EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Gary Aten

Have you ever tried to explain OLLI @ Furman? I have had occasion a couple of times recently to meet prospective new members in the Herring Center who wanted to know what it was all about. What kind of classes are there? Where and when do they meet? What are the fees? Who are the teachers? Are there other activities? I do my best to explain, give them a quick tour and a catalog, and then, when they stump me, find one of the staff to assist them. I feel as though I helped describe the program and explained my enthusiasm for it, but it is not easy to truly reveal what OLLI means to an active member. So, if you are in that situation, explain OLLI the best you can and how you are involved, but also let them know each person is different. That, in the end, is what makes it so great. Just as each OLLI program is different, each person makes it their own program in their own way.

Summer is nearly on us, and with it come a couple of things. First, the OLLI summer session presents the ability to continue classes with many great offerings. Second, many of us will be traveling. Don’t forget that OLLIver likes to travel too. Take him with you, and get some photos of him to share on the bulletin board.

As you travel this summer, you are likely to encounter homeless people asking for help. This reminds me that several years ago the government gave people a $25 rebate on taxes. As several of us were talking, we concluded that we would not really spend $25 more and spur on the economy, which is what that was supposed to do, and the rebate should have gone to those who truly needed it, as they would spend the money. Jean Kral said she was increasing her tips with the money, feeling that was a better way — a great idea I have not forgotten! One thing Judy and I have started doing is keeping a couple of folded dollars within easy reach in the car. If we see someone needing help, it is easy to grab it and hand it out, not having to fumble for a billfold and missing the chance.

If you are reading a hard copy, remember, Gray Matters is on the OLLI website in full color. Just click on “Member Resources” and then “Gray Matters” to view this issue and past editions.

Carole Eisen, Sue Renault, Judy Aten, and Nancy Kennedy proofed this issue. Heidi Wright puts the issues on the website and arranges for the printing. The rest of the OLLI staff and Brad Bechtold also check the content. Thanks to all who contributed articles and photos. Thanks also to our Gray Matters health staff, including our audiologist, Isabelle Ringing, and our plastic surgeon, Luke Young.
The Health, Fitness, and Exercise Curriculum Committee has a mission which is: To provide a diverse group of classes, new and ongoing, appealing to and appropriate for a variety of interests and abilities. We are personally committed to the beliefs that, as we age, it is very important to be engaged in a healthy lifestyle. So accomplishing the committee’s goal is very important to us, and we are trying hard to reach it. But, it is not quite as easy as it seems at first glance. By far, the most difficult task is making sure we have classes that are a good mix and are also interesting, invigorating, relaxing, at the right day and time, in the right rooms, new, old favorite, etc.

OLLI has grown tremendously, especially over the last few years. As recently as 2013, the HFE committee was offering as few as six classes per term. Since then, we have more than doubled our offerings and increased the variety.

We are a small committee, only four of us. But we are committed to trying to live a healthy and fit life and practice what we preach. That is one reason we have volunteered for this committee. You may see us as participants in HFE classes and even teaching some of them. We work hard at our job, and it is actually fun and rewarding. Nevertheless, somebody is likely to be disappointed when the class they want is not offered at all or is at the wrong day and time. So when you are unhappy that your class is missing, seek us out and we’ll talk about it.

We have a wonderful group of instructors, many who offer classes every session, and all are dedicated to the same goals as this committee. Even so, we are constantly looking for new ideas. If you have some, we would love to hear from you, especially if the ideas for a class come with an instructor’s name! And we welcome you if you are interested in serving on this committee.
Many of you know Jann from being in one of her classes. She can, and did, talk about Bach for 12 hours, but she is less inclined to talk about herself. We did find out that her father was an Air Force serviceman and that she has a brother. Her family was moved frequently by the Air Force, and when it was time for her to attend college, she chose the University of South Carolina, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in music theory. Music theory jobs were, as you might imagine, hard to come by, so she continued her education and earned a teaching certification.

Her first job was teaching music in a facility for incarcerated youth. Jann said that she was too young to know what she couldn’t do and wrote an opera for her students to perform. Ticket sales for that opera soared, and additional performances were added. The production was so popular it was filmed. She returned to college and earned a master’s degree in music composition. That education and her passion for music have allowed her to teach in a variety of South Carolina locations, arriving in Greenville about 24 years ago. She has been active in OLLI for several years and has taught several music-related classes.

Jann’s passion for music is matched only by her love of animals. Since an early age, she has felt a connection with animals, saying that when looking into an animal’s eyes she could see there was really a sentient life looking back. She has adopted animals in the past, starting with a rescue dog after college, and currently has several dogs. Volunteering with a greyhound rescue group and helping support other animal care organizations have been a part of her life for some time. In the past few years, she has taken her concern to the next level by participating in adventure travel that includes a focus on animals.

Her first trip was to Kenya, where she helped gather data for scientific study. This involved walking predetermined routes and keeping track of the types of dung encountered or the number and species of animals sighted and then entering that data onto spreadsheets. She enjoyed working with a Kenyan college student, Joseph, with whom she was paired for the work, saying he was one of the trip’s highlights. What really excited her was the impressive speed of the rhinoceros or cape buffalo running close by (scarily close in a couple of cases). Seeing wildlife in their natural habitat made the experience unforgettable.

Her next adventure was in Thailand, where she helped a mahout care for his elephant. Jann lived where all the adventurers lived — in a volunteers’ home with a tiled roof and an actual door, not in the mahout’s humble home.
His elephant had been used as labor to help build the volunteers' home, requiring land be cleared for the complex. The result is that the wild elephants in the region have less habitat, and the labor elephants can no longer fend for themselves and must rely on their owners. Many mahout owners don’t have work and rely on charity or tourism for their living. Thus, Jann was able to both contribute to the elephant’s care as well as help support the mahout family. She told of riding the elephant and having it stop, pick some fruit from a tree, and continue on, munching on its fresh treat.

What impressed Jann most was the extreme poverty in some of the places she visited. Until you actually see it, you cannot begin to comprehend just how tough life is for some people. She told of one instance in Thailand during a trip to gather grass for the elephant, where she met a Thai woman who brought her a pineapple. As they ate it, the mahout and a couple of others joined in and more pineapples appeared. Afterward, as she and the mahout bounced along on his motor scooter on the way to his home, hanging on to the grass and a pineapple, she looked forward to giving the elephant the treat of the sweet fruit. It then occurred to her that the mahout's family would rarely have a chance to eat pineapple, and here she was thinking of giving it to the elephant. She also told of people living in “houses” made of billboard panels, and, in one case, a family living in a home made of plastic bags stretched over a framework.

Her trip to Australia involved working with koalas, which Jann says are not the cuddly little creatures you might think. The claws that allow them to climb their favored eucalyptus trees are formidable, and learning how to get them out of a tree, handle them, get their weight, change radio collars, and use direction-finding antennas was interesting. It was also depressing. Even though many people are concerned about the koalas, their habitat is steadily being destroyed and they are dying out. The Australian government seems unable to pass the necessary legislation to protect them, and most of the animals in Jann’s study had starved to death by the next year.

The trip to Costa Rica was a letdown; there was less animal work and more tourist-like activities. Jann plans to head to South Africa for her next adventure trip. Hopefully, she can be persuaded to send us pictures to put in a future Gray Matters. Most people are not able or willing to make the commitment to animals that Jann has made but genuinely want to help. She recommends exploring different charities to donate to, depending on your interests, while evaluating the choices you have by researching how the money is spent. A variety of charity-evaluating websites, such as Charity Navigator or Charity Watch, can be used. If Jann were willing to get up on a soapbox it is likely her message would be: Enjoy the animals around you, and think about how your activities affect all animals. By doing this we can all aid Jann in her quest to improve animals’ lives.
WHERE IN FURMAN ARE WE?

Do you know where this is? It’s on the Furman Campus. See how many hints it takes you to figure it out. The answer is below. Hints:

1. In a relatively well-traveled area.
2. Located in mid-campus.
3. Close to the Trone Student Center.

Answer: Fountain on the west side of the Duke Library.

SIX-WORD STORIES

Below are the six-word stories submitted in response to our request in the March edition. The stories were reviewed by the OLLI staff without the authors’ names associated. After the ballots were counted, the clear winner was the story below in bold. Thanks to the others who submitted their six-word stories. Those stories are placed in the order they were received.

Friendships form, erudition envelopes, serenity surrounds. \hspace{2cm} Karen Schillinger

Eager eyes, silver spirits, flowing forward. \hspace{2cm} Dorian Dickey

Remembering lines and lyrics is challenging. \hspace{2cm} Sarah Fletcher

New beginnings, old things, now memories. \hspace{2cm} Judy Aten

See, Learn. Teach. Learn more. Ah. \hspace{2cm} Sherry Cowan

No grades; High marks; It’s OLLI. \hspace{2cm} Elizabeth B. Watson

Quenching angry mobs by making coffee. \hspace{2cm} Carson Ruffrage

Lovers of learning make life colorful. \hspace{2cm} Lynda Fredsell
OLLiver is dressed in his best tie for his visit with the Easter Bunny.

Sal shows his usual big smile while polishing a fire extinguisher.

The Monday High Country Hikers are shown at the Green River Narrows in this Greg Peters Photo.

Needles and conversation fly at the Quilting By Hand class.

Mah Jong players in the Manly Lobby.
Crystal Jarrouge - A Miami Connection

A native of Miami, Crystal Jarrouge (rhymes with Moulin Rouge) graduated from Florida International University. She laughed when she said her majors were health science and psychology, not what you might expect of a bookstore manager. After some time with her, however, she said her favorite part of her work is dealing with people, so the psychology portion of her education may have really paid dividends. Her first job after college was managing the Trade Department at the Barnes & Noble at Florida International. Looking for a bigger challenge meant locating. When she was considering a move from Miami, a visit to Greenville made her fall in love with the city and Furman. She landed here nearly 3 years ago and now manages the Barnes & Noble bookstore at Furman. A side benefit was reconnecting with a cousin who lives here.

Crystal’s father immigrated from Syria, went to culinary school in Canada, and moved to Miami to become a chef. Her mother is a native of Miami and worked in the restaurant where her father was the chef. The rest, as they say, is history, and Crystal is the eldest of three siblings. She said she didn’t exactly inherit the culinary gene, but that doesn’t stop her from venturing into the kitchen. While cooking, she sometimes connects via FaceTime with her father, and he makes suggestions while she cooks and they talk.

The bookstore at Furman is one of the many Barnes & Noble College facilities throughout the nation. There are 18 such stores in South Carolina under the direction of a regional manager. Furman partners with Barnes & Noble College to operate the store. Furman’s store has a Barnes & Noble Café, something not all of them have. The store’s collective departments allow it to function as a one-stop shop for student and faculty needs.

TEXTBOOKS: Furman’s professors determine the books they will require in their courses and forward the requests to the store, where they are ordered from the publishers, the numbers depending on enrollment. Crystal said some English courses may require up to 10 books, and some drama classes can require as many as 15 plays. Students have the option to purchase or rent their textbooks every semester. Many opt to rent as it saves them money up-front but
still allows them to highlight in their book as if it was their own. Rentals are returned at the end of the semester. Students who opt to purchase their books do have the opportunity to sell them back at the end of the semester. Both returned rentals and copies sold back to the store become “used” books on the shelf.

GENERAL READING: Even with all the classroom reading, there is a demand by students for other books. This is satisfied in the general reading area, which emphasizes local authors, bestsellers, and trending topics but includes a wide variety. A special display of titles popular with college students nationwide changes weekly. The general reading area features several upholstered seating options, elevated tables and stools, a fireplace, and a great view of the lake. There customers can eat a light meal, read, visit with friends, or just relax. One trend that is becoming more popular all the time is adult coloring books, and there was a prominent display of them at the main entrance. Books not on hand may be ordered, delivered to the Furman store, and picked up there, saving a trip to a Barnes & Noble at another location, including Woodruff Road — a definite advantage.

APPAREL AND GIFTS: One of the biggest areas is the one given to licensed Furman apparel. Everything from socks to hats for adults, youths, and even toddlers can be purchased in Furman purple (and other colors as well) with a variety of logos. Orientation, Furman Family Weekend, and Homecoming are especially busy times during the year. The back-of-the-store storage area has rack upon rack of the clothing that is needed to keep up with the demand. A wide variety of Furman-themed gifts and even class rings can be found here.

BARNES & NOBLE CAFÉ: The food area has light lunch and breakfast items, a variety of drinks, and Starbucks coffee. There is also what may well be the most extensive display of breakfast, granola, and energy bars in Greenville. Obviously, that caters to students on the move. More seating is available for those who do have the time to eat, talk, or relax. OLLI members should know Barnes & Noble cards are accepted, but Starbucks cards are not.

Number of Employees: 25       Number of Book Titles: 1600

All of this requires several employees, and you can find anyone from a Furman student to a Greenville local working here. Crystal is amazed at the national scope of Barnes & Noble College and she told of attending a conference and meeting a store manager from Hawaii Pacific University. Although it is possible to transfer to another location as Crystal did when she came to Furman, she likes Furman and Greenville, noting that she had never experienced a fall season before. She also likes the variety, and says although some things are similar, no day is exactly like the one before. Connecting with people is what she loves the most, and there is plenty of opportunity for that in the store, and at events on the Furman campus.
ST. PATRICK’S DAY AT OLLI

GRAY MATTERS NEEDS YOU!

In an effort to continually improve Gray Matters, we are looking for more participation from the OLLI membership. We are especially interested in having a column in each issue about OLLI classes. If you would like to conduct interviews, write articles, or have another way you would like to contribute, get in touch with Gary Aten at the following: e-mail: gary.aten42@gmail.com or phone: 307-871-1050. Work will need to be done with Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. Of course, we always welcome articles, photos, and poems from the membership. Use the above contact information and get involved!

Irish food, a sing-along, and a piper made for a great St. Patrick’s day in the Herring Center.

Photos by Greg Parker
“THERE IS A HOLE IN MY LIFE AND I NEED TO FILL IT. SOON!”

Tom Nowlin

If you haven’t seen Robert De Niro’s most recent movie, “The Intern,” you may want to do that. It’s available at Redbox and is very uplifting. It represents many of us in so many ways. He is a 70-year-old who has discovered that retirement isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. Seizing an opportunity to get back in the game, he becomes a senior intern at an online fashion site. He simply uses the skills and talents he accumulated throughout the years. His wisdom steals the show. How about you? Is retirement turning out to something different than you imagined? We can’t promise you a job, but we can get you “back in the game” in a meaningful way.

Fellow OLLI members, Jean Blank, Cindy Brothers, Jane Chambers, Susan Cyr, Marie Eldridge, Jack Hansen, Doug Harper, Sheila Garrick, Tom Nowlin, Pat Schweitzer, and Dudley Tower, have developed an initiative to make it easier for OLLI members to add meaning and purpose to their lives through active engagement in our community. KEEP READING. This is not your typical volunteer program.

The Personal and Community Engagement (PCE) Initiative assists in the placement of OLLI members with organizations, commissions, causes, new business development, and other means of meaningful engagement within the Greenville area. This is unique from other programs because it is our intention to place each OLLI student into a position that generates both passion and purpose for the participant, while improving the quality of life for our community. More specifically:

(1) We have identified organizations that have specific opportunities for OLLI members as volunteers, and with whom we have identified opportunities that will provide meaningful engagement for OLLI students.

(2) The Initiative features OLLI members currently engaged with their volunteer organization who will serve as your coordinator and liaison between you and the opportunity. Learn about the reality of serving your chosen organization from fellow OLLI members who are passionate about their experiences. See if it could work for you.

(3) It is a personal and thoughtful approach to matching your purpose and passion with service to the community we live in. We want to make this easy for you. If you don’t know what you want to do, we also have “coaches” and tools available to help you determine your best fit - while also maximizing the utilization of your personal skills, talents, interests, desires, and wisdom.

The Initiative was launched at our Bonus Event on April 29 at the Herring Center, starting with eight local organizations doing incredible work in the Greenville area: Greenville Literacy, Frazee Dream Center, Triune Mercy Center, Juvenile Justice, Julie Valentine Center, Greenville Humane Society, SCORE, and Upstate Warrior Services.

If you have any questions, would like to be a part of this initiative as a volunteer, or are already working with an organization where you are meaningfully engaged that might make a good addition to our program, please email Tom Nowlin at thomasonowlin@gmail.com or Dudley Tower at dotower@earthlink.net.

Let us help you “get your De Niro on” and find something. Soon!
Richard Rusch died on March 6 at the age of 82. Often when people met Rick for the first time and heard his distinctive Upper Midwestern dialect, they would ask, “What country are you originally from?” Rick’s face would brighten with his signature broad grin and he would proudly exclaim “Wis-CON-son.” Rick was proud of his heritage and loved the country he served faithfully in the U.S. Air Force. While passionately devoted to his wife and family, Rick was also a successful businessman before delving into retirement with the same zest with which he lived all aspects of his life. He was a tireless traveler, an active member of his Woodlands community, and an avid learner at OLLI. I am proud and privileged to say that Rick was a member of every class I have ever given in the OLLI program. Rick Rusch truly lived a fully engaged and fruitful life and will be sorely missed by all who came to know and love him. ON WISCONSIN! my friend.

Danna Morrell

With Danna Morrell’s passing this past March, OLLI lost a wonderful and generous student. I met Danna when she took my mosaic class. She and a group of other students enthusiastically decided to use their mosaic-making talents to create a project for the Herring Center. Over the summer, they worked steadily on the OLLI sign that now hangs over the bulletin board. And Danna graciously, through her family foundation, underwrote the cost of the supplies for the project. We will miss her and her generous, loving spirit.

Charles Riddiford

Charles Riddiford passed away on February 18, 2016. He was 82 years old. He was born in Illinois and served in the Air Force. He enjoyed the theater and musical performances. He created the Erika and Chuck Riddiford Endowed Chair for the Greenville Symphony Orchestra. He also enjoyed history and science courses at OLLI. We first met Chuck when he joined our mixed tennis group and played for many years. Our tennis group will miss his friendship and loyal support.

The Tributes section recognizes departed OLLI classmates, teachers, and staff who have enriched the OLLI program. We invite you to submit your name and contact information along with a brief notice of up to 125 words to the Tributes editor, Barbara Leimsieder (bleimsieder@gmail.com). Please emphasize the significance of the deceased to OLLI.
Would you like to learn more about your community? Would you like to know more about the issues that affect citizens of Greenville, South Carolina, and the US? Are you aware of issues that specifically affect the senior population? Do you want to be more involved, more aware, more informed? If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” then Senior Leaders Greenville might be for you!

Senior Leaders Greenville is a program designed and facilitated by OLLI@Furman. During nine day-long sessions, participants focus on topics such as healthcare, transportation, government, and housing. They hear from community leaders, activists, and experts to gain a comprehensive, in-depth look at Greenville’s history, people, and institutions.

The program begins with an orientation in August and concludes with graduation in May. Participants meet monthly for course sessions at Furman and throughout Greenville. Tuition is $350, and you do not have to be an OLLI member to participate. Scholarships are available. For more information and to apply, visit www.furman.edu/olli and click on the Senior Leaders Greenville tab on the right side of the page. Applications are also available in the OLLI Office, and you can talk to Nancy Kennedy or Heidi Wright to learn more about the program as well.

FROM THE OLLI @ FURMAN MARVIN BOOK NOOK

Sergeant Lamb’s America-by Robert Graves

Many great reads can be found in the Book Nook. A hard cover copy of this excellent historical novel was found there and is one of them. Yes — the author is the prolific British writer and poet (the I Claudius series, for example).

Sergeant Lamb was a real person who kept a journal of his service with the British army during the American Revolution, which Graves develops into this novel. Lamb is with General Burgoyne, who will invade New York from Canada in a three-part British plan (the other armies from the south and west) to separate New England from the rest of the colonies by taking over the Lake Champlain/Hudson River corridor. Burgoyne’s army is, of course, defeated at Saratoga in the fall of 1777. Colonel Dan Morgan leading his Virginia riflemen (later of Cowpens fame) was a principal in the American victory as was Benedict Arnold (before his treason).

As in most historical novels, our hero (Lamb) is witness to most of the important characters and events in this campaign. Lamb is a keen observer and seems to have an unbiased view of the abilities and/or failings of the leaders on both sides. We would like to think that the charming writing style of Lamb/Graves is true to the era. For a summary of Revolutionary War history in the North it would be hard to do better.
Summertime Upstate farmers’ markets and roadside stands are offering fresh produce. Children love blueberries; they make their tongues blue! Children should eat their vegetables and fruits because they are growing, but why should middle-aged adults and seniors continue to eat that stuff for any other reason than setting a good example for the kids?

Why? How about potentially reducing the risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease by up to 53%?? That’s the research-based claim from Rush University Medical Center and funded by the National Institute of Aging about the M.I.N.D. diet, a hybrid of the Mediterranean Diet and the DASH Diet. M.I.N.D. is an acronym for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay diet. It discourages 5 unhealthy food groups and promotes 10 healthy ones. Berries stood out on the “good” list. On March 16, 2015, Rush University Medical Center issued a press release quoting Rush University nutritional epidemiologist Martha Clare Morris, PhD. “Berries are the only fruit specifically to make the MIND diet. ‘Blueberries are one of the more potent foods in terms of protecting the brain,’ Morris said, and strawberries have also performed well in past studies of the effect of food on cognitive function.” For the more information about the diet and the complete press release, see this link: https://www.rush.edu/news/press-releases/new-mind-diet-may-significantly-protect-against-alzheimers-disease

Well-known physician and author, Dr. Andrew Weil has promoted blueberry and strawberry health benefits for years. In 2013 he wrote: “They are both anti-inflammatory, good sources of fiber, rich in flavonoids and carotenoids, and offer immune-boosting anti-oxidant activity … Because commercial strains of berries may be heavily sprayed with pesticides, however, I recommend buying only organic varieties.” For the complete essay, see this link: http://www.drweilblog.com/home/2013/4/1/berry-good-news.html

Also, the Harvard School of Public Health wrote: “A new study led by researchers from Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and the University of East Anglia finds that women who eat three or more servings of blueberries and strawberries each week may lower their risk of having a heart attack. The berries contain the dietary flavonoid anthocyanin, which may benefit the heart by improving blood flow and countering the build-up of plaque. The researchers drew from the health data of 93,600 female nurses between 25 and 42 who were surveyed about their diets every four years for 18 years. The
What a person chooses to feed his/her body and brain is a personal decision. Just a note, strawberries and blueberries sandwiched between two biscuits covered in whipped cream may be delicious, but not the way to optimize their health benefits. South Carolina’s strawberry season winds down around the end of May just when blueberry season kicks in and extends through August. Blueberries can make your summer meals, and perhaps your brain, brighter. They’ll definitely make your tongue blue!

Author’s Note: I am not an expert or have a medical/healthcare background. I am simply a fellow senior citizen with a great sense of curiosity. I enjoy researching various subjects and writing about that research. The Synapse column is simply sharing what I find interesting. Patty Roy
Heidi, Carson, and Pam were just three of the OLLI staff we caught all decked out for Dins Day.

THE LAST WORD

involvement

noun

1 his involvement in a plot to overthrow the government: participation, action, hand; collaboration, collusion, complicity, implication, incrimination, inculpation; association, connection, attachment, entanglement.

2 emotional involvement: attachment, friendship, intimacy; relationship, relations, bond.

I usually feel like I have to explain why I choose the “Last Word.” This time I think the choice is obvious as you look through the issue, so I won’t spoon-feed you all of the examples of involvement. Instead, I will urge you to be involved.

Many of you have been part of involvement with OLLI @ Furman, some for many years. OLLI counts on that involvement, and appreciates all your contributions. On the other hand, many OLLI members don’t go past showing up for a class or a couple of bonus events. For many of those members, perhaps for most of them, that is quite reasonable. For those whose circumstances would allow increased involvement, you would be welcomed, valued, and know you are helping OLLI @ Furman continue to become an even better program, serving our community of learners in ways you may not be able to imagine until you start. Think about it over the summer and come back and involve yourself.