Profile

Mark Filler

OLLI students take a journey to The Golden Age of Jazz

You could say that Mark Filler’s infatuation with jazz began at the age of 8, when he found a 78-rpm recording of “Tiger Rag” by the Georgia Washboard Stompers. He asked his father what that was, and his father told him it was jazz.

Then, at 12 years old, Mark says, he read a Jazztone Society ad in the New York Sunday Times Magazine and “wheedled a dollar from his father” to get a sample 10-inch record that opened with Sidney Bechet’s version of Jelly Roll Morton’s “Jelly Roll Blues.”

“When I heard it, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. It was the most wonderful thing I had ever heard.” That was the start of Mark’s love affair with what he calls the Golden Age of Jazz, which he has introduced to OLLI students for more than a decade.

“Since what the Jazztone Society published was only of the highest quality, early on I listened only to the best,” Mark says. “I didn’t have to work my way up, separating the good from the boring. Through those records I developed an intuitive sense of what is good jazz.” Mark also joined the Columbia Record Club to add to his growing collection.

Since Mark’s mother was a high school classmate of the editorial page editor of the local newspaper, he was able to get press passes to the Newport Jazz Festival for many years.

Today Mark owns thousands of records and CDs, especially from the 1930- to-1945 period. To make his case for his Golden Age he points in particular to Louis Armstrong (featured in his last OLLI class), Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Lionel Hampton, Benny Goodman, and Woody Herman as among the 20 or so idols in his pantheon.

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At several meetings in the past few weeks, it has become clear that many people do not understand the relationship between OLLI and USM.

**OLLI is a department of USM.** We are not a separate, independent program. We are very fortunate that USM has allowed us to be a hybrid organization of volunteer and staff leadership. As a USM department, we get free use of classrooms and office space, media support for all classroom technology, discount parking in the garage, and free use of the computer labs and libraries in the USM system. All OLLI money is held by the University, and OLLI has an operating budget just like every other department. OLLI money is designated as such and is used only for OLLI.

**OLLI is part of the Division of University Outreach at USM.** The Division includes Summer/Winter Session, International Programs, ESOL, Off-Campus Programs, Center for Technology-Enriched Learning (CTEL), Continuing Education, Conferences, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute National Resource Center (NRC).

**OLLI students are non-credit students of USM.** As such you are registered in the University database, you are able to obtain a free USM photo ID card that can be used for more than just parking ([www.usm.maine.edu/usmcard/users.htm](http://www.usm.maine.edu/usmcard/users.htm)), you can use the University libraries, and you are able to access the University e-mail system and computer labs. You also qualify for any discounts offered to USM students: [www.usm.maine.edu/sullivancomplex/ucfr.html](http://www.usm.maine.edu/sullivancomplex/ucfr.html)

**OLLI does NOT own the Wishcamper Center.** It is a University building. Yes, the Muskie School and OLLI contributed toward its construction, and yes, we have priority of occupancy, but it is a University building and is used by the University at large when not in use by us. This is why all groups and committees need to book space through the OLLI office. Just because there are no OLLI classes in session does not mean space is available.

**The OLLI office suite is shared by two separate programs:** OLLI at USM and the National Resource Center. Kali, Fran, Kyle, and Ann are the NRC staff. They coordinate information and communications among the 118 OLLIs nationwide and work closely with the Bernard Osher Foundation in California. Rob and I work full-time for OLLI at USM, while Linda and Sue each work half-time. We are fortunate this year to have 11 office volunteers and two work-study students. We work closely with the OLLI Advisory Board, various committees, OLLI faculty, various USM departments, and our 1,400-plus OLLI members to keep the program running as smoothly as possible.

I know this is a lot of factual information, but I hope it helps everyone understand our University relationships. Our relationship with USM is unique. Many other OLLIs around the country are charged by their university for space, equipment, upkeep, and general overhead. We are very fortunate that USM views OLLI as a vital, growing program that fulfills its ideal of lifelong learning.

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**NOTES FROM SUSAN**

Don’t forget your Clynk bags

OLLI members are reminded to fill their Clynk recycling bags and drop them off at any Hannaford. Proceeds will benefit OLLI.

Why not have an OLLI Clynk bag available when you host your summer picnics and barbecues?
More Great Courses donated to OLLI

Special thanks to James Roberts for his donation of Great Courses Video Series to OLLI in April 2011. Stop by the OLLI Office if you want to borrow any of these titles:

- Peloponnesian Wars, Parts 1, 2, and 3
- Greece & Rome, Parts 1, 2, and 3
- Understanding Genetics: Two CDs, one book
- The Search for Meaning, Parts 1 and 2
- Ancient & Medieval History, Parts 1 and 2
- Einstein: Relativity and the Quantum Revolution, Parts 1 and 2
- World of Byzantium, Parts 1 and 2
- No Excuses: Existentialism and the Meaning of Life, Parts 1 and 2
- The American Mind, Parts 1, 2, and 3
- The Story of Human Languages, Parts 1, 2, and 3
- Change & Motion: Calculus Made Clear, Parts 1 and 2
- Particle Physics for Non-Physicists: A Tour of the Microcosm, Parts 1 and 2
- Great Ideas of Philosophy, Second Edition, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

OLLI artists on display this summer in Wishcamper lobby

Several OLLI artists and photographers have agreed to present their works in the display area of Wishcamper. Summer-term students have an opportunity to appreciate the talents of their friends in Wishcamper’s lobby from June through August. Take time, after you have smelled the roses outdoors, to observe the works of your talented colleagues indoors:

- David Murray
- Natalie Murray
- Nancy Payne
- Betty Smith
- John Sutherland
- Kathleen Sutherland
- Maureen Sze
- Rick Tomazin
- Anne Vaughan
- Edith Yonan
- Sidney Lincoln
Mark Filler (continued from page 1)

Mark has not only built a huge library of recordings but also books on jazz. Because of the fragility of long-playing records, he is transferring to compact discs those records he can’t purchase as CD reissues.

As far as he is concerned, “after 1945 there is very little in jazz for me.” He shakes his head at the term “modern jazz.” The 1920s, he believes, were an un-jelled period with an underdeveloped sense of form and content.

A Fall River, Mass., native, Mark earned his B.A. at Boston University with a major in philosophy and religion “because I thought college was where you went to be liberally educated.”

While working in Boston to earn his C.P.A. credentials, he and his wife decided to buy a place in the country after visiting a cousin at a farm in Parsonsfield, Maine. Not able to afford a farm in New Hampshire, they ended up buying an 1840s farmhouse in the town of Washington, between Augusta and Rockland, in 1968. They came up every weekend from Boston for the next four years to fix the place up.

Mark first set down his Maine roots in 1972, ostensibly to be closer to the farmhouse. He went to work for a firm in Brunswick and then, the following year, in Portland. Portland turned out to be “country” enough, so he and his wife sold the farm. Since 1981 he has been managing director of Filler & Associates, P.A.

Over the years Mark has added to his credentials in such areas as commercial damages analysis, business valuation, and economic damages for personal injury. He has likewise taught courses in his field, has been published frequently in professional journals, and provided expert testimony in numerous court cases.

Mark’s connection with OLLI started 11 years ago. He was listening to jazz records with his friend Jerry Goldberg, who was impressed by his knowledge and told Harry Sky (a co-founder of OLLI). “Harry called and asked if I’d like to teach a class, and I’ve been teaching every year since.”

His courses draw 25 to 30 eager listeners each time. “It must be popular, since I’ve been asked back every year.” As Mark explains, “I talk a bit, sort of like a disc jockey, and tell the students what to listen for, particularly the important parts. I try to answer the question: What makes this a good record? Afterwards, we discuss what they just heard.”

Mark has taught four different modules of the course over the years, but he is worried that he may run out of offerings. However, from the enthusiasm he’s engendered, it appears OLLI students can’t get enough.

—Don King

We’re online!

The OLLI Newsletter is now online and in color. Go to http://usm.maine.edu/olli/olliusm/ and click on “OLLI News” in the left column. On the next page you’ll find a link to the Newsletter. Or you can Google “OLLI USM news” and click on the first search result.
OLLI plans Boston excursion to see works of glass artist Dale Chihuly

Join the OLLI excursion to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts Friday, July 15, to view the work of the accomplished glass artist Dale Chihuly. Throughout his creations, he has gained worldwide renown for his vibrant, colorful glass constructions of intricate flowers, sea creatures, baskets, and chandeliers.

Chihuly’s installations have been presented all over the nation and in 13 countries. Some of his works are huge—some are 58 feet long and others 42 feet tall. He is masterful in creating a play on light that highlights his unique environments. The explosive colors and fantastic shapes are usually set against a dark background. [Ed. Note: See these pictures in full color at usm.maine.edu/olli/olliusm]

The MFA has installed the works in several rooms, each enveloping the viewer in Chihuly’s breathtaking environment of glass formations. It has been said that he is the most creative glass artist since Louis Comfort Tiffany.

The museum’s ongoing exhibits are well known for their variety. A new wing, the Art of the Americas, was recently opened, and there will be ample time to explore its post-Revolutionary exhibits and artifacts. Headphones will be available for listening to commentary on the Chihuly exhibition as well as on the Art of the Americas.

Enjoy lunch on your own at either the cafeteria, with an outside courtyard, or the new elegant cafe. Shopping is available at two gift shops.

Our coach will depart from the Wishcamper Center at 8:30 a.m. and return to Portland at 6 p.m. This trip should fill up quickly as the very well-received exhibit ends the first week of August.

Total cost of $60 includes transportation, driver’s gratuity, entry to the museum and headphones. Register by mail with your check to OLLI, P.O. Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104, or reserve by phone at the OLLI office with credit card by calling 780-4406.

There will be no refunds for cancellations made after July 5.

For questions or further information, call Ruth Cohen (797-3612) or Dauna Binder (773-4790).

—The OLLI Excursions Committee

Botman features OLLI in op-ed

On May 16, an op-ed by Selma Botman, president of USM, was published in the Portland Press Herald. In her essay, Botman praised OLLI and other senior colleges: “These senior colleges engage the ‘over 50s’ in genuine and stimulating learning, and they offer a special kind of camaraderie that happens only in a classroom where ideas are exchanged and learning occurs. Senior college classes offer students all the excitement and the thrill associated with the expansion of knowledge.” She singled out OLLI and some of our instructors and courses. See http://tinyurl.com/Botman-OLLI for the full essay.
Your OLLI—working for you

[Editor’s note: Your OLLI classes, special-interest groups, day trips and excursions, social events, art exhibits, walks, ski trips, and much more, are organized and led by hard-working volunteers—your fellow OLLI members. Much of the work is coordinated and implemented through Standing Committees and their subcommittees. Joan Kushner, a member of the Newsletter Subcommittee, asked the Chairs of the Standing Committees to describe their committees’ work. Here is her compilation of the information she gathered. If you are interested in working on any committee, get in touch with Mary Collins, the Chair of the Volunteer Coordination Committee, at 839-3050. ]

Recruiting and maintaining a volunteer base is crucial for OLLI’s continued success. The Volunteer Coordination Committee meets monthly, and conducts recruiting drives twice a year, at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Volunteer information is entered into an electronic database and provided to other committee chairs, as needed, in order to guide volunteers to both their area of expertise and to those areas of greatest need. Call Mary Collins, 839-3050, for further information.

At the core of OLLI is its curriculum of about 150 courses offered every year. The Education Committee is responsible for making sure that curriculum is organized, publicized, and implemented. Someone researches what OLLI members are interested in. Someone encourages members (and others) —who might want to organize and present a course—to write a proposal. Someone collects these proposals and reviews, edits and proofreads them for inclusion in the OLLI course catalog. It takes quite a few someones to get all that done. Call Lenore Fleming, 878-9279, for further information.

The Community Committee plans and implements membership opportunities for cultural enrichment and community engagement. The committee, with the assistance of several sub-committees, develops a calendar of events and trips for the year and is always responsive to membership ideas and input. It helps plan and implement OLLI Excursions, Extended Travel, Creative Arts, Senior Players, Special Interest Groups, Ninth Week, the Culture Fest (with USM’s Department of International Studies), OLLI Follies, and much more. Call Judith Harris, 642-2577, for more information.

The Nominating Committee consists of five members and meets several times between February and May. The committee solicits résumés of individuals who are interested in serving on the Advisory Board. These résumés, listing past experience and interests, are then reviewed and evaluated, and those that qualify are forwarded to the Board for final selection. For the coming year, the committee needs one additional member. Contact Pat Muzzy, 773-0139, for further information.

The Planning Committee monitors OLLI’s compliance with the Advisory Board’s strategic plan. We gauge OLLI’s effectiveness, as it faces changing conditions and fresh opportunities, in order to propose new directions and goals when necessary, desirable, and obtainable. Committee members are expected to be visionary and creative in initiating new ideas. The committee meets monthly from November to May. Call Phil Curran, 797-2455, for further information.

The Resource Development Committee explores and implements avenues of funding in order to supplement OLLI’s tuition revenue and enhance the Osher Foundation’s initial endowment. The committee conducts various fund-raising activities and explores other granting sources for both the endowment and one-time needs. There are currently four members on the committee, and additional members would be welcome. Call Dick Sturgeon, 773-3174, for further information.

The Communications Committee, in its Newsletter Subcommittee, has been working for the past several months on making sure the OLLI Newsletter is as informative and accurate as possible. It has also undertaken a transition to electronic publishing of the Newsletter on the OLLI/USM website, with color graphics and photographs and clickable links to e-mail addresses and other websites. Future challenges for the Communications Committee as a whole include taking over content of OLLI’s website and integrating the Newsletter into it more fully. For more information, call Tim Baehr at 899-1043.
Announcements / Calendar / Special Events

OLLI Night Out planned at Scarborough

Summertime OLLI Night Out gatherings will kick off on Wednesday, June 22, at 5 p.m. at a summer restaurant—Uncle Don’s Spurwink Country Kitchen at 150 Spurwink Road in Scarborough. We always get special attention there, the food is very good, and the prices are reasonable! There’s a piano at the restaurant, and Terry Foster will bring his accordion, too.

All are welcome to join OLLI friends at a local eatery each month for a Dutch-treat meal. Make your reservation by e-mailing tfoster@maine.edu or calling 780-4895 and leaving a message. If you need a ride, we’ll try to help with that, too.

October book sale will benefit memorial fund

It is not too early to begin setting aside books to donate to OLLI’s October book sale. The sale will benefit the Keith Sherburne Memorial Fund.

You may bring books in to the OLLI office beginning in September. Look for more information in the September Newsletter, but please begin saving books now.

Walking Club plans June, July treks

The Walking Club had a very successful May outing at the Cathance River Nature Preserve in Highland Green in Topsham. Fourteen walkers enjoyed a scenic hike and an informative tour of the Ecology Center as well.

On Wednesday, June 8, the group will walk at the Powell Point Preserve (part of the Freeport Conservation Trust) in Freeport (off Lambert Road), a new location for us. The club will visit the peony gardens at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth on Tuesday, June 21.

For both walks, we will meet at the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 9 a.m. (our summer start time) and carpool. Bring a lunch, water, bug spray, and sunscreen.

Members will be going to Swan Island on Wednesday, July 13. We will be taking a ferry. Cost is $8, and we will need to make some different arrangements. Stay tuned.

If you have questions, call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

Reminders for summer session

Here are some things you need to know about OLLI’s Summer Term.

- June 1 is the beginning of phone, mail, and drop-in registration for Summer Term courses. You need to be registered by mid-June.
- The cafeteria at the Student Center across Bedford Street is closed for the summer.
- USM parking rules apply all summer. OLLI members can park in the garage but not in USM surface lots, even if they are not full.
- Annual membership runs from July 1 to June 30 and costs $25. You can pay this at the OLLI office or with your course registration.

Ninth Week a smashing success

OLLI’s Ninth Week celebration and volunteer luncheon on May 20 was a great success. We’ll have a report in a future Newsletter; for now, you can enjoy a picture album here:

http://tinyurl.com/OLLI-9th
Should you include OLLI in your estate plan?

Income and estate taxes can consume nearly 60 percent of retirement plan funds when inherited. An estate planner can help you structure the inheritance so family members pay the least taxes.

Experts sometimes advise adding a charitable component to the plan (a percentage or a specific amount), which passes tax-free to a non-profit such as OLLI. This way a person can support both the charity and their heirs.

For further information, access the USM website on planned giving (http://usm.maine.edu/giving/opps.htm) and click on Planned Giving, or call Dick Sturgeon at 780-4448.

—Dick Sturgeon, Chair, Development Committee