

The OLLI INSIDER

October 2026

News for OLLI members at The University of Alabama in Huntsville



EATING, MEETING, EXPLORING, EXERCISING, LOOKING BACK

Clockwise from top left: Leisurely Lunch is free in the lounge every Tuesday; new OLLI members mix with veterans in the lounge; Madyson White (on the right, holding her coat), who is a new staff member and this month's Insider profile subject, travels with a friend in Greece; tai chi's popularity leads to another weekly practice; OLLI members' pictures of two of the dozens of species they saw in southern Africa; and a pilot recalls 9/11 and security lapses preceding it. (Photos from Madyson White, Suezy Proctor, Roxanne Pennington, Helmut Stahl, Marie Arighi and Steve Stewart)



uah.edu/olli

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From the Editor

HISTORY, ANIMALS AND INSPIRATION IN AFRICA



By Steve Stewart
Editor, The OLLI Insider

In some ways, South Africa is a mirror image of the United States.

South Africans drive on the left side of the road. South Africa's August is much like February in south Florida because they are equally distant from the equator in opposite directions. South Africa's population is more than 80% Black, while the U.S. is majority white.

Each country experienced shameful racial segregation and discrimination, but South Africa consigned it to history decades after the United States — although struggles for equal rights continue in both countries. Heroes and founders of modern South Africa are still alive. As OLLI traveler Barbara Johnson noted, being there is like having the chance to meet John Adams and Betsy Ross.

Both nations have extreme economic divides. During OLLI's group tour, we saw both wealth and heartbreaking poverty. South Africa's unemployment rate was 32.7% in the second quarter of 2026, according to Reuters; the U.S. unemployment rate in August was 4.1%.

Learning how South Africa overcame its segregation, known as Apartheid, was a highlight of this visit to South Africa in August and early September, with a side trip to Zimbabwe and Botswana. We toured museums, prisons and a hall of justice. We met a former prisoner and also Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela's jailer who became his friend and wrote a memoir called *Doing Life with Mandela*.

Mandela (1918-2013), a Black man who became the country's president after getting out of prison, was a hero. He led both a revolution and a reconciliation. His name and image are everywhere.

Africa's other big attraction was the animals: not only lions, elephants, baboons, rhinos, giraffes, hippos, zebras, monkeys, reptiles and birds, but also tiny beach creatures that were vividly explained to us by a retired high school science teacher who is a leader of a group that resembles OLLI.

The animals, like the people, remind us of the wonderful diversity and complexity of this world and the importance of every living being.

Inside The Insider: Jane McBride tells about her late, inspiring friend Sallie Smith, a grandmother with a plan to leave the world better. We will see the film *Sallie's Ashes* next month. It is about toxic coal ash in Alabama.

Donna Berger's column now includes recipes. Her committee is sponsoring free Tuesday lunches. Marsha Langlois writes that a name tag is a kindness to others. Speaking of kindness: Bill Confer says that OLLI cultivates empathy — a



An elephant ambles toward OLLI members during a river cruise at the Zimbabwe-Zambia border. (The boat captain eased away and kept them separated.) Nelson Mandela's statue is on a balcony in Cape Town; his former house is a hotel and restaurant in Johannesburg. (Photos by Steve Stewart)

good thing despite its detractors. Michelle Lavery writes that volunteering, just like learning, is good for you. Suezy Proctor describes the requirements and benefits of teaching. Mark Tenhundfeld explains "Popper's Paradox": Free speech is both essential and risky. Roxanne Pennington promotes a patriotic photo contest.

Clay Williams shows that OLLI always offers something interesting to do. Chris Stuhlinger and Alison Toney outline coming off-campus events. Lisa Brunegraff previews October bonuses and next year's Germany trip in separate articles. David Sayre says to stand by for travel details about Japan and Oregon. We have pictures and reports from Africa and the Mediterranean. Lee Roop is back from enjoying England — both culture and countryside.

Welcome to Madysen White, OLLI's new marketing and design specialist. Glen Adams writes about her.

From the President

WEARING A NAME TAG CAN BE AN ACT OF KINDNESS



By Marsha Langlois
President
OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

When I was much younger, my wonderful memory was not always appreciated by my family. I could remember things that they probably thought were best left forgotten!

Now that I am older, however, my personal database seems to be almost full. That is my current excuse for not

remembering things as well as I once did, and I am sticking with it.

Sometimes I meet someone, have a perfectly pleasant conversation, and then — almost immediately — their name disappears from my brain. Unfortunately, this also occasionally happens with people I already know.

I may not remember your name right away, but I can probably tell you how many grandchildren you have, where they live, and perhaps even what one of them majored in during college. Names, apparently, are taking up more storage space than my aging database can handle.

That is why I am especially grateful that OLLI provides name tags with a font large enough to read, along with those familiar OLLI/UAH blue lanyards.

I am always relieved when someone is wearing a name tag. There it is — right in front of me! No awkward pause. No frantic search through my mental files. No need to begin a conversation with “Well, hello there!” while desperately hoping someone else will say their name first.

I began to wonder if I was the only person who found name tags so comforting, so I did a little research. The information below was gathered and summarized from multiple web sources, and it appears that name tags can offer several benefits beyond simply helping us remember someone’s name.

- **They can make social situations feel easier.** When names do not come to us as quickly as they once did, meeting or greeting someone can sometimes feel a little uncomfortable. A visible name tag removes some of the guesswork and allows us to relax and enjoy the interaction.
- **They help create a stronger sense of community.** OLLI members come from many different backgrounds and careers. We include retired teachers, executives, engineers, homemakers, healthcare professionals, military personnel, and people from many other walks of life. Yet when we come together at OLLI, we share a common interest in learning, enjoying new experiences, and getting to know one another.

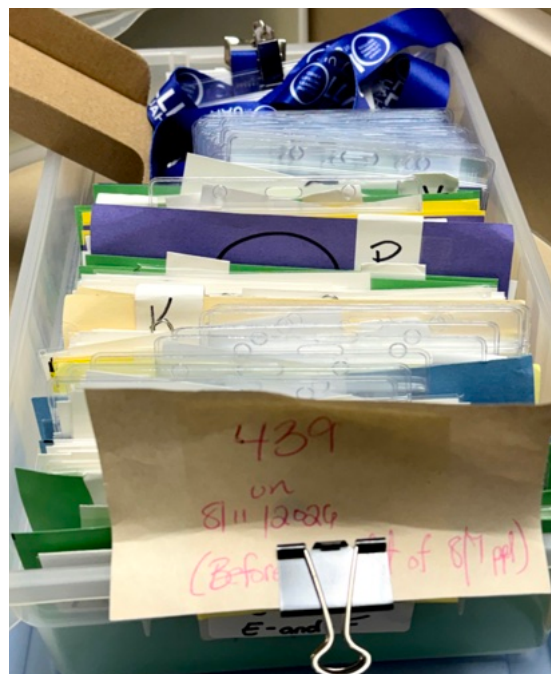
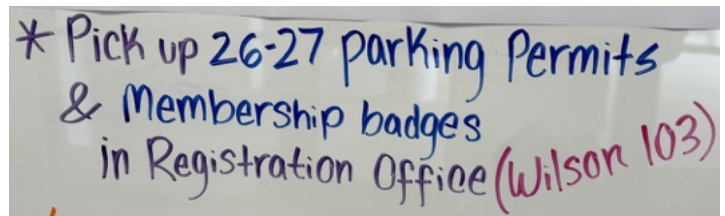
- **They are helpful for instructors and guest speakers, too.** It is certainly easier to call on someone or respond to a question when you can see the person’s name. And it probably makes the instructor feel a little more confident, too!

We meet many new people through OLLI classes, events, trips and other activities. If you are new to OLLI and have not picked up your name tag and lanyard, please stop by the OLLI office. They are free and included with your membership. The OLLI staff will love you! Note the photos about name tags waiting to be picked up.

Find a convenient place to keep your name tag so you can grab it whenever you are heading to an OLLI activity.

Wearing your name tag may seem like a small thing, but it can make a big difference to someone else. You may save a fellow OLLI member from an embarrassing memory lapse, help a new member feel more welcome, or simply make it easier for someone to say hello.

So, the next time you put on your OLLI name tag, remember: You are not just identifying yourself. You may be performing a small, random act of kindness — for those of us whose databases are almost full!



Unclaimed name tags and parking permits in the OLLI registration office prompted a notice on the white-board near the entrance to Wilson Hall. (Photos by Steve Stewart)

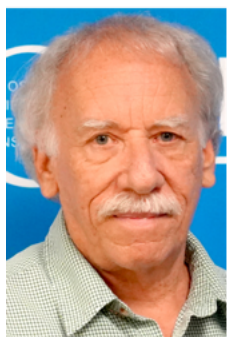
Events Committee



Coming events: Biergarten, water aerobics, ghost walk, dental lab and Guntersville Museum.



EVENTS FOR OCTOBER; REGISTRATION REMINDER



By Chris Stuhlinger and Alison Toney

Events Committee Co-chairs

We have five events planned for October. Be sure to register for and attend the events

of your choice. But be aware that registration for some of the events is already full. There will be no events in November or December.

Reminder: Everyone who attends an OLLI event must register ahead of time! Go to the registration page (<https://tinyurl.com/uah-olli-registration>) and log into your OLLI account. Select Fall Special Events, and choose the event(s) you want to attend.

Some events may require an admission charge that must be paid at registration or at the event (see the event description). The registration process includes your agreement to the release/waiver form required by UAH.

Details for attending the event will be emailed two to three

days prior to the event. We hope to see you at our events!

Event recaps

First Solar factory tour, Sept. 10 — OLLI members visited the north Alabama location of First Solar, the only U.S.-headquartered manufacturer of photovoltaic solar panels. After a presentation explaining the manufacturing process, our group viewed a portion of the actual production line.

Oakwood University and Glenwood cemeteries, Sept. 12 — Led by passionate Huntsville historian William Hampton, our group learned fascinating stories about several residents who had been laid to rest in these two cemeteries. Buried at Oakwood University Cemetery is singer-songwriter Little Richard.

Events for October

Note that registration for some of these events has already reached capacity. You can join the waitlist if you wish.

- Thursday, Oct. 1 — **Biergarten under the Saturn V** (Huntsville), 5-7:30 p.m. Bring your family and friends to an evening of good food, live music, and fun under the Saturn V rocket at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. The beneficiary of this evening's charity fundraiser will be OLLI at UAH! Cost: Varies according to food order.

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Events Committee

COMING EVENTS, cont from previous page

- Friday, Oct. 2 — **Water Aerobics at Huntsville Aquatics Center**, 1:45-3 p.m. Pool time! Get an easy-on-the-joints workout at the Huntsville Aquatic Center's instructional pool, a heated indoor pool with jets. Admission gets you the swim class and all-day swim, so get your swimsuit ready. Locker rooms are available, and there's a view of the lake you can enjoy afterward. Cost: \$4 (unless you already have a membership).
- Thursday, Oct. 15 — **Twickenham Ghost Walk**, 6-8 p.m. Hear stories from Huntsville's haunted past. The Twickenham Ghost Walk begins at Harrison Brothers and travels through the oldest streets in Huntsville. Stops include Helion Masonic Lodge, the LeRoy Pope mansion and Gov. Thomas Bibb's mansion, as well as the birthplace of Gen. John Hunt Morgan, known as "The Thunderbolt of the Confederacy." Cost: \$13 cash.
- Saturday, Oct. 17 — **Guntersville Museum**, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (includes commute time and lunch). Enjoy an optional lunch at Wintzell's Oyster House at 11:30. Explore the history and culture of the region, including Native American artifacts, Frank Nelson watercolors, and archival photos at Guntersville Museum, located in the historic rock armory, at 1:30. There will be an opportunity for an optional stop to see Honeycomb Natural Bridge on the drive home.
- Friday, Oct. 23 — **Oral Arts Dental Lab**, 2-4 p.m. See firsthand how artistry, engineering and digital innovation come together to create the restorations that dentists use to restore function and appearance for their patients. Guests will observe both traditional bench techniques and the newest digital systems, including subtractive manufacturing, 3D printing of resin dental models, and the use of lasers to create complex dental components.



The poster for the Broadway Theatre League 2026-2027 Season features a central image of Belle and the Beast from Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast' sitting at a formal dinner table. The background is a dark, ornate room with large windows. The text 'Be Our Guest' is written in a large, elegant script across the top. Below it, '2026-2027 Season' is written in a smaller, serif font. The Broadway Theatre League logo is in the top left corner, and 'OASYS, INC.' is in the top right. On the left side, there are three smaller posters for 'Waitress', 'The Neil Diamond Musical A Beautiful Noise', and 'The Wiz'. On the right side, there are three smaller posters for 'The Notebook The Musical', 'Beauty and the Beast The Musical', and 'Bluey's Big Play'. At the bottom, the website 'BroadwayTheatreLeague.org' and the phone number '256-518-6155' are listed. A 'Special Add-On' logo is in the bottom right corner.

Broadway Theatre League

Be Our Guest

2026-2027 Season

OASYS, INC.

Waitress

THE NEIL DIAMOND MUSICAL
A BEAUTIFUL NOISE

THE WIZ

The Notebook
THE MUSICAL

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
THE MUSICAL

BLUEY'S BIG PLAY

BroadwayTheatreLeague.org
256-518-6155

Special Add-On

Events Committee

FIRST SOLAR TOUR: HARNESSING THE SUN'S POWER



(Photos by Patricia Haag and Chris Stuhlinger)

Events Committee

2 CEMETERIES: PEOPLE FROM HUNTSVILLE'S PAST



Oakwood University Cemetery



Glenwood Cemetery

(Photos by Suezy Proctor and Chris Stuhlinger)

Coming Bonuses

SIGN UP AND BRING GUESTS TO SEE SALLIE'S ASHES

By Jane McBride

I write as both a tribute to my friend Sallie Smith and an invitation to you to attend OLLI's super bonus on *Sallie's Ashes*.

In the early 1960s when we were in college, Sallie Crosby stood out as a classmate who was serious, a little more focused than most of us. Years later, after kids had fledged, I became aware of a group of 60-year old alumnae whom I tagged "the intrepid hikers" — they were tackling the Alpine slopes in Switzerland and France with 20-pound packs on their backs. While I was not on those trips, Sallie always was. I connected with the hiker group when the pace was a little more to my liking: at the Coastal Bird Fest at Five Rivers Delta in Spanish Fort, Alabama, in 2014.

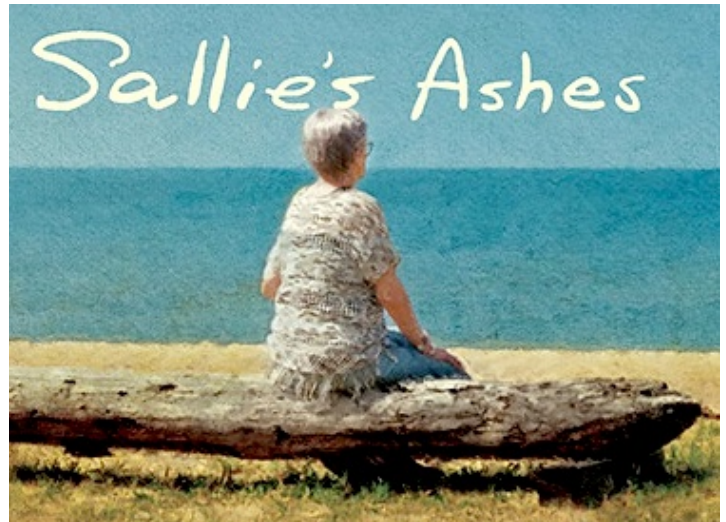
Sallie was living then in Fairhope on the shores of Mobile Bay. As a child she spent every summer with her grandparents there, so it really was moving home for her. She'd picked up where she'd left off as a teacher in Delaware who had distinguished herself as an educator; she was named Adult and Community Educator of the Year by the state of Delaware and given the Reading Award by the International Reading Association.

In Fairhope she opened a tutoring business called "Unlocking Potential." As an ardent volunteer in the schools, she initiated an award-winning program, "Read Aloud Baldwin." Sallie was deeply involved in faith and civic activities and part of founding the Hope Community in Baldwin County — a nonprofit promoting locally sourced healthy foods, employment opportunities and cultural enrichment.

Our classmate "hiker" group stayed close through the years, alternating laid-back vacations with more challenging camping and hiking adventures. During COVID, we, like many, used Zoom for staying in touch and planning future gatherings.

Each Zoom session began with a round-table status update from each of us. I distinctly remember Sallie telling us that her cancer had returned and had spread. Prognosis for remission was not good, but her spirits were high. It seems like only weeks after we knew about the cancer's return that Sallie said that she'd started a project and formed a group called the Coal Ash Action Group (CAAG).

She was as excited as we'd ever known her to be, and we were totally amused by her telling how this came about. She'd learned that Alabama Power Co.'s Plant Barry had dumped millions of tons of toxic coal ash on the banks of the Mobile River only a few miles above her beloved Mobile Bay. She told of spending a restless night contemplating the ticking time bomb upstream on the river, and imagining the disaster this portended for her children and grandchildren who lived nearby. The following day, she committed herself and her last days to doing something about that ash heap.



You can sign up to attend the super bonus about *Sallie's Ashes* at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-bonuses>. This event starts at 11 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 6, in Chan Auditorium on the UAH campus. At left is the late Sallie Smith (left) with her friend Jane McBride.

Ever the organizer and energizer, Sallie telephoned two friends who had her zest for making things right. Savan Wilson and Diane Thomas couldn't have been more perfect ones to hear from Sallie. They set about researching the history of Plant Barry, litigation and legislation that involved Alabama Power and environmental factors, as well as any possible mitigation potential for this danger. In short order, these three grandmothers had a plan, a group of activists, a website and a name.

Their efforts were tireless and remain so today. From living rooms to public spaces and from handing out flyers at every gathering to garnering big-city newspaper articles, the word was getting out. Other civic and environmental groups had taken up the banner to "Move the Ash" (<https://www.move-the-ash.com>). The classmate group caught the fever also, and we began spreading the word.

Soon we were receiving regular updates from CAAG about the urgency of 21 million tons (or 541 football fields) of deadly arsenic, cobalt and other heavy metals heaped on unlined soil in a U-shaped bend of the Mobile River, protected only by a dirt mound. Any hurricane-force wind or flood could cause a breach in this dike and spill the

(continued on the next page)

Coming Bonuses

OCTOBER: STORYTELLERS AND FLAMETHROWERS



By Lisa Brunegraff
Fall Bonus Coordinator

Join us for two bonuses in October.

As usual, they are free to all OLLI members, but please register beforehand so that we can be sure to have food and space for you. The link is <https://tinyurl.com/olli-bonuses>.

Each bonus starts at 11 a.m. in 168 Wilson Hall or Chan Auditorium, which is in the nearby Business Adminis-

tration Building.

The Art of Storytelling, Oct. 9 — The annual Athens Storytelling Festival is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. It is dedicated to preserving and expanding the essential art of storytelling.

We are having two representative of the festival share their talents with us: Leah Oakley, the current president of the festival board, serves as the emcee for the week. Tim Chasteen is also on the storytelling board and serves as the liaison for the master storytellers. Both have deep roots in the Athens community.

Plus, there will be a drawing for tickets to the storytelling event in Athens on Oct. 22-24.

My Old Flame ... Throwers, Oct. 23 — Looking for a class that really sparks interest? Come explore the fiery world of antique gasoline blowtorches!

We'll uncover the who, what, when, where, how and why — plus meet the Blow Torch Collectors Association of America.

Our very own Suezy Proctor, an OLLI member since January 2025, will tell her story. She still carries a 30-year torch for these blazing old "flamethrowers."

SALLIE'S ASHES, cont from previous page

contents. Furthermore, these toxins were leaching into groundwater.

We soon learned, just as Sallie had run out of options to treat her cancers, that a documentary film crew was seeking to record the efforts of the "grannies" at work. The producer/videographer had heard an NPR segment on the determination of three grandmothers' fight against an industrial giant in south Alabama. The crew filmed for the last six weeks of Sallie's life. She died Oct. 27, 2023.

In conclusion and as a testament to Sallie's legacy, I quote from The Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) July 2026 newsletter *The Advisor*: "In 2022, a group called Mobile Baykeepers filed a lawsuit against Alabama Power over its Barry Ash Pond, estimated at 21 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash. The federal district court dismissed the case, but

an appeal was filed. Last month the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned that dismissal."

The RSA writers go on to warn that a breach of the earthen dike at the Barry site would turn Mobile Bay into a wasteland, rendering the coastal areas of Alabama in far worse conditions than the BP oil spill and destroying tourism and the export/import industry at Mobile. Similar breaches of coal ash at the smaller Tennessee River site at Kingston, Tennessee, and Dan River, North Carolina, caused 250 workers to become chronically ill and killed 30 cleanup crew members.

You are invited to bring guests to the showing of the award-winning documentary *Sallie's Ashes*, OLLI's super bonus, on Nov. 6 at 11 a.m. in Chan Auditorium.

PUZZLEMANIA CHALLENGES OLLI BRAINS

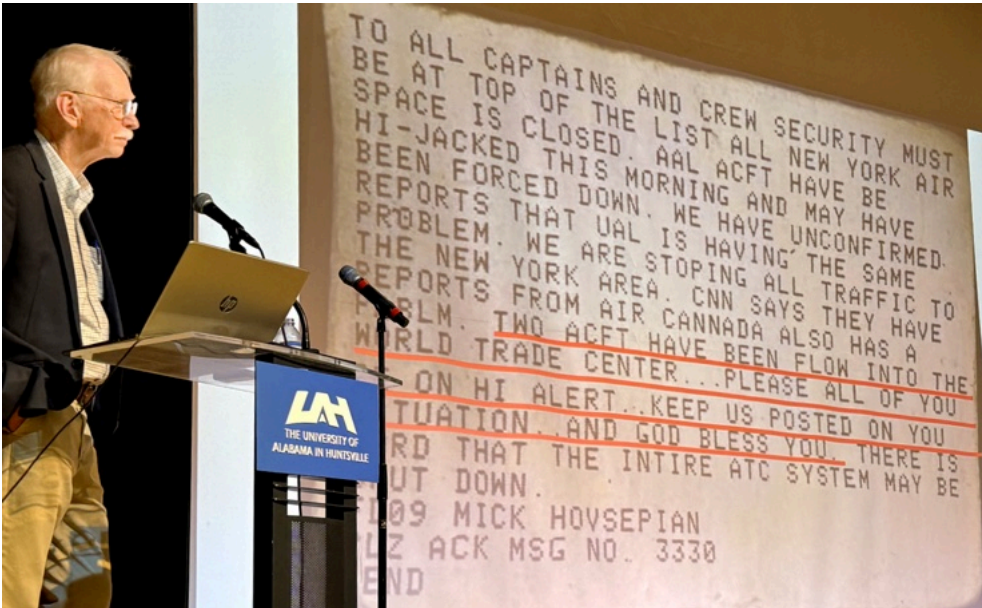
Puzzlemania on Aug. 13 provided a challenge as well as conversation, food and drinks. The group completed one puzzle and started two. One 1,000-piece puzzle was left in the lounge for others to tackle.

The lounge also contains a puzzle exchange. (Photos by Anelisse Westmeyer)



AN AIRLINE PILOT LOOKS BACK AT 9/11/2001

Alan Cockrell, an airline pilot, was scheduled to fly on Sept. 11, 2001 — but terrorists crashed passenger planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Pennsylvania before he got into the air. Twenty-five years later to the day, he presented an OLLI bonus lecture in Chan Auditorium about his experiences. He criticized the industry's “laissez-faire attitude” toward security before 9/11. Cockrell, who lives at Gurley, is now an author and writer.



(Photos by Steve Stewart and Madyson White)

Course Spotlight

There is still time to register for fall 2026 courses. Register here: <https://olli.uah.edu/olliatuah/category/category.aspx>



DIGITAL PHOTO EDITING USING LIGHTROOM CLASSIC

10/13 – 11/3 • T • 8:30 – 10 a.m. • 4 sessions • Live virtual • G. Tackett • \$40

What's the difference between your snapshots and the stunning photos you see online, in photobooks, and proudly displayed on the wall? Sometimes simply post-processing to bring out the best of all the information encoded in your digital photos. Learn the fundamentals of digital photo editing, and walk through examples using Lightroom Classic (not required to purchase). Upload your own photos to the digital classroom so we can edit them as a class.



EXPLORING CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR OUR TIME

10/13 – 10/27 • T/Th • 3:15 – 4:45 p.m. • 5 sessions • In person • R. Goebel • \$40

Despite popular music, casual internet listening and dwindling financial resources, Western classical music proves all the more important for today's culture. This course will explore a wide range of music, from the baroque to contemporary styles, in its historical context, compositional techniques, and cultural significance for today. If possible, we will also make a field trip to one of the large organs in town, to witness how an organist rehearses for a recital program.



BEGINNING FRENCH II

10/20 – 11/10 • T • 8:30 – 10 a.m. • 4 sessions • In person • T. Prescott • \$40

This course is a follow up to the Beginning French class offered in the spring 2026 session. We will continue to explore basic French grammar and conversation with a focus on tools for travel in the Francophone countries.



LET'S DANCE THE RUMBA

10/21 – 11/11 • W • 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. • 4 sessions • In person • T. Romine • \$40

It's never too late to learn to dance! The rumba is a smooth dance for slow songs. Feel comfortable dancing at your holiday parties by learning several rumba steps to popular music, regardless of your level of dance experience. It is helpful to sign up with a partner, but it's not required.

Save 20%

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

OLLI CULTIVATES THE WISDOM OF EMPATHY



By Bill Confer

We appear to have evolved as a species with a capacity for empathy, an ability to put oneself inside the experience of another person so, to some extent, we can view the world from the vantage point of the other. This advantageous genetic/biological predisposition to understand and get along with others becomes activated through maturation: accumulated

wisdom, social sophistication, and cultivation of virtues.

Empathy has been a civilizing force in societies. Casual cruelties once viewed as entertainment and indifference to suffering of others have either lost their audience or become subject to legal restraint as individuals have become more learned and humane. The rise in literacy and popularity of novels have been proposed as potent sources of teaching empathy.

Psychopaths, predators and bullies have impaired empathy. Some forces in our society today do not see empathy as moral virtue as do philosophers, do not see empathy as character strength as do psychologists, and do not see empathy as a core construct for living well as do secular humanists and those with religious compassion.

Recent detractors of empathy disparage it as “dangerous,” “canceling culture,” “sinful,” “woke,” “unmanly,” “toxic,” or a sign of “weaponization” by liberalism. Elon Musk has characterized empathy as “the fundamental weakness of Western civilization.” One author cherry-picked the Bible to coin “the sin of empathy.”

As any virtue carried to excess becomes a vice, empathy is not putting up with anything on the part of others or becoming subservient to exploitation. Excessive empathy may be modestly harmful, but a paucity of empathy is a toxin by which ordinary people give themselves permission to do horrible things. Selective empathy is fuel for atrocities to “out groups” when paired with the abuse of power.

When moral strength is caricatured as moral weakness by those who wish to dominate, kindness is said to be for losers and service for suckers, social provision is mislabeled as socialism, and civility/decorum is ironically demeaned as



Empathy has been a civilizing force, but some do not see it as virtue. (Image by HtcHnm from pixabay.com)

“political correctness,” then negotiation and compromise are slighted as excessive deference rather than including the wants of others as well as one’s own wants in win-win decision-making. Disrespect and brutishness are reassessed as candor. Acceptance of blatant lies is refashioned as loyalty. Obvious components of a democracy such as tolerance for diversity, equitable treatment, and inclusion in the benefits of society are inverted as selfishness, derangement, unappreciation, etc.

When empathy is derided, loyalty to greed, dominance, self-indulgence, exclusion, and excessive stimulation are redefined as entitlements, fruits of exceptionalism, or spoils to the victors. Mercy, compassion, abiding by just law, and ordinary deference like courtesy and respect for differences are redefined as “silly rules” that limit conquest.

OLLI is a bastion for cultivating wisdom, virtue and empathy through coursework in philosophy, science, social relations, religion, cultural history, art, language and craft, among others where information and discussion are exchanged. Moreover, congenial social gatherings are practices of respect, inclusion and kindness. We are lucky to have OLLI.

Curriculum Committee

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN OLLI INSTRUCTOR



By Suezy Proctor

OLLI Instructors are the foundation of our program! OLLI's curriculum is conceived by our members, for our members. So! What does it take to be an OLLI instructor? What does it take to teach? Why teach?

Every OLLI instructor I have met had one thing in common with other instructors: passion. Passion for the focus of their course, be it tai chi, history, art, music, games, travel, language, civil conversation, good books — the list goes on.

The varied courses I have taken inform me that they are also people who love talking about their passion. Voila! There's a teacher!

OLLI instructors do not need any formal teaching experience. They do not need to be the world champion of public speaking. They need a pulse and a desire to share what they know about something they are passionate about. But don't take my word for it. Here's what other OLLI instructors have to say for themselves:

Steve Jones: "*Knowledge of and passion for the subject.* I learn from teaching — in preparation and through discussion. I stay sharp and subject-matter proficient. My teaching and learning inform my writing and subsequent speaking. It furthers my written retirement mission: Employ writing and speaking to educate, inspire and enable readers and listeners to understand, appreciate and enjoy nature ... and accept and



(Art by ChatGPT)

practice Earth Stewardship." Steve's courses: At least a dozen to date.

Lisa Brunegraff: "*When you teach, you learn again.* Teaching is a great way to learn. Sometimes it's new things, relearning what you have forgotten, or what you should have learned in the first place. I have enjoyed doing the research and meeting people who are directly connected to the subject." Lisa's courses: "Women in Aviation," "Bicycling in the New Millennium," and currently "The History of the Relationship Between Alabama and Germany."

John Mason: "*Docendo discimus.* A Latin proverb that translates to 'by teaching, we learn.' It reflects the idea that explaining ideas to others helps us understand and remember them better. I teach mainly because I am interested in any number of subjects and think that others might be interested, too. It's

a win-win!" John's courses: Various history, economics.

Chris Stuhlinger: "*The ultimate reward.* I started teaching soon after I joined in 2020. I enjoy sharing my knowledge and experiences with others, to help them understand better and develop a broader awareness of the course topics. My preparation for each course always includes additional research. I learn even more as I prepare. The ultimate reward is to see the students apply what they have learned, whether it be identifying trees, choosing travel destinations, or learning about their hometown." Chris' courses: Travel, national parks, forestry, history.

Philip Graham, past board president: "*What I love about teaching:* I thrive on all opportunities to enrich OLLI members who remain curious." Phil's courses: Genealogy, tai chi, military history.

News From UAH

NEVER A DULL MOMENT



By Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

"I'm bored." "There is nothing to do."

Anyone who has raised children is familiar with these phrases, as kids have long challenged parents with finding them something to do. Luckily, OLLI members should never have that problem.

OLLI membership provides a large number of benefits and opportunities for mental and social growth.

The most obvious one is the multitude of courses one can take. Topics range from history to literature, to science and health, and all points in between. There is definitely something for everyone. We have three semesters (fall, spring and summer) to expand your mind in a variety of fields.

But there is so much more to OLLI. Check out our free bonus presentations that take place in the fall and spring. These occur on selected Fridays at 11 a.m. and feature a variety of topics and are free with membership. Our OLLI Social Committee provides wonderful snacks and refreshments before and after each event so you can socialize with fellow members.

Speaking of socialization, OLLI provides plenty of fun social events. This fall, we offer Leisurely Lunches on Tuesdays, the Biergarten event in October and our annual Holiday party this December, where OLLI members can enjoy food, fellowship and fun.

Each semester also features tours and special events. Visit nearby museums and historic sites, natural wonders, intriguing businesses and laboratories, and other local attractions. Huntsville and north Alabama are filled with wonderful things to see. Let OLLI show you what's in your own backyard.

OLLI also provides a tailor-made group to travel the country and the world (<https://tinyurl.com/olli-travel>). Each year, we offer excursions nationally and internationally. Coming trips are to New Mexico, Arkansas, Germany and Japan. OLLI travelers just got back from South Africa and the Dalmatian Coast. Join a group of lifelong learners on a



Socializing and playing a game during fall-semester open house on Aug. 7, which featured many activities available to OLLI members. (Photo by Patricia Haag)

great trip, and leave the planning and logistics to us.

One of the fastest growing aspects of OLLI is our member interest groups or MIGs (<https://tinyurl.com/olli-migs>). These MIGs are the perfect complement to courses. They are member-led and meet outside the classroom. OLLI has 10 MIGs, including Mah Jongg, Tai Chi, Hiking & Biking and even Dine Out. There is something for everyone.

And don't forget our relationship to UAH itself. Being affiliated with a university provides our members access to UAH facilities such as the library, fitness center and Charger Cafe. Cheer on the Chargers at sporting events such as volleyball, basketball, baseball, soccer, lacrosse and others. Plus attend movies, plays and other events hosted by UAH itself.

As you navigate all the wonderful opportunities at OLLI, do not forget that the UAH staff is here to assist you. The registration office located in 103 Wilson Hall is open 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Whether it is helping you understand our registration system or Google Classroom or any other question you might have, do not hesitate to talk to us. We want to make sure you get the most out of your OLLI membership and never have a dull moment.

We hope you are having a wonderful semester.

Member Services Committee

PHOTO CONTEST HAS A PATRIOTIC THEME



By Roxanne Pennington
Member Services Committee Chair

Each year, Member Services holds the Philip Flowers Memorial Photo Contest, which is open to all OLLI members. In honor of our country's 250th anniversary, this year's theme is "USA 250: Celebrating American Culture."

Photos should reveal some aspect of our culture and may incorporate red, white and/or blue.

Photos taken between June 2026 and April 2027 are eligible.

Submissions will begin in November, and judging will take place at the end of April 2027.

Winners will be announced at the OLLI banquet in May.

Grateful for volunteers and staff

For the first two weeks of classes, 20 OLLI volunteers manned the member services office (151 Wilson Hall), directed students to their OLLI classes, and answered questions about member interest groups (MIGs), the testing center on the second floor, and the medical clinic on the third floor of



"USA 250: Celebrating American Culture" is the theme of this year's photo contest.
(Photo by Roxanne Pennington)

Wilson Hall. Throughout the semester, you will often find a volunteer in the member services office sitting behind the desk ready to answer questions and meet members.

The 20 volunteers included OLLI board members, instructors and classmates. The volunteers were Donna Berger,

Randy Boyette, Jo Broussard, Charlotte Cain, Bob Darnall, Nancy Darnall, Marcia Elkins, Phil Graham, Barbara Johnson, Al Kilby, Renee Kump, Michelle Laverty, Betsy MacKay, Anita McKee, Dave Moore, Roxanne Pennington, Suezy Proctor, Dave Sayre, Silvia Summers and Jeanne Zibell. Thanks again for serving as volunteers!

I also want to acknowledge the full-time OLLI staff: Clay Williams, Anelisse Westmeyer, Alice Sammon and Madyson White. Their team works together like a well-oiled machine, and they have my utmost respect.

Clay manages the team, schedules the classrooms, helps instructors with audiovisual equipment, and worries about parking. Anelisse registers new students and issues parking passes. Alice helps Anelisse, assists instructors with A/V, and records Zoom calls. Madyson is new to the team and is already photographing art projects and bonus lectures.

I'm sure there are dozens of tasks they do behind the scenes to keep everything moving smoothly. Well done!

So a tip of the hat and my gratitude to the 20 volunteers, the full-time OLLI staff, and the OLLI members for making the launch of a new semester a success.

DID SOMEONE SAY 'PHYSICS'?

Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1727) visited Bob Carroll's OLLI class called "Phun Physics" on Sept. 14, which was helpful because the class is studying Newton's laws of motion, gravity and optics. No one offered a scientific explanation of Newton's reincarnation. But he and Bob Carroll were never seen in the same room at the same time.



Travel Committee

WATCH FOR DETAILS ABOUT JAPAN AND OREGON



By David Sayre
Travel Committee Chair

We are close to finalizing the itinerary for OLLI's group tour of Japan, one of the most vibrant and exciting countries in the East. Also in the works is a trip to Oregon.

The Japan dates are Aug. 19 through Sept. 3, 2027. Contact Chris Stuhlinger to add your name to the interest list.

"The Faces of Oregon: Mount Hood, Columbia River Gorge and Astoria" is scheduled for June 2028. Exact dates have not been determined.

On daylong field trips, discover the natural beauty and human history that make Oregon a state of wonder. Take in city highlights like the International Rose Test Garden, then explore the natural wonders outside the city, from the rugged Pacific Coast to the dramatic Columbia River Gorge to the volcanic Cascade Mountains.

Each journey will be accented by interesting, interactive activities, enhanced with interpretation from the program Instructor.

Check the bulletin boards and the newsletters or the OLLI website's travel page (<https://tinyurl.com/olli-travel>) for updates on travel, including the following:

For 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>.

For 2027

- **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



The Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, often called Saint Francis Cathedral, in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico.

to <https://tinyurl.com/olli-arkansas-27>. Or contact Jane McBride.

- **The historic relationship between Germany and Alabama** — May 15-24, 2027. From Alabama to Germany and back again — 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 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 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 visit <https://tinyurl.com/olli-germany-27>.

Never let curiosity fade! Contact David Sayre, other members of the Travel Committee, or coordinators for the trips at olli.info@uah.edu.

Travel Committee

SEE GERMANY'S CONNECTIONS WITH ALABAMA



By Lisa Brunegraff

Have you ever heard the phrases “I didn’t know that” or “We never studied that in history”?

“The Historic Relationship between Germany and Alabama” is *not* your usual trip to Germany.

It is an opportunity to fill in some of the blanks of history or visit places your parents or grandparents may have

spoken about.

The threads connecting these two places are historically linked through triumph, innovation and transformation.

With the start in Berlin, we will walk through Berlin’s Olympic Park, where Oakville’s own Jesse Owens defied Nazi ideology with four gold medals.

Learn about the Berlin Airlift under the Marshall Plan that helped rebuild Western Europe after World War II. Our NASA center in Huntsville bears the name of Gen. George C. Marshall, creator of the Marshall Plan.

Explore Peenemünde’s rocket research facility, perhaps the most interesting site on our tour. It is known as the birthplace of technology that launched America’s space program.



The Peenemünde rocket research facility in Germany is known as the birthplace of technology that launched the U.S. space program,.

Then on to Hamburg, where we will visit the Airbus plant, mirroring Mobile’s own operations.

Join us May 15-May 24, 2027, when OLLI has an opportunity to visit many of the sites in Germany that have connections to Alabama. It is a trip specifically curated for OLLI at UAH.

To express an interest or request information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/olli-germany-27> or contact Lisa Brunegraff through olli.info@uah.edu. You can find still more information and sign up for the tour at <https://tinyurl.com/olli-goaheadtours>.

Member Interest Groups



MEXICAN FOOD ON THE MENU

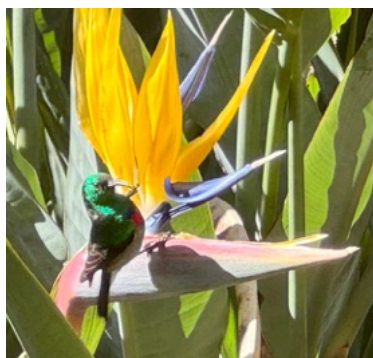
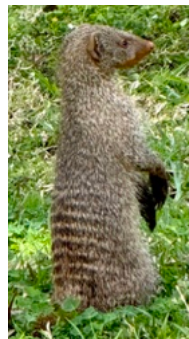


OLLI’s Dine Out Member Interest Group got together Sept. 10 for dinner at Fuego Tequila & Comida, a Mexican restaurant at 1105 Wayne Road NW, Huntsville. (Photos from Nancy Darnall and Sandra Dabrowski)

Travel Committee

OLLI FINDS ABUNDANT ANIMALS IN AFRICA

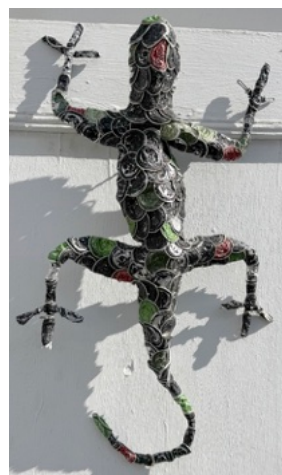
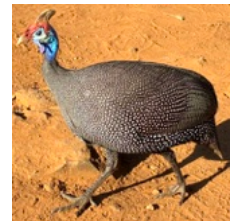
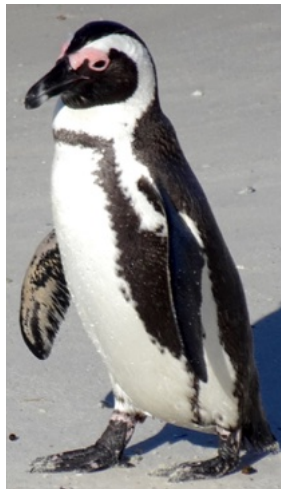
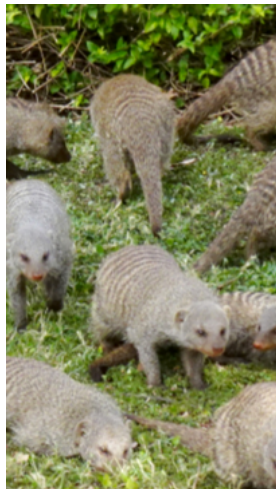
While traveling in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana on Aug. 21-Sept. 6, OLLI members saw more than 50 species of animals. Trip coordinator Chris Stuhlinger compiled a list. Mammals and reptiles included the elephant, giraffe, lion, zebra, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, kudu, wildebeest, impala, crocodile, warthog, Cape buffalo, steenbok, springbok, blesbok, sable antelope, baboon, vervet monkey, caracal, humpback whale, water monitor lizard, painted dog, banded mongoose, duiker, waterbuck and dassie. Birds included the ostrich, penguin, lilac-breasted roller, martial eagle, African fish eagle, guinea fowl, yellow-billed hornbill, red-billed hornbill, African spoonbill, weaver, trumpeter hornbill, sacred ibis, stork, African darter, go-away bird, vulture, egret, Cape starling, Egyptian goose, African jacana and white-crowned lapwing.



Travel Committee

AFRICA'S WILDLIFE — IN NATURE AND IN ARTWORK

OLLI travelers rode trucks through nature preserves and boats along rivers, making pictures with smartphones and long lenses. Some animals hung around hotels. Artwork depicting animals abounded in shops and museums. (More photos, some showing humans, will be published next month from the Africa tour, which took place in August and September.)



(Photographers on these two pages include Marie Arighi, Helmut Stahl, Steve Stewart, Chris Stuhlinger, Tilman Stuhlinger, Alison Toney, and several who contributed to a group WhatsApp feed.)

Travel Committee

POST-TRIP: HOMER, THE FIRST OLYMPICS, ATHENS

This is the third of three monthly articles by Steve Goodman, who led an OLLI group tour of the Dalmatian coast and Greece from April 25 to May 9. Previous articles described a pre-trip and the main tour. This one is about the post-trip to Athens and the Peloponnese



By Steve Goodman

Sunday morning, our bus first stopped at the Corinth Canal, where we got off and viewed the narrow channel. We could not envision our small ship fitting through.

We continued to our hotel in Olympia, birthplace of the Olympic Games. Olympia is in the Peloponnese, a peninsula in southern Greece that is connected to the mainland by the

Isthmus of Corinth.

On Monday we set out on a three-hour walking tour of the original archaeological site. We stood on the spot where the Olympic torch lighting ceremony takes place to this day.

During our tour of the ruins, we stopped for a group photo at the starting line in the stadium where the approximately 200-meter sprint races took place. Afterward we visited the Archaeological Museum and had lunch on our own. In the afternoon, we returned to the hotel. We later walked back to the city center for shopping.

On Tuesday we took a four-hour bus ride to the seaside town of Nafplion, the former capital of Greece after independence.

En route, we stopped at Epidaurus, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its well-preserved fourth-century amphitheater. The acoustics are said to be perfect. A coin dropped at the center can be heard clearly at the top row of seats.

On Wednesday we stopped at Mycenae, another UNESCO World Heritage archaeological site, before returning to Athens.

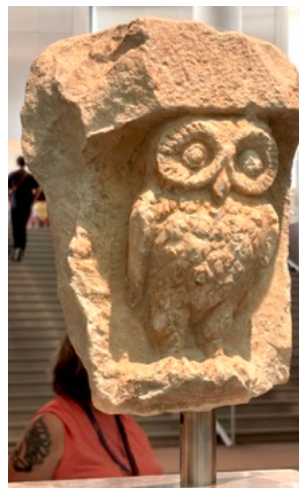
Mycenae was a Bronze Age culture that occupied the region until 1100 B.C. The culture mysteriously vanished after the Trojan War. Homer wrote about Mycenae in his ninth century B.C. epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

We visited a pottery workshop before continuing to Athens for our final group dinner, which we held at a rooftop restaurant with a spectacular view of the illuminated Acropolis.

Thursday, we toured the world-famous Acropolis, our final UNESCO World Heritage site, crowned by the Parthenon. In the afternoon, we explored Athens on our own and packed for Friday's return trip home.



OLLI members in front of the Parthenon. Below: the Acropolis and the Parthenon as seen from a rooftop restaurant; inside the Acropolis museum.



(Photos in three Insider editions contributed by Steve Goodman, Gary Klein, John Shimada, Kerri Geppert and Petra Elsayed)

Social Committee

JOIN US IN THE LOUNGE, AND TRY THESE RECIPES



Coffee, food and socializing are free to members in the OLLI lounge, which is 152D Wilson Hall. (Photos by Donna Berger)

By Donna Berger
Social Committee
Chair

It is wonderful to see everyone back for the fall semester!

The Social Committee has been busy planning for the new-member lunch, bonus events and Leisurely Lunches. It is heartwarming to see members socializing and enjoying the food.

When you are on campus for classes, be sure to stop by the lounge. The coffee pot is usually on, and conversation is always welcome!

Renee Kump, Social Committee co-chair, enjoys baking and especially trying new recipes. Her treats are a favorite with our members.

We are adding requested recipes to our monthly article. We hope you enjoy trying these recipes at home. Here are two of them:

Banana bread

2 cups sugar
½ cup butter
1 cup milk
2 eggs
4 bananas mashed
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup nuts (optional)

Cream sugar and butter. Add other ingredients. Beat 3 minutes. Bake in 2 greased, floured loaf pans for 1 hour at 350.



Raspberry mazurkas (Polish wedding cookies)

1½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup packed light brown sugar
¾ cup old-fashioned rolled oats
⅔ cup finely chopped walnuts or pecans
½ cup unsweetened finely shredded coconut
¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1 cup raspberry preserves

Place rack in center of oven; preheat to 325 degrees. Coat an 8-by-8-inch baking pan with cooking spray or brush with butter. Line the pan with two crossed strips of parchment paper that hang over the sides.

Combine flour, brown sugar, oats, chopped nuts, coconut and salt in a large bowl. Stir well. Add the melted butter, and stir until well-combined and the mixture holds together in clumps. Use your fingers to do the last mixing.

Set aside about 1 heaping cup of the mixture. Transfer the remainder to the pan; gently and evenly press the mixture into the pan bottom.

Spread the jam evenly over the top. Sprinkle the reserved crumbs over the jam, and very gently press them in.

Bake until the top is deep golden brown and the jam just starts to bubble around the edges, 40 to 50 minutes.

Let the bars cool completely in the pan on a rack, then use the parchment paper to lift the bars out of the pan and slice.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 4 days.



Social Committee

FREE LUNCH IN THE LOUNGE EVERY TUESDAY

Leisurely Lunches started Sept. 22 and are offered every Tuesday at noon in the lounge (152D Wilson Hall). These lunches are free for OLLI members. The Social Committee prepares the food. These scenes are from the first lunch.



(Photos by Madysen White and Suezy Proctor)

Member Interest Groups



OLLI hikers and walkers will visit Monte Sano Nature Preserve (left) on Oct. 10 and Monte Sano State Park on Oct. 25.



OCTOBER HIKING AND NATURE WALK ACTIVITIES

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

We have scheduled a hike and an extended nature walk for October. See the descriptions below.

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>

We currently have almost 160 members on our Hiking & Biking email distribution list! We would like to see more MIG members join our MIG activities, especially those who joined OLLI recently.

If you want to have your name removed from our distribution list and no longer want to receive information emails about coming MIG activities, please contact Chris Stuhlinger directly or through olli.info@uah.edu.

October activities

- Saturday, Oct. 10 — **Monte Sano Nature Preserve hike** (Huntsville), 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Meet at the Oak



Park Trailhead off Oakwood Avenue and hike to Buzzards Roost and back (just over 2 miles total, with an elevation change of 200-plus feet). See a nice stream and interesting rock features along the way.

- Sunday, Oct. 25 — **Monte Sano State Park extended nature walk**, 1-4 p.m. Discover the Sinks and Wells Memorial trails and see the towering hardwood trees growing in this cove forest. We'll take a more in-depth look at the trees and other vegetation and also measure some of the trees. Trail length is about 1.75 to 2 miles, with an elevation change of about 250 feet.

Mark your calendars for November and December:

- Saturday, Nov. 7 — **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge nature walk and bike ride** on the hiking and biking trail, 10 a.m. noon.
- Tuesday, Dec. 8 — **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge**, 10 a.m. to noon. See the sandhill and whooping cranes near the visitor center.

See you on the trail!



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Constitutional Corner

POPPER'S PARADOX

"Constitutional Corner" columns are written in different months by John Mason and Mark Tenhundfeld.



By Mark Tenhundfeld

Governing is hard, or at least it should be. A government that is truly of, by, and for the people must continually balance our desire for liberty with our need for order.

John Mason's excellent discussion of the Bill of Rights in his last two articles left us squarely in the middle of that balancing act. And nowhere is striking

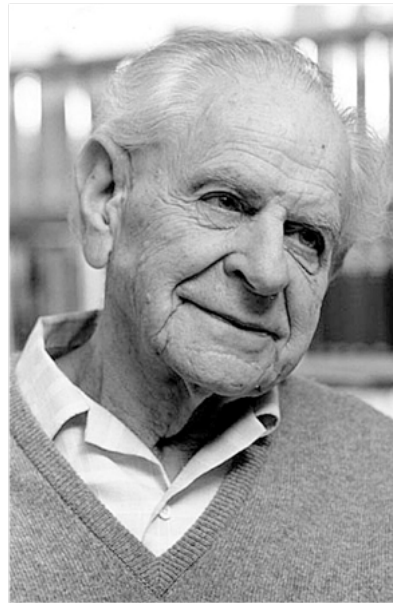
the right balance trickier than in the First Amendment.

The First protects, among other things, our freedom of speech and the closely related freedom of the press. These freedoms of expression are crucial to the success of our experiment in self-governance and yet, paradoxically, can be destabilizing.

Karl Popper was among the first to write about the problem in his 1945 book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In what has become known as "Popper's Paradox," Popper noted that a society that places no limits on its tolerance for free expression may eventually be destroyed by the intolerant conduct that is allowed to flourish.

Popper knew whereof he spoke. Born in 1902 into a Jewish family from Austria, Popper emigrated to New Zealand in 1937 to escape what he saw as a growing threat from Nazism. From that vantage point, he advocated for a graduated response to conduct that was intent on destroying an open society. If persuasion through rational argument failed, said Popper, then the tolerant society must be intolerant of the threatening conduct.

My wife and I recently returned from a trip to Europe, during which we heard an anecdote from 2006 that undoubtedly would've made Popper smile. In the lovely German village of Miltenberg, a group of neo-Nazis wanted to stage a rally in the town plaza outside a church where Fr. Ulrich Boom was pastor. The applicable law tolerated the gathering of the group; Fr. Boom's sense of right and wrong did not.



In his 1945 book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Karl Popper (left) expressed "Popper's Paradox": that unlimited free expression may eventually destroy a society that permits it. (Photo by Lucinda Douglas-Menzies, via Wikimedia Commons)

While the neo-Nazis tried to assemble, Fr. Boom directed that the bells of his church ring continuously. After 20 minutes of being unable to communicate over the bells, the group disbanded. Though criticized by the neo-Nazis for interfering with their right to assemble, Fr. Boom was recognized by the town for his valor and was made a bishop by the Catholic Church.

Karl Popper, Ulrich Boom, and countless others who've lived through the horrors of brutally oppressive governments (or at least the prospect of their resurgence) understood the need for common sense to assert itself before tyranny takes hold. Today's fractured media environment compounds the challenges of doing so as fact and fiction are conflated, but that conflation makes the effort all the more important.

History is replete with megalomaniacs eager to destroy the freedoms, and perhaps the lives, of those who stand opposed. America has not been spared.

We thus far have managed to overcome the power-hungry demagogues who've been willing to sacrifice our founding principles in the pursuit of personal gain. Continued success will depend in large part on our nation's tolerance for free expression in the service of a free society but intolerance for distortions designed to serve narrower objectives.

Huntsville Then and Now

ENGLAND: LITERATURE, HISTORY, DRAMA AND A HIKE



By Lee Roop

England and two English majors — what did we expect?

Probably “a good trip,” but what we had was the trip of a lifetime this past month. We are now home and changed by what we’ve seen, heard and experienced.

That is what travel gives you, of course. Change. You learn to expect it if you travel enough. Sometimes it’s good change and sometimes it’s “never

again.” All of us, including my non-English-major sister-in-law and brother-in-law, I believe, had good change.

While in England we sought literary things like Oxford University’s Bodleian Library, where everything in my reading life seems to have originated. Being in the same building as a millennium’s worth of writing was a true peak of awe. Everything you thought and studied was real, is real, and much of it has been saved.

Also savored were places like Bletchley Park, where the German Enigma code was broken in World War II, probably cutting years off the war and saving not only many brave people but our civilization as we know it now.

My World War II history buff brother-in-law was especially excited about that visit. What was accomplished there in small rooms with primitive tools to our modern eyes shows what brains and perseverance can create. Or discover.

My wife’s birthday treat was to see a Shakespeare play at the re-created Globe theater in London. “As You Like It” was, in fact, just as I like it as well as dozens of others, young and old, who delighted in the experience.

We packed so much into this trip: the Tower of London, the British Museum, Westminster Abbey where we bowed our heads in Poet’s Corner. A week in The Cotswolds was magical, a slower pace in a lovely, historic village home to



The English countryside is among Lee Roop’s fondest memories of his trip. (Photo by Patricia Ammons)

the door that likely inspired the “Doors of Durin” in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. All of this was electrifying for readers, English majors and “word people” like my wife and myself.

But as I have thought about the trip, a day of hiking may turn out to be my best memory. We followed a public trail that crossed fields and wound along near villages. We popped wild blackberries into our mouths along the way and marveled at the views.

Imagine America if our countryside had been cared for — truly cared for — over centuries and then open to everyone to enjoy.

Maybe we were under CCTV surveillance. Maybe farmers watched from upper windows with cameras and notepads. I hope they felt we belonged there, truly in our element. Truly at home.

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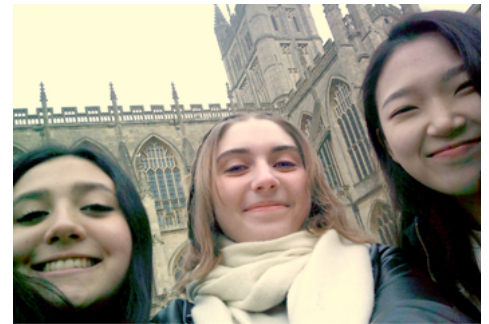
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People of OLLI



Family members celebrated Madyson White's master's degree from The University of Alabama. From left are brother Emerson, father Josh, Madyson, brother Avery, stepmother Lana and grandmother Susan. In the other photos, she travels with friends in Athens, Greece, (top right) and Bath, England, and skis with family in Keystone, Colorado.



MADYSON WHITE BRINGS ART AND MARKETING EXPERTISE, EDUCATION TO NEW JOB WITH OLLI

By Glen Adams

Madyson White comes to OLLI with big shoes to fill. She replaces Justin Clay as OLLI's marketing and design specialist. Justin has returned to teaching at UAH. Madyson assumes her new job with an excellent background in design and with considerable enthusiasm. She is the subject of this month's *Insider* profile.

First, her name. That unique spelling resulted from her mother seeing it spelled that way in a baby name book and liking it. That's the whole story.

Madyson was born in Huntsville but grew up in Hoover outside Birmingham. Her father spent most of his career as a NASA engineer in Huntsville and still lives here with Madyson's stepmother. Her mother and stepfather live in Birmingham, where her mother has devoted herself to raising her children.

Madyson's blended family is considerable: She is the eldest and has five brothers and two sisters ranging from 9 to 20

years old, which she reports "made for a very lively childhood and adulthood."

"As a child, I was an avid reader and explored a variety of sports, including soccer, swimming, tennis, gymnastics and ballet," said Madyson. "But over time, my attention shifted entirely to the arts. I began taking painting and drawing classes, a hobby I continued throughout high school and ultimately led me to study graphic design at The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

"I was a fairly driven student, focusing on developing my artistic skills and pushing myself academically through a range of advanced placement courses. I was determined and excited to continue my education beyond high school."

Initially, Madyson focused her college studies on brand identity design. But gradually a series of art history courses, particularly one that took her behind the scenes at local libraries and museums, helped her decide she wanted to

(continued on the next page)

People of OLLI

MADYSON WHITE, cont from previous page

work for a cultural institution. This desire was reinforced when she spent her final semester studying in Great Britain, visiting museums and libraries across Europe.

That field generally requires a master's in library and information studies, so Madyson's next stop was The University of Alabama. While working on her master's, she was able to broaden her experience with internships at the Paul W. Bryant Museum, Birmingham Public Library Archives and Grandview Medical Library.

After finishing her master's, Madyson worked at the Homewood Public Library until she was hired in November 2025 by the UAH Salmon Library as a marketing and communications specialist.

"I promote library events and services through print and digital media and channels," said Madyson, "which will now extend to OLLI. I will be creating marketing materials, signage, course guides, social media content and news-

letters, as well as photographing OLLI activities and events.

"My roles at the library and OLLI have given me an opportunity to explore a blend of my educational background and interests — how graphic design is used to craft the means by which communities connect with an organization's programming and resources."

Madyson will continue to work for the library as well as OLLI.

Although Madyson knew nothing about OLLI before coming to UAH, she has enjoyed her new job.

"Already in my short time on the team, OLLI — its staff and members — have been incredibly welcoming. The drive and excitement to champion continued education is inspiring, and my goals are to continue to help promote and grow this mission."

Thanks, Madyson, for all you will do for OLLI.

Member Interest Groups

TAI CHI PRACTICE NOW AVAILABLE 2 DAYS: TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

By Phil Graham

This past spring, the Tai Chi Member Interest Group (MIG) participants expressed interest in opening an additional day and time period to practice tai chi beyond the Friday morning MIG.

On Sept. 15, OLLI at UAH opened this additional opportunity — available free to any OLLI member, whether a MIG participant or not.

You need not be enrolled in a current tai chi course, but sometimes instructors are available in MIG sessions.

The new one-hour tai chi practice is



**OLLI members practice tai chi on Tuesday, Sept. 15, in 218 Wilson Hall.
(Photo by Roxanne Pennington)**

weekly on Tuesday mornings, starting at 7:30. The location is 218 Wilson Hall.

Take advantage of practicing a lifelong wellness exercise more frequently.

By the way, you can use this opportunity to grab a parking space, eat

breakfast at Charger Cafe in the Conference Training Center building, or attend an 8:30 a.m. class without fighting the morning traffic.

The Friday MIG meeting continues at 9 a.m. weekly in Room 111 of Salmon Library.

NEW MEMBERS GET TOGETHER TO MEET AND LEARN

The new-member social in the lounge on Sept. 1 was an opportunity for those who had joined in the past year to meet one another, meet veteran members, and post questions to the staff.



(Photos by Marsha Langlois and Suezy Proctor)

OLLI Life



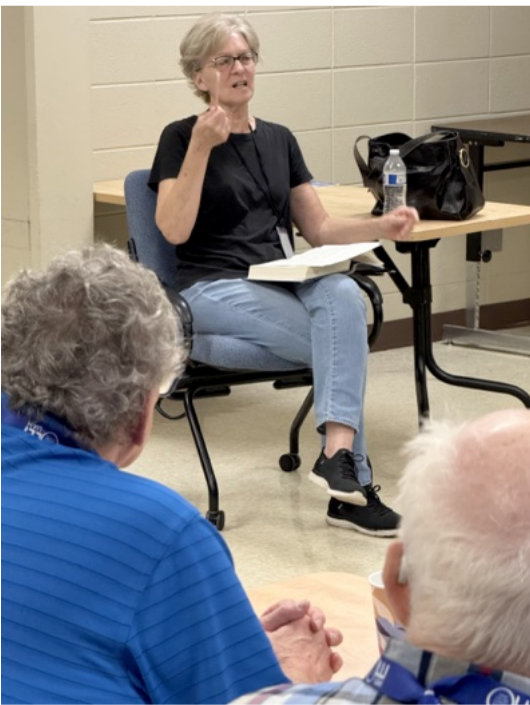
BONUS FEATURES ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM



Sinead Lounmala, Madison County Extension coordinator, gave a bonus lecture about the Alabama Cooperative Extension System on Aug. 28. In the righthand photo, she is on the left with Lisa Brunegraff, who coordinates bonuses

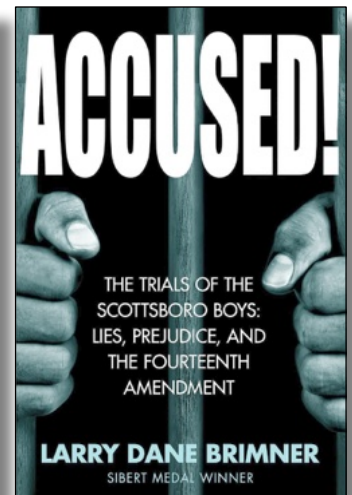
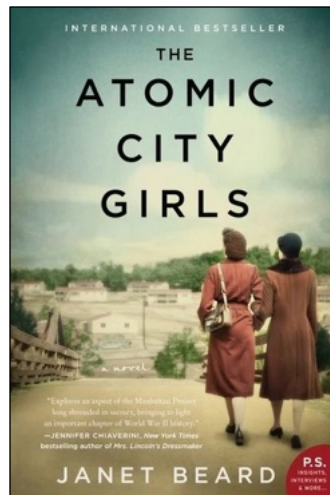
this semester, and OLLI member Steve Jones. He served as ACES director from 1996 to 2001, unifying the extension programs of Auburn University and Alabama A&M University. (Photos by Madyson White and Roxanne Pennington)

Member Interest Groups



NEXT READING DISCUSSIONS: *THE ATOMIC CITY GIRLS* AND *SCOTTSBORO BOYS BOOK*

Diana Standridge led the discussion of Lois Romano's *An Inconvenient Widow: The Torment, Trial, and Triumph of Mary Todd Lincoln* during the Sept. 9 meeting of the OLLI Reads MIG. The Oct. 14 topic will be the novel *The Atomic City Girls* by Janet Beard, followed on Nov. 18 by *Accused!*, Larry Dane Brimner's book about the Scottsboro Boys. The MIG meets at noon in Wilson Hall, and all OLLI members are welcome. Book selections alternate monthly between fiction and nonfiction. If you attend the meetings, you can help select the books. (Photos by Steve Stewart)



The Last Word

VOLUNTEERING, LEARNING HAVE SIMILAR BENEFITS



By Michelle Lavery

The OLLI Insider is routinely filled with articles extolling the benefits of continuous learning, whether they be cognitive, social, mental, physical

— just about every area of a person's senior life is enhanced.

Now, granted, the majority of us did not routinely set aside retirement monies to take OLLI classes. I don't think I've come across anyone who said they were growing their retirement nest egg so that they could continue their education. One primary reason I retired from the military as an O-5 was that I just didn't want to do war college or any of the schooling and classes that a promotion to O-6 would require.

It's funny. Here we are waking up to an alarm clock, and instead of reading emails and news feeds with our morning coffee in our jammies, we're putting on our public clothes and getting ready to go out the doors so we can continue to learn!

In that same good-for-seniors vein, I propose *volunteering*. When you ask Google artificial intelligence about benefits of learning and volunteering for seniors, the answers are similar.

Many members of OLLI expend significant time volunteering. We all belong to a number of groups: our OLLI community; our church communities; our civic organizations. And we routinely support volunteerism through these communities.

Did you know that UAH is part of Cummings Research Park? As members of OLLI and citizens, we have the opportunity to participate in any or all calls for volunteers that the Chamber of Commerce releases in support of activities happening in CRP.



Volunteers such as Michelle Lavery (top left) help community efforts such as paracycling competitions and elections run smoothly. Election officials are government appointees; poll watchers represent parties and candidates. (Photo from Michelle Lavery; photo illustration by Steve Stewart)

This past Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3-7, the city and CRP hosted the 2026 Paracycling Road World Championships of Union Cycliste Internationale, the worldwide governing body for cycling. This was a qualifying race for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Hundreds of para-athletes competed from over 40 countries. Over 900 volunteers were required to ensure that the races were conducted safely and responsibly. The roads had to be kept clear of children, cars and unauthorized bikes; athletes had to be chaperoned from finish line to anti-doping area; athletes had to be served meals; and credentials had to be checked.

I've heard from athletes and chamber members that Huntsville is a venue the athletes look forward to visiting because the city and volunteers do so much for the athletes. Granted, we don't have the crowds a bicycle road race in Europe attracts. But our spectators show up loud and boisterous.

Another community in which you also have membership is that of a citizen. Voting in Alabama takes place in a safe, secure environment only because of the



volunteers who set up the polling place, check your driver's license, and hand you the right ballot.

It's volunteers who ensure your vote is counted and delivered to the courthouse. And it's volunteers who deal with any disruptions to your right to a safe and secure voting environment. As a volunteer, I discovered that in Madison County there are two records of your vote. Once voting closes, the workers get a printout of the votes from the machine. This paper trail is delivered to the courthouse. A county law enforcement person with a live gun comes and takes the machines' hard drives. The votes are delivered to the courthouse under separate and redundant means.

Volunteers are often on site hours before the polls open, placing signs and setting up the room with those funky tall voting tables. They make sure that you place your ballot correctly in the ballot box so that it is counted. These people know that they are volunteering for a long day. They stay hours after polls close.