and your slogan, and T-shirts bearing it will be available from the OLLI merchandise store at tinyurl.com/olli-store (also available through uah.edu/olli).

Entry forms are available in the OLLI volunteer office (151 Wilson Hall) and at tinyurl.com/olli-t-shirt.