

The

# OLLI INSIDER

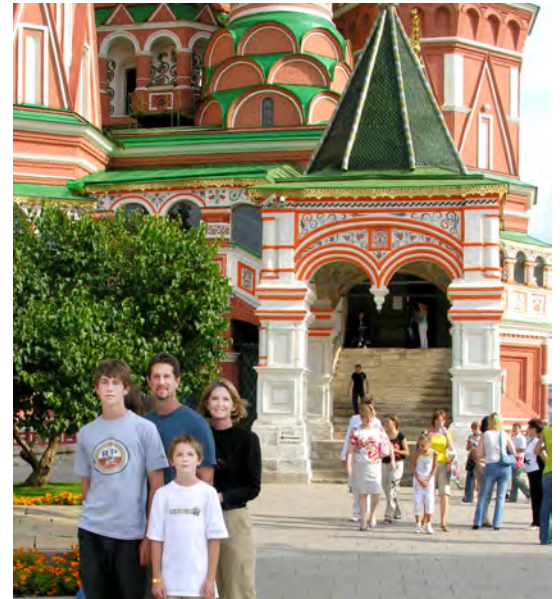
May 2026

News for OLLI members at The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Sonnie Wellington Hereford IV, the six-year-old son of a prominent physician, was the first Negro to attend class in a white public elementary or grammar school in the state. His father filed suit last Friday after state troopers, under orders of Gov. George Wallace, barred all pupils from the Fifth Avenue Elementary School and closed it for three other schools for the day.

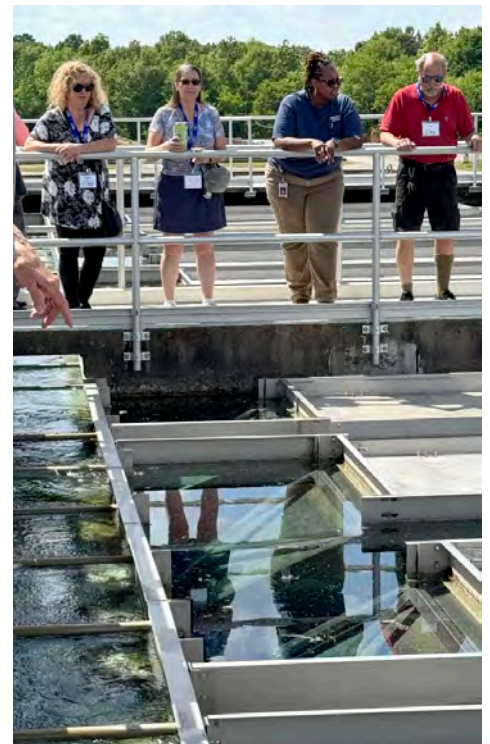
Young Hereford entered without incident.

Huntsville Courier  
September 10, 1963



## HISTORY, ART, DRUMS AND DRINKING WATER

Top: Decades after Sonnie Hereford made history at age 6, he attended an OLLI course where his daughter lectured (two photos); artist Jean Krieger, this month's OLLI Insider profile subject, with her family at St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow's Red Square. Left: Children of German rocket team families get applause during a bonus lecture; learning Irish drumming. Right: Touring a Huntsville plant that makes river water drinkable. (Photos from Huntsville Revisited, Beth Hereford Patin, Steve Stewart, Jean Krieger and Marsha Langlois)



[uah.edu/olli](http://uah.edu/olli)

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# From the Editor

## 'ELDERLY' IS LARGELY A STATE OF MIND



While reading young Jon Meacham's biography of Abraham Lincoln, titled *And There Was Light*, I got rattled because Meacham, 56, described a 73-year-old U.S. senator as "elderly." I am two years older and would prefer not to think of myself that way.

I had thought of "elderly" as implying decline, but when I looked up the word, I found that it simply means "old or aging." Well, I thought, "old" is a matter

of opinion. Then I saw that the same dictionary lists "septuagenarian" as a synonym. I am running out of denials here.

As a journalist, I learned that it was indiscreet to refer to a named individual as elderly. The adjective could safely be used for large, vaguely defined groups of people (or maybe, as in Meacham's case, dead ones).

When candidates declared for public office, I always asked their ages. One replied, "Old enough to know what to do and young enough to do it." He did not answer my question. He was probably in his 70s, and I was in my 20s. I certainly *thought* he was elderly.

He made a good point, though. We are only as old as we act. We age out of doing certain things but remain perfectly good, or become even better, at other things. Every person is different, and every situation is different. My wife Patrice's grandfather snuck out of the house and, against his family's wishes, renewed his driver license at age 99. Given a choice of two years or four, he chose four. He lived to 103.

In the OLLI parking lot, I saw a 4Runner SUV with a bumper sticker that said: "There will come a day when I cannot do this. Today is not that day." Directly underneath, another sticker said, "10k."

That's the spirit. We enjoy life and accomplish things while able, and we make adjustments as time goes on. If we are lucky and resourceful, we never run out of something interesting or worthwhile to do (such as hanging out at OLLI or reading Jon Meacham). If those bumper stickers are yours, I want to meet you. I like your attitude.

**Inside *The Insider*:** In this edition, we hear from several people who express thanks for everyone's help — but we also owe them thanks and congratulations for good work as they move on from service and leadership positions. Phil Graham will be stepping aside as president of the OLLI Board of Directors after a year of record membership growth. Betty Koval will pass the bonus baton to Lisa Brunegraff after the final bonus lecture of the academic year, which is coming up right away, on May 1. Marilynn Szecholda is winding up her service as Social Committee chair. Justin Clay, marketing and design specialist on the



**Are these your bumper stickers? Maybe they should be.**  
(Photo by Steve Stewart)

OLLI staff, will be taking a full-time teaching job at UAH.

Clay Williams writes about summer courses. Suezy Proctor, writing for the Curriculum Committee, discusses the advantages of courses that combine classrooms with Zoom and how to make these courses effective. Cliff Lanham makes the case for learning and writing your family history and cites help available from two OLLI courses to be offered this fall. Anelisse Westmeyer says more than 200 people need to pick up name badges from the OLLI office.

Jean Krieger, an OLLI art teacher and leader of the Artist Studio Member Interest Group, is the subject of Glen Adams' profile article. Jean's MIG column focuses on tole painting and rosemaling. We also have reports from two other MIGs — Hiking & Biking and OLLI Reads — as well as a list of MIGs and leaders.

John Mason reminds us to sign up for OLLI's annual dinner, on May 19 at Burritt on the Mountain. Chris Stuhlinger previews summer events. Dave Sayre announces OLLI's latest travel offering: a tour of Arkansas in May 2027.

Mark Tenhundfeld calls for "civility, humility and mutual respect" while celebrating the United States' 250th anniversary this summer. Lee Roop reflects on Huntsville's role in spaceflight and German rocket team members he met.

We'll see you again Aug. 1. *The Insider* does not publish in June and July, but OLLI keeps going. Enjoy the summer!

**Steve Stewart**  
**Editor, The OLLI Insider**



## THE TRAIL TO GOAT HAUNT



Stopping at a signpost such as the one below enables us to gauge not only how far we have to go, but also how far we have come.

For my “Trailhead” epilogue with *The Insider*, my reference point is the attached trail post picture.

Our OLLI at UAH has been graced with a 33-year legacy of discovery, hardships and perseverance to bring us to this signpost of unprecedented accomplishment over the past academic year.

My three-year trail crew experience with the National Park Service in Glacier National Park and years backpacking with our four sons imprinted the importance of stopping at a signpost, not as a means of laying out how far to go but to appreciate the distance, time and effort it has taken to arrive at the point of one’s trek. To look back and get one’s bearings in order to continue forward.

Our shared successes, to cite just a few over this past year, include:

- Establishing and installing an OLLI bench to honor our present and past members and their legacies.
- Partnering with the Broadway Theatre League, Fantasy Playhouse and Huntsville Ballet to expand OLLI’s exposure and commitment to the performing arts community.
- Writing and distributing the current news through articles, opinion pieces and photography relevant to OLLI members in the weekly OLLI at UAH *eNews* and the monthly *Insider*, and reaching national attention through Osher’s National Resource Center.
- Opening an online store with an opportunity to visibly display our individual and collective pride in UAH Charger blue and OLLI comradeship through memorabilia and quality apparel items.
- Generating a means for adaptive access to OLLI courses, events and activities for older adults who



are marginalized because of visual and auditory impairment.

- Undertaking a much-needed facility maintenance action by repairing classroom tables and deep-cleaning classroom chairs for our members.
- Emphasizing OLLI’s focus on health and wellness for elders through meaningful social connections, as well as through offerings enabling elders to reimagine our post-work lives.
- Delivering plentiful, nutritious, delicious and diverse food selections before bonus events and midweek lunches that effectively build friendships and transform social connections in a communal and welcoming OLLI lounge.
- Widening the aperture for immersion and experiential learning through a thriving and energetic assortment of regional, national and international travel.
- Strengthening OLLI ties with the Salmon Library, where we enjoy nonpareil support as well as

progressive success in having a voice with UAH leaders and administrators over OLLI issues and concerns.

Last year at this time, your OLLI Board of Directors identified a direction and a suggested route to reach where we pause today. Our simple strategy was to “focus on visibility” with an objective of growing our membership.

It’s a simple correlation; that is, increasing OLLI growth is positively associated with increasing OLLI visibility in our Huntsville and Madison County communities. With this past month’s release of OLLI’s 30-second commercial for WAFF’s weekday program “Aging Untold,” I’m excited about more elders being curious about the lifelong learning opportunities that await them at OLLI.

Similarly, the board also reviewed its quality of OLLI curriculum, events and activities. Incremental quality improvements and widening the range of opportunities for our members decrease the loss of OLLI membership

*(continued on the next page)*

# The Trailhead

## THE TRAIL TO GOAT HAUNT, cont from previous page

from fall term to spring term during an academic year.

Based upon academic year rates of net growth of membership from 2019 through 2024, our membership growth target goal was to increase by 3% net growth, and our stretch goal was a 5% growth rate. Conversely, to accomplish either objective, OLLI needed to decrease its historical membership loss rate to less than 20%.

Our dream was to reach 1,000 members by the end of academic year 2026-27. This membership number had been the requisite standard for UAH to receive its original Osher Foundation monetary grant for establishing OLLI on campus.

Membership numbers vary from week to week. The last end-of-month membership number for March 2026 that I received was 992. This number represents a total net membership gain of 18.8% from the end of March 2025 (835). **This is the largest year-to-year net membership gain since 2003, the first year of record keeping for Osher Foundation purposes.** Our present membership is the third highest academic year enrollment since 2003, as well.

Commensurate with this unprecedented growth, for the first time since before academic year 2017-18, OLLI experienced a net increase of 3.2% in membership retention from fall term to spring term.

Growth in OLLI membership numbers generates its own challenges, but as Program Manager Clay Williams remarks on a regular basis, "This is a good problem to have."

So OLLI has arrived at the current trail post, and we pause again to ponder in which trail direction to proceed. A backpacking trek, in my experiences with trail crew and with our sons, was never about a destination or how far we were to travel as much as it was about sharing how we would encounter, negotiate options and overcome obstructions that would otherwise slow our progress or force us to head back whence we started.

As I close out my term as OLLI board president, my heartfelt appreciation goes out to you because without you, your talents, your energy, your curiosity and our shared experiences, there would be no OLLI.

**Phil Graham**  
*President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors*



**SUMMER SALE** everything is **19% off**

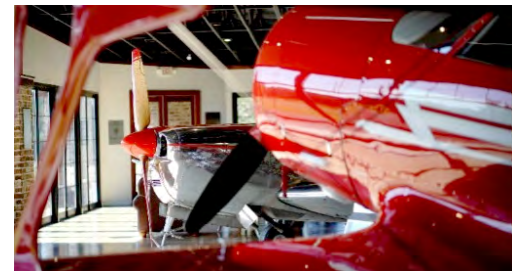
**5/1 - 5/31**

Now is the perfect time to pick up your OLLI gear from the merch shop. New items are available!

<https://olli-at-uah-merch.printify.me/>



# Events Committee



Summer events include, starting at top left, a Lowe Mill scavenger hunt, barbecue and minigolf, Alabama Constitution Hall Park, United Launch Alliance (tentative), Huntsville Concert Band, and Beechcraft Heritage Museum. (Some photos are from the venues.)

## SUMMER PREVIEW



Many thanks to all OLLI members who attended one or more events during this spring semester, especially the new members!

We have six events planned for this summer term; see descriptions below.

Remember that there will be no June or July *Insider* newsletter, so check the OLLI website for information about summer events.

### Event recap

**Irish drumming**, March 27 — Andy Kruspe from the Irish Drum Center led an entertaining and interactive bodhran drum session for OLLI members at the downtown Huntsville library. Andy described how the drums are constructed; he explained how you hit the drum with various tippers to create different sounds, and how you voice the drum using hand pressure and dynamics to best accompany the melody. Andy gave several demonstrations and taught the group several rhythm patterns, which we then played along to an Irish reel and an Irish jig. Andy has a teaching studio

at Lowe Mill, plays with several bands, promotes folk music concerts, and participates in many music festivals. Learn more at [www.andykruspebodhran.com](http://www.andykruspebodhran.com). (Submitted by Alison Toney.)

**South Parkway Water Treatment Plant**, April 17 — OLLI members toured this Huntsville Utilities plant — one of three that treat water from the Tennessee River for use by the community. The treatment process was explained in detail. During our visit the production rate was 17 million to 18 million gallons per day (gpd). The maximum capacity is 70 million gpd. Processing time is 8 hours for cleaning the river water to meet state specifications for drinking water. Water samples are tested several times per day. (Submitted by Randy Boyette.)

**Birding at Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve**, April 18 — Tim Gels (Land Trust of North Alabama) led our group in a discussion about observing birds in their natural habitat. He showed us how to use the Merlin app to identify birds based on location, color and sounds. Tim encouraged “slow birding,” a fun and relaxing way to observe birds. We identified around 20 birds by their calls along one of the

*(continued on the next page)*

# Events Committee

## SUMMER PREVIEW, cont from previous page

trails, and visited the bird blind where we watched birds enjoy a water source.

### Coming events

- Friday, May 29 — **Low Mill scavenger hunt** (Huntsville); hunt 2:30-4:30 p.m., concert 6 p.m. Cost: \$2 per person (cash only). Join us for a scavenger hunt at Low Mill Arts & Entertainment, the largest privately owned arts facility in the U.S. Teams of two to four OLLI members will each be given a list of items to find and photograph in several of the art studios. The top three teams finding the most items in the given time will be awarded free ice cream at the Fizzy Flapper Ice Cream Parlor. Stay for the free Concert on the Docks, featuring the Cigar Box Guitar Musicians.
- Wednesday, June 3 — **Putt-putt golf and barbecue** (Decatur), 5-8 p.m. Cost: Barbecue cost depends on your order; golf is \$4 to \$8 per game (cash only). Come join your fellow OLLI members for an evening of legendary barbecue at Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q, followed by putt-putt fun and competition at Funland Mini Golf. Choose from two options: Play 18 rounds of golf at just \$4 a game, or join a team and go tournament-style for \$8. See who has the best obstacle evasion and who can get that ever-elusive hole-in-one.
- Tuesday, June 9 — **Huntsville Concert Band**, 7-9:30 p.m. Cost: \$0. The Huntsville Concert Band is in its 63rd season as an all-volunteer community ensemble open without audition to anyone who plays a band instrument. Visit the band's home in the new Sandra Moon Performing Arts Center on the former Grissom High School campus. Meet the music director and the 80 band members and their instruments. Attend a rehearsal and learn about the music the band is preparing for its performance at the America 250 celebration in Big Spring Park on July 4.
- Saturday, June 27 — **Alabama Constitution Hall Park** (downtown Huntsville), 10:30 a.m.-noon. Cost: \$11 per person. Travel back in time to 1819. Discover domestic life in a family home; see a demonstration of a printing press and a demonstration of a working forge in the blacksmith shop. During our private guided tour, we will learn about the Alabama constitutional convention, Huntsville's first newspaper, and Huntsville's first "public library."
- Friday, July 24 — **Beechcraft Heritage Museum** (Tullahoma, Tennessee), 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Cost: \$11-14 per person. Visit this world-class aviation museum and learn about the Beechcraft models from 1932 through the present. Explore several hangars displaying about 38 aircraft, aviation artifacts and memorabilia, and an exhibit about Louise Thaden, an American aviation pioneer. We will have a docent tour from 10:30 to noon, but you are free to explore the museum between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Friday, July 31 (tentative) — **United Launch Alliance** (Decatur), 10 a.m. to noon. Cost: \$0. Tour the United Launch Alliance facility just west of Decatur to learn about the company's work of developing and producing rockets that carry satellites and astronauts for space exploration and terrestrial applications. Registration deadline is July 16 at 4 p.m.

**Chris Stuhlinger**  
**Events Committee Chair**



*Sign up now*

for the OLLI at UAH

## Annual Meeting

Food ■ Fellowship ■ Fun ■ Awards

Tuesday, May 19, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

**Burritt on the Mountain**

3101 Burritt Drive SE, Huntsville

*Buy your tickets at*

<https://tinyurl.com/olli-annual-2026>

# Events Committee

## GETTING INTO THE RHYTHM OF IRISH DRUMMING



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger; read more about this event on Page 5.)

# Events Committee

## SOUTH PARKWAY WATER TREATMENT PLANT TOUR

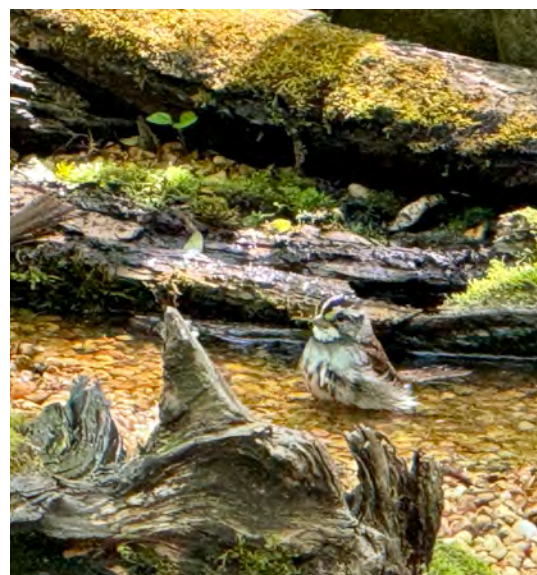


(Photos by Marsha Langlois and Chris Stuhlinger; read more about this event on Page 5.)

# Events Committee

## BIRDING AT CHAPMAN MOUNTAIN NATURE PRESERVE

The yellow-and-black bird in the top and bottom photos is a hooded warbler, according to a birdwatching app. The brown-and-white one — well-camouflaged in the middle picture — is a white-throated sparrow.



(Photos by Marsha Langlois and Chris Stuhlinger; read more about this event on Pages 5 and 6.)

# Coming Bonuses

## A SPACE CAMP BONUS, THEN A TRANSITION



Hello, OLLI friends!

As we approach the end of the spring term, I want to share some bittersweet news.

Over the past three years, I have enjoyed working with several wonderful people to find engaging topics and speakers for our bonus talks. With the upcoming May bonus, I will be stepping away from my role as

bonus coordinator.

I am pleased to announce that Lisa Brunegraff will be taking over this position, and I am confident that she will continue to bring many interesting bonus events to our community.

I want to sincerely thank each one of you who supported my efforts to provide stimulating and thought-provoking topics for the OLLI membership. Your encouragement has meant a great deal to me, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served in this role.

We had a few recent bonuses that required an overflow room. This makes me so happy to see the interest generated by the subject matter being presented. Thanks for your attendance.

Our next bonus talk on May 1 promises to be a fascinating one.

Robin Soprano, vice president of Space Camp who is responsible for Space Camp operations, will present **"Space Camp — Past, Present and Future."**



**OLLI members prepare to control a simulated mission at Space Camp on March 21. The May 1 bonus presentation in Wilson Hall will be about Space Camp's past, present and future. (Photo by Chris Stuhlinger)**

Some of you attended the recent Space Camp experience on March 21, and I hope this event will be repeated, as I was unable to attend due to being out of town.

I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting and dinner, which will be held on May 19 at Burritt on the Mountain. I hope everyone enjoys a wonderful summer.

Once again, thank you for all the support you have given me as bonus coordinator. It has truly been my pleasure.

I look forward to seeing you in classes this fall and at our future bonus events!

**Betty Koval**  
**Bonus Coordinator**



### Empower lifelong learners by setting up a recurring gift to OLLI at UAH!

Your recurring donation not only helps sustain engaging programs that inspire curiosity and connection across our community; it also earns you recognition as a member of our **Blue Gems Giving Society**, a special group of donors who shine brightly through their sustained commitment to learning and growth.

Make your gift today by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://uah.givingfuel.com/olli-blue-gems>



## WOMEN OF THE GERMAN ROCKET FAMILIES

UAH graduate student Rebekah Faris presented “Operation Paperclip’s Forgotten Women: Gender, War, Food and Identity in the Space Age” as a bonus lecture April 3. She described her studies about the women who came to the U.S. with their husbands after World War II to help build the space program. One of these photos shows some of those who stood after she asked children of these German rocket team families to identify themselves. The crowd in Wilson Hall’s lecture room (168) spilled over to a classroom (152); others were watching online.



The German families' "assimilation took place rather easily..."

- Historian James Hanson, 2012 documentary.

Ruth Hainburg accompanies her husband, Earl, as he receives the Hermann Oberth Award for his "outstanding technical contributions to the field of astronautics."

# WIVES.

Look this ad over carefully. Circle the items you want for Christmas. Show it to your husband. If he does not go to the store immediately, cry a little. Not a lot. Just a little. He'll go, he'll go.

CIRCLE ALL THE QUALITY DORMEYER APPLIANCES YOU WANT!

Husbands: Look this ad over carefully. Pick out what you, wife wants. Go buy it. Before she starts to cry.

**Dormeyer**

Integration into the Huntsville community

German Rocket Wives perform in traditional dirndls at St. Marks Lutheran church in Huntsville.



### Seeking Growth and a new German-American Identity

- Sought ways to engage with the local community.
  - St. Marks Lutheran Church
  - Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
  - Joined local garden clubs
- Taught themselves English
  - Ruth would read the Readers Digest, women helped each other.
- Non-traditional growth - Maria Von Braun obtained her pilot's license
- Education not taken for granted.
  - Emphasis on obtaining a 4 year degree (Erika Shultz Gerth)

The German Rocket Wives wartime experience and their integration into the U.S. was both formed and informed by their gendered position.

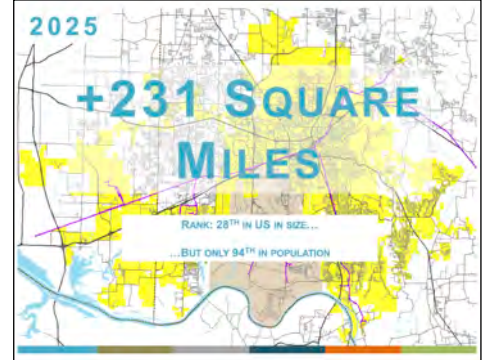
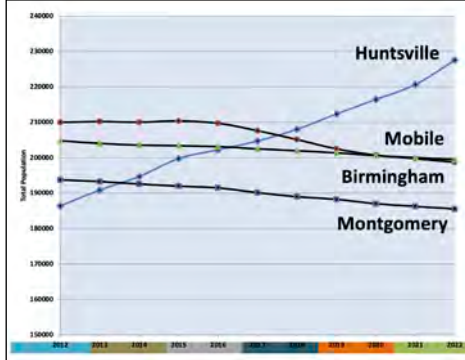
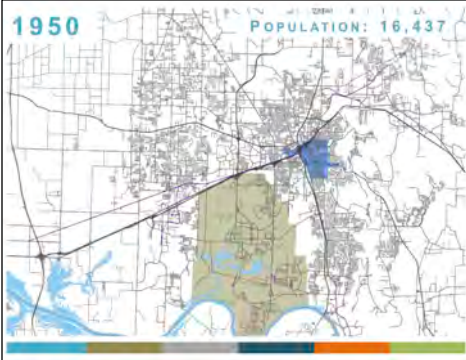
This research contributes to the historiography of this moment by broadening the narrative, engaging with nuanced and complex realities revealed through a gendered analysis.



(Images by Steve Stewart and from the speaker)

## HUNTSVILLE'S GROWTH: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Dennis Madsen, manager of urban and long-range planning for Huntsville, discussed how the city has grown and will be growing during a bonus presentation April 17. His audience was in the Wilson Hall auditorium (Room 168), in two overflow rooms and on Zoom.



Growth Estimates	Population
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Huntsville population as of 12/31/25: <b>250,648</b></li><li>Added over 35,000 people since 2020</li><li>17 people per day</li><li>Huntsville added 23,390 housing units in the same span</li><li>Fastest growing major city in Alabama</li><li>Average annual growth rate: 2.3% over the past decade</li></ul>

(Images by Steve Stewart and from the speaker)

# Social Committee

## MANY PEOPLE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR FOOD AND FUN



As this term winds down, I'm thinking of the many occasions that the Social Committee provided opportunities for members to gather and enjoy good food.

We supplied snacks for the open houses and the bonuses. The teacher appreciation pizza party was a way to thank our great instructors.

Lunches during the first and second terms were popular and well-attended.

It was uplifting to see everyone enjoying lunch with their friends. February brought the Souper Bowl — time to enjoy homemade soups supplied by OLLI members.

Still to come is the annual dinner on May 19 at Burritt on the Mountain. Hope to see you all there!

My position as Social Committee Chair is ending this term. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my wonderful Social Committee members. They were always ready to do whatever was necessary to make our events successful. From shopping, cooking and baking to cleanup, they were ready and able.



Members dine while other members serve their plates during free Leisured Lunch on Feb. 10, 2026.

And thank you to other OLLI members who contributed food, water, utensils and time.

Thank you all!

**Marilynn Szecholda**  
Social Committee Chair

**BTL**  
**BROADWAY THEATRE LEAGUE**

# 2025-2026 SEASON

[BROADWAYTHEATRELEAGUE.ORG](http://BROADWAYTHEATRELEAGUE.ORG)

POSTERS & HAMMERTON'S  
**THE SOUND OF MUSIC**  
LINDSAY A. CROWE

THEIR'S LIFE AFTER BONDED  
**Jukebox**  
THE 801 BROADWAY MUSICAL

**BACK TO THE FUTURE THE MUSICAL**

**shucked**  
THE FORTY-NINE WINNING MUSICAL COMEDY

**HADESTOWN**

**HELLO OOO, HUNTSVILLE!**  
**Mrs. Doubtfire**  
The New Musical Comedy

**BEST NEW MUSICAL**  
**WATER FOR ELEPHANTS**  
A NEW MUSICAL

PlayStation  
**THE CONCERT**  
THE STEVEN SEAGAL LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT  
**GHOST THE LAST OF US**  
**GOD OF WAR HORIZON**  
AUTOBOT JOURNIES UNCHARTED  
Bloodborne

**RICHARD THOMAS**  
**MARK TWAIN TONIGHT!**  
BY HAL HOLBROOK

**THE CHOIR OF MAN**

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

256-518-6155

# Member Services Committee



Enjoy the scenery as well as the fellowship at OLLI's annual dinner on May 19. Sign up using the link in this article. (Photos from 2025 meeting by Steve Stewart)

## IT'S BEEN A GREAT YEAR!



It's been a banner year for OLLI, and we're now looking forward to a wonderful and fun culmination of events at the OLLI annual dinner, Tuesday, May 19, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Burritt on the Mountain.

Thanks to all our members for all they've done in making it so successful.

By the time you read this, the new Board of Directors members will have taken their seats on the board and be preparing to elect the officers for the

2026-27 academic year. Thanks to them for picking up the torch and leading us into another term!

The OLLI Volunteer of the Year and winners of the Philip Flowers Memorial Photo Contest will be announced at the annual dinner, so besides great food, great entertainment, and great socialization, we'll get to congratulate those deserving and talented folks.

So sign up today at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-annual-2026>. The registration deadline is 4 p.m. on May 11.

Have a great summer!

**John Mason**  
**Member Services Committee Chair**

## The OLLI Insider needs your help!



Would you like to contribute articles, photos or other art for our monthly newsletter — either occasionally or as a regular member of the team, accepting opportunities to cover events and topics? (For example, we would love to replace ChatGPT with a human artist.)

If interested, please email

[OLLINewsletter@uah.edu](mailto:OLLINewsletter@uah.edu)

or speak with an *Insider* team member, who may be wearing a name badge that includes the word "PRESS." You'll often see us shooting pictures.

# Curriculum Committee

## LIVE VS. HYBRID: FIND THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS



My entire first year in OLLI, I chose Zoom for every class. I didn't know anyone, and I certainly didn't want to battle Highway 72 traffic during rush hour. No, thank you — Zoom it was.

That said, I did attend a few tours and special events. At each one, I met fun, engaging members. The annual banquet on Monte Sano introduced me to even more. That's when I discovered the "secret sauce" of OLLI — its

people. They made it worth the drive.

Then came another live event. I arrived early — of course — and, as many of you know, if you show up early, Clay Williams will put you to work! Somewhere between setup and conversation, I had a realization: I had found my place.

When registration opened for the next term, every class I chose was live. I felt welcomed. I belonged.

Fast forward to open house. I was excited to be teaching two classes and had created eye-catching displays. People stopped, asked questions, and showed real interest. I was floating — until several told me they wanted to enroll, but the classes were already full.

That was a turning point.

While I was thrilled to have full classes, I realized I had limited my reach by not offering a hybrid option.

In curriculum meetings, both Committee Chair Richard Brooks and Clay, the OLLI program manager, emphasized the value of offering hybrid classes — not just for instructors, but also for OLLI as a whole — when classroom equipment and other factors make it feasible.

Hybrid expands access, increases enrollment potential, and allows more members to participate, regardless of schedule or mobility.

Fortunately, I'm no stranger to hybrid environments. As a past international director for Toastmasters, I've facilitated meetings across the globe — United Arab Emirates, India, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore — many of them hybrid. One principle was always clear: You must treat online and in-person participants equally.

If you're considering teaching hybrid, here are a few practical guidelines:



**Hybrid classes allow more OLLI members to participate, regardless of location, schedule or mobility. (Art by ChatGPT)**

- **Be ready early.** Set up your technology at least 15 minutes in advance — and always have a backup plan.
- **Use a microphone if available.** It makes a world of difference for remote participants.
- **Go digital with materials.** Share handouts in advance so everyone has equal access.
- **Leverage Google Classroom.** It keeps communication and materials organized for all students.
- **Work with your remote moderator.** The OLLI staff provides someone to monitor chat, raised hands and engagement, ensuring that no one is overlooked.
- **Be intentional with inclusion.** I invite remote participants to introduce themselves first, then the in-room group. I also pause every 15 minutes to check for questions — online first, then live. Everyone feels seen, heard and valued.

Making the shift to hybrid was an easy decision once I saw the bigger picture. It allows us to extend the OLLI experience to more members while preserving the connection that makes it so special.

And yes — it may also mean more full classes.

(P.S. My next course proposal is Self-Publishing 101 in the fall of 2026. This time, it's hybrid.)

**Suezy Proctor**  
**Discipline Chair for Hobbies & Leisure**  
**Curriculum Committee**

# Curriculum Committee

## SUMMER OFFERINGS NOW AVAILABLE



**By Clay Williams**  
**OLLI at UAH Program Manager**

Spring semester has ended, and we hope everyone had a rewarding term.

The good news is that you do not have to wait until fall for new courses to stimulate the mind, body and soul. OLLI offers nearly 30 courses in June and July, guaranteed to keep your mind active throughout the summer months.

Don't hesitate, and register now.

Summer schedule is a bit different, as our courses are shorter with either one, two or four sessions maximum.

We know many of you travel and have other responsibilities, so none of our courses require long-term commitment. And as usual, we have classes in person, online, and a combination of the two. Plus, we offer some courses offsite to provide you a look around Huntsville to see everything our great community offers.

We tried to cover all the disciplines this semester. If it's history you like, then check out courses on Abraham Lincoln and the Americanization of the Gulf Coast.

Is fitness your thing? Then we offer Yoga, Master Your Balance, and even Line Dancing.

Want to get your creative juices flowing? Check out Building Perfect Pound Cakes, Art: Let's Try It, Earring Making, Digital Cameras, and Terrarium House for Home.

Looking for something different? How about Nuclear Re-birth, Mah Jongg, Geocaching, Navigating Political Conversations, or simply Protecting Oneself from the Computer.



See this flyer at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-summer-26>.  
It contains details about summer courses.

Go beyond UAH and take courses at 1818 Farms and Lowe Mill.

And as a special treat, sign up for a free look at *Alabama Heritage* magazine, which is celebrating 40 years of publications with an inside look at some of their past stories and what's to come.

There are other favorites like 3D Printing and offerings from our friends in Tuscaloosa to round out your summer. We hope you join us for all the fun.

Finally — although we are excited about summer — fall will be here before we know it. Look for news on registering for the fall in late July.



### Empower lifelong learners by setting up a recurring gift to OLLI at UAH!

Your recurring donation not only helps sustain engaging programs that inspire curiosity and connection across our community; it also earns you recognition as a member of our **Blue Gems Giving Society**, a special group of donors who shine brightly through their sustained commitment to learning and growth.

Make your gift today by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://uah.givingfuel.com/olli-blue-gems>



# Curriculum Committee

## INJUSTICE: WHAT'S BEEN DONE, WHAT CAN BE DONE

For six weeks during spring semester, OLLI's "InJustice" class met in the Salmon Library. Speakers described instances when justice was blind and the innocent were not protected. They discussed what can be done now and in the future. At age 6, Sonnie Wellington Hereford of Huntsville became the first Black to attend a white public school in Alabama. He was a guest while his daughter, Dr. Beth Hereford Patin of Syracuse University, spoke to the first class. Other speakers were former Selma-area District Attorney Michael Jackson; immigration lawyer Kimberly Fasking; Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist John Archibald; former Alabama Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb, addressing prison reform; and Dr. Thomas Reidy, executive director of the Scottsboro Boys Museum in Scottsboro. Ralph Petroff taught the course.



Beth Hereford Patin with her father, Sonnie Hereford



Kimberly Fasking



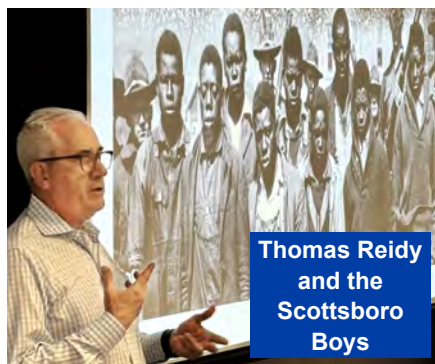
John Archibald



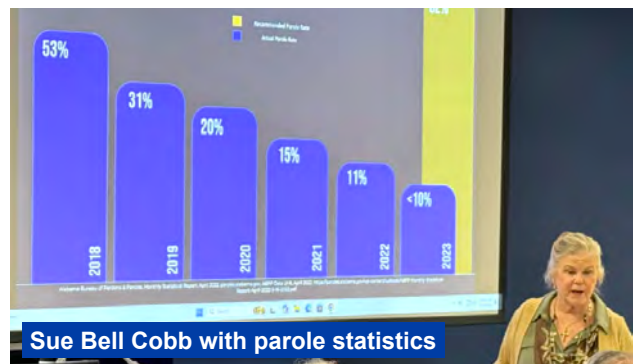
Michael Jackson



Ralph Petroff



Thomas Reidy and the Scottsboro Boys



Sue Bell Cobb with parole statistics

(Photos by Steve Stewart and Linda McAllister)

# Curriculum Committee

## 2 CLASSES YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE THIS FALL



By Cliff Lanham

Many of the OLLI members are approaching their later stages of life. Some of you are in your 60s, and a few of us are approaching the 90s! My gosh, 90! Almost a century here on earth!

As we approach our later phase of life, we often think of the younger members of our families. Will the grandchildren remember me 10, 20 years from now? What did I learn from my parents and grandparents, and how did that wisdom help me? Better yet, who were my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents? Why didn't someone write their story?

As OLLI members, we have opportunities to fill in this potential loss of knowledge. The opportunity to pass on knowledge and wisdom to our younger family members is at OLLI.

OLLI provides courses in **writing your life's story** and **genealogical research** of your family's history. These courses dovetail nicely with each other.

"Writing Your Life Story" allows you to write short stores of your life, which will provide wonderful events of your life to the next generation. Collecting these stores over a five- or six-year period adds up to a nice-sized book. My book was published back in 2016. Yes! Some of the grandkids have read it.

Genealogy classes at OLLI allow you to research backward to your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and beyond. Your research may surprise you as to how much your great-grandfather resembles you in appearance and behavior. Now, that could be scary!

These classes bring students together through shared backgrounds, life events, and sometimes even unexpected family connections.

I have taught genealogy at OLLI for well over 15 years. There has never been a class in which two or more students did not find that they were related to another genealogy student in the class.

Genealogy is a dangerous class to take. *Really!* Once you start your research, there develops a desire to know more about your family.

Much of your personal research can be done at home using



**You can learn about your ancestors and pass on information about them and about you to future generations. (Art by ChatGPT)**

one of many genealogy research sites such as Ancestry.com or Familysearch.org. Unfortunately, only about 30 percent of genealogy data has been digitized and is obtainable through the internet. Your research at some point takes you out of your home and the internet and requires you to travel — yes, research on the ground, in courthouses and locations in which your ancestors lived, worked and died.

Travel is not so bad, really. It will keep you young at heart. You will meet people who will broaden your horizons and add to your life's experiences, enabling you to write another short story for your life's history and expand genealogy at the same time.

Do you want to remember, to know more about yourself and your ancestors?

You may have folks in your past who were famous, wealthy, intellectual and even interesting. Then again, your family may have been part of the "silent majority." They did what was necessary to live, provided for their family, and died.

Whatever your family did was important to your family. You need to find out all you can to pass on this information. The next generation really does want to know their family past.

OLLI expects to teach "Writing Your Life Story" and "Basic Genealogy" in the fall, taught respectively by Peter Finzel and me.

What do you want to know about your ancestors?

# News From UAH

## I BID YOU ALL A FOND FAREWELL



Ahoy, OLLI members! Clay Williams has kindly offered up his column this month so that I, your favorite graphic designer person, can deliver the news about OLLI and other poignant tidbits.

The spring semester has come to a close. Now it's time to take a breath and think back on all the things we've accomplished in the last four months.

For me, I think I lost and regained the same 10 pounds at least three times. I know, it's impressive. But I don't tell you that to brag. In fact, my hope is that you've got something far more interesting to reminisce about.

Speaking of reminiscing (how's that for a segue?), the annual meeting is coming up on May 19. It will once again be held at Burritt on the Mountain. There will be food (hooray). There will be drinks (*hooray*). There will be chit-chat and tall tales. Volunteer of the Year and photo contest winners will be revealed.

You know the drill. If you don't have your ticket(s), I highly recommend you get them soon. There is a limited number of tickets, and 4 p.m. on May 11 is the deadline to purchase them at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-annual-2026>.

Summer classes start on June 2. Take time to recharge and get fired up for more OLLI goodness! Registration is at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-signup>, and I'm sure classes are filling up



You could say that Justin Clay is riding into the sunset — or that he has found a new opportunity over the horizon but still at UAH. (Art by Justin Clay)

as you read this.

Ah, now to the heart of the matter and the main reason I'm writing the column this month. As of the end of July, I'll be leaving my position at OLLI. (I know, I know, take a moment to let the sadness wash over you.)

I've accepted a full-time teaching position here at UAH and will start teaching graphic design classes this fall. The good news is that I'll still be roaming the corridors of Wilson Hall daily. I plan to occasionally teach an OLLI summer course and check in to make sure you're all behaving.

I'd like to thank you all for being so welcoming and kind. Seeing so many people who are enthusiastic and engaged has been a treat. I can only

hope that I have a smidgen of the energy you have when I retire.

Lastly, it's been an honor to watch membership grow over the last three years and to be a small part of that process. Keep spreading the good word about OLLI, and never stop learning!

**Justin Clay**  
**Marketing and Design Specialist**  
**OLLI at UAH**

**Postscript:** *Justin has been a pleasure to have as a part of the OLLI staff. His contributions are too numerous to list. He quickly acclimated to our OLLI family and has been one of the program's strongest proponents. He will be sorely missed. — Clay Williams, OLLI program manager*

## DISCOUNT TICKETS OFFERED FOR MUSICAL WATER FOR ELEPHANTS

Broadway Theatre League is offering a ticket discount to OLLI members on *Water for Elephants* on Tuesday, May 5, at 7 p.m.

This musical is about a young man who finds new life and love on a circus train after his dreams collapse. Phone 256-518-6155 and mention OLLI to pay \$68 or \$77 per ticket, depending on closeness to the stage.



Lonely name badges and lanyards in the OLLI registration office. One of the badges may literally have your name on it. (Photos by Steve Stewart)

## HUNDREDS OF OLLI NAME BADGES ARE UNCLAIMED

By *Anelisse Westmeyer*  
OLLI Registration Office Coordinator

As an OLLI member, I'm sure you're used to seeing reminders to come to the registration office to get your badges and parking passes or to see me to get a replacement.

Well, those badges have multiplied out of control, and now we're at about 241 badges that haven't been picked up!

We know we used to be able to send out badges, but the mail hasn't been ... well, you know ... great. Coming to the office to pick up your badge has been the next

reasonable option.

While wearing your OLLI badge isn't mandatory, it's a great cheat sheet for all of us to know who you are!

Feel free to call me at 256-824-6010 to see whether your badge is ready or has been waiting for you in the stack. You can also call if you're not sure that you have one waiting on you but feel like you might.

I'd love to know that everyone's been taken care of and can identify themselves for OLLI events and such. And if you haven't gotten one yet, the lanyards are pretty nifty, too! For OLLI members only. 😊



Visit "**newsworthy**" at [uah.giftplans.org](http://uah.giftplans.org) to learn how the new legislation impacts your charitable deductions this year and beyond!



# Travel Committee

## VISIT ARKANSAS, FROM CLINTON LIBRARY TO OZARKS



We are announcing another new trip:

- **The Best of Arkansas: Little Rock, Crystal Bridges and the Ozarks** — May 9-16, 2027. Arkansas is “the Natural State,” swathed in vast forests of oak, pine and hickory and adorned with rivers winding down from the Ozark Plateau and Ouachita Mountains to the mighty Mississippi. Discover these and other pristine natural treasures of Arkansas and encounter the great cultural gifts

enshrined in its cities and towns. Experience the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum in Little Rock, and find yourself immersed in Ozark traditions and music. To express an interest or request information, go to <https://tinyurl.com/olli-arkansas-27>. Or contact Jane McBride.



One of three bridge pavilions at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

The following trip to Germany was also announced recently:

- **From Alabama to Germany and back again** — May 15-24, 2027. The threads connecting these two places are woven through triumph, innovation and transformation. This curated journey traces the remarkable ties between the Heart of Dixie and modern Germany. Walk through Berlin’s Olympic Park, where Oakville’s own Jesse Owens defied Nazi ideology with four gold medals. Explore Peenemünde’s rocket research facility, birthplace of technology that launched America’s space program from Huntsville. Learn about the Berlin Airlift, when Alabama airmen helped save a city. And tour Hamburg’s Airbus plant, mirroring Mobile’s own operations. Discover how Alabama’s story intersects with Germany’s across continents and generations. To express an interest or request information, contact Lisa Brunegraff or go to <https://tinyurl.com/olli-germany-27>.

Our fantastic Travel Committee members have itchy feet for exciting places. Over the next couple of months, we will announce more plans for 2027 and 2028 adventures.

You can still sign up for these trips in 2026:

- **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 or visit <https://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 offers: 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 <https://tinyurl.com/olli-nm-2026>.

Here are a few of the destinations that are still in the works:

- Kentucky — Bourbon Trail, rolling hills, horse races
- Northwestern United States, including Oregon: Rose Festival, roses, tulips and horse races
- Michigan — the Tulip Time Festival in Holland, Michigan, and Mackinac Island
- New York — Finger Lakes and Corning Museum of Glass
- Japan
- Alabama parks
- River cruise

Never let curiosity fade! Contact David Sayre, other members of the Travel Committee, or coordinators for the trips at [olli.info@uah.edu](mailto:olli.info@uah.edu). All who wander are not lost!

**David Sayre**  
*Travel Committee Chair*

# Member Interest Groups

## FOLK ART: TOLE PAINTING AND ROSEMALING

**Tole painting** is a traditional folk art involving tinware. Very plain functional items became art objects. You may have seen a tin tray on Grandma's dresser, or a trash can by the bedside painted with a bouquet of flowers on a black background.

The technique began in the 1660s in Pontypool, Wales, where metalworker Thomas Allgood developed a rust-resistant varnish from linseed oil, burnt umber and asphaltum for tinware. This method, known as "japanning," applied a heavy black lacquer finish to objects and furniture. The French adopted and refined this technique, calling it "tole peinte de lac," which means painted tin.

In America, tole painting began in New England and expanded south because of German and Dutch immigrants. Tole painting was very much in vogue in the 1800s but fell out of favor by the early 1900s. The technique experienced a resurgence in the 1960s. Priscilla Hauser began to train teachers and organize studios around the Midwest.

By 1972, these American tole painters formed the National Society of Tole and Decorative Painters, which would eventually become the Society of Decorative Painters.

Metalware of all kinds, not just tin, was painted with intricate designs and then lacquered for protection. Representative metal objects included utensils, teapots, coffee pots, trays, containers and similar household items.

A key technique in tole painting was japanning. This process applied a durable, brownish lacquer varnish to metal, protecting it and creating a base for painting. A decorative pattern was transferred to the surface with parchment or tracing paper.

The decorative pattern was colored using a technique called "one-stroke" painting. The one-stroke method loaded a round or flat brush with multiple colors to create a leaf or flower in a single stroke. Typical brushstrokes were the comma stroke and the flowing



Jean Krieger's grandmother's tole-painted tray and wastebasket (above); Norwegian rosemaling on a tin box (left, by Erik A. Drablos); an 1815 tole-painted coffee pot (Wiki-media Commons).



"C" and "S" strokes.

Designs were enhanced by "sideloading" a liner brush for shading, teardrop shapes and delicate linework. Modern tole painting normally uses inexpensive, water-based acrylics instead of historical pigments mixed with linseed oil and turpentine.

Another, similar technique, **rosemaling**, was a traditional Norwegian folk-art form that emerged in the mid-1700s.

This method of decorating household items was used to brighten homes during long winters. Norwegian, Danish and Swedish immigrants brought the Scandinavian technique to America.

There are differences in both folk-art methods. German and Dutch tole painting concentrated more on metal and tin objects, while Scandinavians and Netherlanders concentrated more on wooden objects and furniture.

Patterns in the two traditions vary

slightly as well. Despite the name, rosemaling rarely depicts roses. Designs usually feature stylized, fantastical flowers, acanthus scrolls, and distinctive regional styles (Telemark Hallingdal and Vest-Agder.) Tole painting designs featured stylized flowers, fruits and rustic folk-art motifs.

If you would like to try tole painting or rosemaling, start with a small, flat wooden or tin piece. First, practice the brushstrokes on paper. Continuously repeat the one-stroke comma, C and S brushstrokes using the pressure, lift and drag method.

Tole painting designs are available online, ranging from traditional folk art to seasonal Christmas or winter scenes. If you have a metal tray, trash can or watering jug from your ancestors, be proud and display it — this decorative object is a part of immigrant history.

**Jean Krieger**  
Leader, Artist Studio MIG

# Member Interest Groups

## JOIN US FOR NATURE WALK, HIKE AND BIKE RIDE

Thanks to all who joined our nature walks, hikes and bike rides this spring. Only one MIG activity will be scheduled for this summer: a nature walk at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in June. A second summer activity might be scheduled later, depending on the weather and heat.

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. A valid OLLI membership is required to join the MIG and its activities.

Join the MIG: <https://tinyurl.com/hike-bike-mig>

### Summer MIG activities

- Saturday, June 13 — **Flint Creek Nature Trail**, 10 a.m.-noon (Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, southeast Decatur). Join us for this easy 1.5-mile nature hike through a lakeside pine/hardwood forest. We will have the opportunity to observe a variety of natural features with occasional glimpses of Flint Creek. The Flint Creek parking lot is on the north side of Alabama 67 (Point Mallard Parkway), across the highway from the visitors center)
- Saturday, July 11 (tentative) — **Nature walk and bike ride at Bradford Creek and Mill Creek Greenways** (Madison), 1:30-3:30 p.m. Walk or ride on paved paths along the creeks. The walking distance is at the discretion of the participants; total ride length is about 7 miles.

See you on the trail!

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



MIG events are planned in June and July, respectively, at Flint Creek Nature Trail (top) and Bradford Creek and Mill Creek Greenways.

## MAY'S BOOK TOPIC: STATE OF SEGREGATION



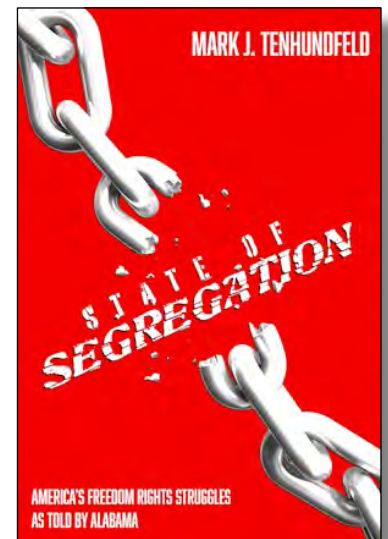
**Mark Tenhundfeld speaks about his new book during a signing event April 11 at Blue Apple Books in Madison.**

An OLLI member's new book will be the discussion topic for the May 20 meeting of the OLLI Reads Member Interest Group.

The book is *State of Segregation: America's Freedom Rights Struggles as told by Alabama*. Author Mark Tenhundfeld will attend the meeting at noon in Wilson Hall.

The book came out a month ago from The University of Alabama Press. It tells the story of Alabama's civil rights struggles, examining law and history.

The book MIG is meeting monthly, discussing a different book each time and alternating between fiction and nonfiction. April's topic was *Mona's Eyes* by Thomas Schlessler.



# Member Interest Groups

## WALKING AND RIDING THE COUNTRYSIDE

These photos are from two recent expeditions by the Hiking & Biking Member Interest Group. Steve Jones' video of the second event is available at <https://tinyurl.com/big-cove-4-12-26>. You can subscribe to his "Great Blue Heron" posts at <https://tinyurl.com/jones-blue-heron>.

### RAINBOW MOUNTAIN NATURE PRESERVE, MARCH 28



### BIG COVE CREEK/FLINT RIVER GREENWAYS, APRIL 12



(Photos by Chris Stuhlinger)

# People of OLLI



Jean's family travels have included (clockwise from upper left) an Ecuador rainforest, aboriginal sites in Australia, Red Square in Moscow, Fiordland National Park in New Zealand, and the Arctic Circle in Alaska.



## JEAN KRIEGER, FORMER TAX ACCOUNTANT, IS TEACHING ART AND CREATIVITY FOR OLLI

By Glen Adams

If OLLI members know the difference between pop art and op art or have found their own best medium of artistic expression, it's probably thanks to Jean Krieger.

Jean just finished teaching courses that explained the differences between various art movements from 1860 to 2000. She also taught a hands-on multimedia course where students learned new techniques and created innovative artwork. Jean also leads the Artist Studio Member Interest Group.

Jean is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

Jean was born in Hingham, Massachusetts, a town first settled by English colonists in 1633. The "Irish Riviera" is a nickname for the South Shore region of Massachusetts — Jean's grandparents were from Ireland and Sweden. She grew up in a typical Colonial farmhouse surrounded by woods.

Jean went to Ohio Wesleyan University, where she received two degrees: a Bachelor of Fine Arts (major in painting) and

a Bachelor of Arts (majors in art history and history.) After graduation, Jean left for California to work at the San Diego Museum of Art, be a waitress at nights and work at art galleries on the weekends. After three years, she realized that you could not make a living in art and returned to New England.

In Boston, Jean worked at Bank of New England's headquarters as a corporate tax accountant. She settled in Beacon Hill, walked to work, and traveled extensively.

Jean met her husband, Bill, on a blind date in Boston. The couple immediately moved north to Andover, Massachusetts, where her boys, David and Stephen, were born.

In 1997, the family moved to Laguna in southern California, where Bill became staff scientist at Tower Semiconductor in Newport Beach. Jean went back to work when her children were in high school. She loved working in taxes and was soon the tax manager at a certified public accounting firm in Irvine.

Once the boys graduated from college, Jean and Bill left for  
*(continued on the next page)*

# People of OLLI

## JEAN KRIEGER, cont from previous page

Oregon, where their elder son, Stephen, worked for Three Mountains Plumbing, HVAC and Electric. The couple bought a historic home in downtown Portland.

Jean pursued two of her favorite hobbies: art and gardening. She obtained her Master Gardener certification, subsequently designing and planting Multnomah County's "Native Plant" garden.

Jean revitalized the Oregon Society of Artists landscape gardens and consequently was given one free art course per term. During the COVID pandemic, Jean was also a "Produce for People" manager, planting seven gardens and donating food for nonprofit food pantries.

After riots in Portland that followed the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd, the Kriegers moved in 2022 to Huntsville because their younger son, David, worked for Blue Origin Space Rocketry and had built a house with his wife.

Jean's preferred medium as an artist is encaustic, one of the oldest painting



Jean's encaustic picture called Forsythia; her family in the Drake's Bay wilderness in Costa Rica.



methods. The word *enkaustikos* derives from ancient Greece — it means "to burn in" because every layer of hot wax must be fused with heat.

Jean is a member of the Huntsville Art League and editor of its newsletter and social media. She is also a member of the Alabama Women's Caucus for the Arts, National Association for Women Artists, International Encaustic Artists and Encaustic Art Institute.

Jean and her husband of 35 years love Huntsville. Jean joined OLLI in 2022. In the fall, she expects to teach a hands-on course called Let's Create and an art history course called Art of the South.

Jean's favorite quote comes from George Bernard Shaw: "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

Thank you, Jean, for all you do for OLLI.

## OLLI NOW OFFERING 10 MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

OLLI now has 10 member interest groups, including some recent additions.

Each MIG is created and run by OLLI members who share a mutual interest in a topic or activity. MIGs typically meet outside the classroom, and members decide where and when to meet. There is no charge to join a MIG, beyond your \$40 annual OLLI membership.

Here is a list of the MIGs with leaders or contact people:

- **Artist Studio** — Jean Krieger
- **Dine Out** — Sandra Dabrowski
- **French Study Group** — Sandy Moore
- **German Conversation for Beginners** — Rosemarie

Juergensen

- **Hiking & Biking** — Chris Stuhlinger
- **Let's Play Bridge** — Bob Darnall
- **Mah Jongg** — Annie Arrigo
- **Mindfulness in Knitting** — Pam Collopy
- **OLLI Reads** — John Syster
- **Tai Chi** — Phil Graham and Candi Holcombe

For more details about the MIGs, go to <https://tinyurl.com/mig-list>. You can also phone the OLLI office at 256-824-6183 or email [olli.info@uah.edu](mailto:olli.info@uah.edu).

MIGs' leaders are invited to submit *Insider* articles at [OLLInewsletter@uah.edu](mailto:OLLInewsletter@uah.edu).

# Constitutional Corner

## ON TURNING 250

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



**By Mark Tenhundfeld**

Vacations are great opportunities to reflect. As *The OLLI Insider* takes a summer vacation that spans the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it’s a great opportunity to reflect on what that document has brought forth. Stated another way, it’s a great opportunity to reflect on what it means to be “American.”

I’m not talking about who is an American. Most legal scholars believe the U.S. Supreme Court soon will give the country a suitable birthday present by affirming the long-standing rule of “birthright citizenship” (i.e., if you’re born on American soil, you’re an American).

Instead, I’m talking about what is an American.

Unlike other countries, we didn’t have a common religion, ethnicity, or allegiance to a crown uniting us at the outset. What we did have was a unifying grievance against a government that many colonists considered despotic.

That unifying grievance led naturally to the unifying solution: namely, a government that respected the “self-evident truths” of universal equality and the inalienable rights of everyone to (among other things) life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In a concept that was foreign to the monarchy, “the people” withheld their consent to be governed by the crown because the crown failed to respect the people.

Thus began our experiment in what might be called collective individualism. To be “American” was to be fiercely protective of individual freedoms. Underscoring the rationale for our independence, the Continental Navy and Marines adopted the motto “Don’t tread on me.” But it was more than a motto; it was a mindset.

That mindset immediately ran into a conflicting reality, however. Unless you believed in the fiction of white supremacy (as some people did, of course), it was impossible to reconcile the founding assertion of universal equality with the human bondage practiced by many and the subjugation of Native Americans. The founders also applied a watered-down respect for the individual when it came to women, who lost, among other things, their legal identity when they married.

While the promise of our founding was realizable at the outset only for some, the underlying ideals continued to animate the American spirit despite the awkward contradictions. Americans have long prided ourselves on our “rugged individualism” and ability to succeed through talent and hard work. And, like most popular narratives, ours focuses on some truths while ignoring others.



**The moon’s surface with Earth in the background — a photo from NASA’s Artemis II mission last month. “We draw our people — our strength — from every country and every corner of the world,” President Ronald Reagan said.**

America does reward talent and hard work, but it also has a history of excluding certain groups from a fair competition for those rewards. Some demagogues have sought to profit from that exclusion, selling a narrow conception of community and stirring passions with a message of “us against them.”

We can do better.

The good news is that our founding ideals, if applied consistently, provide the antidote. It’s as easy, and as hard, as taking seriously the notion that all people are created equal and that each possesses inalienable rights. Distinctions that are irrelevant to each person’s inherent liberty and equality — such as skin color, religion, sex or gender — should be treated as such.

Diversity is America’s superpower. By its very nature, it should transcend politics. Immigration lawyer Kimberly Fasking, in her wonderful presentation to OLLI’s “InJustice” class, highlighted that point by reminding us of the following observation by Ronald Reagan in his final speech as president: “We lead the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people — our strength — from every country and every corner of the world. And by doing so we continuously renew and enrich our nation.”

Recent tremors of support for a definition of “American” that exalts America’s historically advantaged undermine that strength. Succumbing to the short-sighted comforts of tribal identity enables demagogues to nudge us toward a despotism that holds out the promise of America for only the complicit.

Let’s save our tribal energies for college football games. And let’s celebrate our nation’s 250th birthday by focusing on those communal energies of civility, humility and mutual respect that are part of a definition of “American” we all can take pride in.

Happy birthday, America!

# Huntsville Then and Now

## HUNTSVILLE PROPELS AMERICA BACK TO THE MOON



By Lee Roop

Congratulations to all in Huntsville who are part of the latest generation of human space missions, beginning with the Artemis II launch to, beyond and back from the moon.

Everything was big April 10 in a space splashdown celebration by thousands in Big Spring International Park, the downtown spring that is the city's original foundation.

Those thousands included hundreds of new memories made and old memories remembered.

I'm essentially a lifelong Huntsvillian who arrived at age 3 so that my father could bring our small family from my birthplace in the Kingsport, Tennessee, mountains.

Dad worked in a military munitions factory there, but when there was no more World War II, there wasn't overly much to do. Unless you farmed, raised cattle on a mountainside, worked on the railroad or had a job in town. There was a little tobacco grown there, as well.

We came to Huntsville in 1956, where Dad had veteran's preference for a federal job at Redstone Arsenal. That's also where America ultimately stashed Wernher von Braun's German rocket team after the war. And it was where my sister would be born a Huntsvillian.

I'm a proud Tennessean by birth but claim the Rocket City as my own and hope y'all will always accept me.

How was that "y'all"? That's a joke



A crowd cheers the Artemis II launch at Huntsville's Davidson Center for Space Exploration on April 1. (Photo by Steve Stewart)

because people here then and today are from everywhere. My friends as boys were from New York, London, Los Angeles and Birmingham. And Tennessee Me.

We could hear NASA rocket engine tests then as we hear tests today for a private rocket factory owned by Elon Musk. Many locals knew von Braun then. I didn't, but did meet, interview and film most of his surviving rocket team for a series of *Huntsville Times* stories.

That was also amazing, and, I think, the recorded stories are somewhere in the Alabama state history archives. "Somewhere" as in the Arc resting and hidden in Indiana Jones' hometown.

What were von Braun team members like? Just people. Some were relaxed and helpful. Some were truly nice, and some were using good manners to get through the motions. A couple seemed bored and unfriendly, but it's challenging being smarter, much smarter, than

everyone and the only rocket scientist in most rooms.

I have little personal experience, to be sure. And some of their names might have gotten misspelled in a story or two. Accidentally, I'm sure.

My favorite rocket scientist couldn't have been nicer. I visited for a newspaper story at his house in northwest Huntsville. He had a big piece of hilly land with a machine workshop that challenged the size of any I've seen in any factory.

His home was (and still is) visible but where you might not expect it. It was not on Monte Sano mountain, the well-known home of many in the rocket team. It wasn't on the water, either, just on a hillside in good old northwest Huntsville.

Smart move, I say. Much closer to some of the best barbecue in the South that went very well with German beer. Still does.

## DONORS' RECEPTION AT UAH PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

OLLI donors were treated to a reception at the UAH president's house on April 6. President Charles Karr and his wife, Jodie, greeted them, and Karr spoke. The house, known as the Fletcher-Lowe House, dates from 1902. Information about donating to OLLI is at <http://tinyurl.com/olli-uah-donate>.



(Photos by Steve Stewart)

## German Prisoners Arrive In Alabama

ALICEVILLE, Ala. (AP) —The War Department today permitted disclosure that approximately 3,000 German prisoners of war have arrived at an internment camp just outside Aliceville.

The war prisoners began arriving by special train June 2. The camp here can accommodate some 5,000.

Eyewitnesses said most of the prisoners appeared extremely young, some appearing to be about 17, with the average age about 22.

The War Department has previously announced the locations of 21 war prisoner camps in the United States.



Learn how German prisoners of war experienced Alabama and how people today can experience Alaska. The Dothan Eagle published the news article at left on June 10, 1943.

## WELLPOINT PROGRAMS: WAR PRISONERS, ALASKA

Two presentations in August will offer examples of OLLI courses at Residences at Wellpoint, 2940 Mill Run Road SE in Hampton Cove. OLLI members and the public are invited to join Wellpoint residents to see either or both of the 90-minute presentations at 10 a.m. on consecutive Thursdays:

- “The Enemy among Us: The World War II Nazi German Prisoner of War (POW) Experience in Alabama,” pre-

sent Aug. 6 by Phil Graham. This is part of a prospective fall course coordinated by Lisa Brunegraff, titled “The Historic Relationship between Alabama and Germany.”

- “A Sneak Preview of Alaska — America’s Last Frontier,” presented Aug. 13 by Steve Jones and Chris Stuhlinger. They will give their firsthand overview of the 49th state, previewing a course they expect to teach in the fall.

## NEWSLETTER BACK ISSUES

Archived editions of OLLI newsletters from as far back as 2007, when Sue Chatham was board president, are available from OLLI’s UAH staff at [olli.info@uah.edu](mailto:olli.info@uah.edu). Request the specific issues you are looking for.

These archives previously were online, but they have been removed to comply with an effort to make everything accessible to the sight-impaired. If you would like to help update the old files so that they can go back online, please email [OLLInewsletter@uah.edu](mailto:OLLInewsletter@uah.edu).

at UAH  
**Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**  
 Est. in 1993 as the Academy for Lifetime Learning, Inc. at UAH

P.O. Box 1581, Huntsville, AL 35807 256-824-6959 [www.osher.uah.edu](http://www.osher.uah.edu) June/July2007 Newsletter

### Summer Enrichment Series = OLLI Members "In the Know"

OLLI members are delighted to hear, firsthand, about the transitions of our region’s growth resulting from the increased population due to the upcoming Base Realignment and Closure.

Each Tuesday, distinguished and entertaining guest speakers described the future of Huntsville, including Bridge Street, the plans for a world-class biotechnology center, the growth of Huntsville Hospital and other positive changes. Redstone and MSFC representatives discussed changes, including road construction, new facilities, larger workforces and the need for area schools and colleges to meet the demands.



Coordinators responsible for the Enrichment Series are from L to R: Mary Compton, Eleanor Carter, Barbara Lapidus, Elizabeth Earnest, and Barbara Lucero. Not pictured is Jerri McLain.

The Series, brain-child of Mary Compton and

# The Last Word

## OLLI MEMBERS HELP IN UAH KINESIOLOGY STUDIES

OLLI members have participated in several human-subjects research studies for UAH.

Dr. Ryan Conners, department chair and associate professor of kinesiology, said the majority of participants in these two undergraduate studies were OLLI members:

- “Effect of exergaming duration on accuracy, score, and rate of perceived exertion in healthy older adults”
- “Effects of water depth on heart rate, rate of perceived exertion, and stride frequency during underwater treadmill walking in healthy older adults.”

The students from these studies shared their research findings on posters as a part of Kinesiology Day on April 24.

The Department of Kinesiology invited OLLI members — specifically those who participated in the studies — to visit an open poster session that morning in 330 Wilson Hall.

In addition, Dr. Sara Harper's augmented reality study, completed in the summer of 2025, included a total of 10 OLLI participants. She is assistant professor of kinesiology.

Harper has a current study regarding contrast frequency on stairs. At least 19 OLLI members are already participating, and participants are still being enrolled.

Both Conners and Harper expressed appreciation for OLLI members' collaborations and support of their work — “especially our stairway safety research,” Harper said.

Kinesiology is the study of the mechanics of body movements.



**OLLI member Darryl Edwards runs on an underwater treadmill in Wilson Hall as part of one of the studies.**

## MEET SILVIA, WHO BRIGHTENS OUR OLLI EXPERIENCE



**Silvia Summers**

✦ Silvia is one of those rare people whose presence quietly lifts an entire room.

As a dedicated member of the Social Committee, she is always the first to step in, the first to lend a hand, and the first to brighten someone's day.

She helps set up the food for bonuses, making sure everything looks welcoming and runs smoothly.

Silvia also brings her own special touch to the OLLI lounge by arranging fresh flowers for the tables — a small gesture that makes a big difference in creating a

warm, inviting space.

Whenever extra help is needed, Silvia is simply there. No fuss, no hesitation. Just a smile, a positive word, and a willingness to pitch in.

Her kindness is steady, her energy is uplifting, and her love of wearing pink adds a burst of springtime cheer even on the grayest days. That splash of color has become part of the OLLI sunshine.

Silvia embodies the spirit of an OLLI Elf — generous, joyful, and always ready to make the experience better for everyone around her.

*Help The Insider identify and recognize people who quietly keep things cozy and tidy for the rest of us.*

*If you have a nominee, please email [OLLInewsletter@uah.edu](mailto:OLLInewsletter@uah.edu).*