Profile

Bob McCue

Lure of Joyce has entangled Bob McCue for half-century

Bob McCue says his lifelong fascination with the writing of James Joyce might be traced back to when he heard a reference to Joyce in the movie The Third Man. Being a Brooklyn native whose parents had Irish ties helped to spur his interest in Joyce. Further, his brother told him about a Joyce society at Fredonia State College in New York.

Bob has been drawn to Joyce for a half-century. Since his retirement from business, Bob been leading OLLI classes here and in Arizona for the past five or six years.

Bob says he picked up a copy of Joyce’s Ulysses when he was 21 or 22, but he admits he couldn’t understand it. He put it aside, but its siren song lured him back until he was captivated by its themes, motifs, puzzles, and superb narration. In retrospect, he says, he should have started with A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, advice he offers to anyone venturing into Joyceland.

While his interest in Ulysses was nascent, Bob earned a BA in electrical engineering at Northeastern and an MBA at the University of New Haven.

Retirement has allowed Bob to concentrate on Joyce and other Irish writers. In 2003, his interest found him on a 21-day literary tour of Ireland, where in addition to walking Joyce’s Dublin, he was introduced to Gregory, Synge, Yeats, and Heaney.

Why the attraction for Joyce and particularly Ulysses? “Joyce was ahead of his time,” he says, “particularly in elevating stream-of-consciousness techniques and introducing the epiphany — as in The Dubliners, when the reader suddenly experiences a flash of new insight. Now, such interior monologues and epiphanies are so commonplace as to go unnoticed.

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Where has the summer gone? Already thoughts have turned to fall and “Back to School.”

Registrations for fall classes have been pouring in, but it’s not too late to register. Registration is accepted right up to the beginning of classes. But the decision to cancel a class due to low enrollment will be made by the end of August to allow displaced students a chance to get into an alternative choice.

Remember OLLI now offers courses on Thursday evening and workshops on Saturdays to attract working people.

If you haven’t checked out our website recently, I encourage you to do so. USM has adopted a new Web page format, and for the first time OLLI at USM has control of our own site. Rob was given permission and basic training in May, and he has been working hard to post items and update information.

The catalog and Newsletters have color photos, there’s information about up-coming trips and events, and all the information needed for the fall term is just a click away. Check it out at www.usm.maine.edu/olli.

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director of Programs

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**Parking for OLLI classes**

Discounted parking in the USM garage next to Wishcamper is one of the benefits of OLLI membership. OLLI students can choose from several plans, from one or two days a week to unlimited, any-time parking.

All students will receive details about parking in the materials that are mailed out before classes begin. The parking information will also be posted on the OLLI at USM website (http://usm.maine.edu/olli).

Here are some key things you need to keep in mind:

1. You need an OLLI-USM identification card to access the garage. The card has electronics built into it that the parking garage attendant uses to “load” information about what days you have purchased for parking. Then you just wave your card at the box going into the garage and going out of the garage. **Note:** The entry and exit boxes also have slots. They are not intended for ID cards. Do **not** put your card into the slot; it will get stuck!

2. If you already have parking for the spring or summer term, your parking expires Aug. 31. You can purchase parking at the attendant’s booth near the garage entrance starting Sept. 6. Don’t try before that date; USM undergrads will be buying their parking permits, and the attendant will be extremely busy.

3. We share the garage with USM undergrads and staff, and the USM parking garage gets very busy, especially at the beginning of the school year. Please count on arriving at least half an hour before you class starts.
Fall term reminders

- OLLI fall term classes begin Monday, Sept. 12. To see what classes are still available, drop by the office or call 780-4406. If your class calls for required or recommended readings, check the USM Bookstore in the Woodbury Campus Center.
- SAGE lectures will resume Tuesday, Sept. 13. To register stop by the OLLI office or call 780-4406, or send your registration to OLLI SAGE, USM, P.O. Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104.
- If you have a spring term parking permit for the garage you must renew for the fall term starting Sept. 6.
- Please turn off your cell phone, pager, or other device when you come to class. And please don’t wear perfume, after-shave, or other fragrances. Some students are allergic to them.
- Please pay your OLLI member dues. They run from July to June. (If you took a summer class, you have already paid your dues.)
- The OLLI office does not handle lost and found. Check first at the coat room outside room 102. Then call police and safety at 780-5211; ask for the Portland campus.

Name tags are for wearing

Several people have commented that name tags have been less in evidence in class lately. This imposes a particular burden upon your instructor. You have only the instructor’s name to remember. The instructor, on the other hand, gazes out at anywhere from a dozen to over one hundred faces and would like to attach names to them.

So how about it, gang? If you don’t have a name badge, ask the OLLI office to get one for you and then, *puleeze*, for the sake of those hard-working instructors, wear it where everyone can see it! The gratitude you receive will warm the inner cockles of your heart!

Yours in eternal collegiality,
John Sutherland, Instructor

**We’re online!**

The OLLI Newsletter is now online and in color. Go to [www.usm.maine.edu/olli](http://www.usm.maine.edu/olli) 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.
“Moreover, despite Joyce’s sporadic use of five or six languages and many obscure references and allusions with their attendant complexities, there’s much humor to tickle the funny bone. A small reading group I’m in is focusing on that humor. There are puns, jokes, and some very funny scenes. *Ulysses* is thought by many critics to be a great comic novel. Joyce must have enjoyed his own humor. Nora [Joyce’s wife] once reported that Jim, after midnight and while writing in his tiny office, would burst into paroxysms of laughter.”

As Bob points out, *Ulysses* is a work that has no carbohydrates or fat. Each word has layers of meaning as it takes the skeleton of Homer’s *Odyssey* and uses it as a framework for this modernist work. Joyce takes his protagonist, Leopold Bloom, an ad canvasser and an outsider, on a 20-hour-long odyssey and through him demonstrates that, as we soldier on in life, we are all heroes.

The subject of his class this fall at OLLI will be the Cyclops episode of *Ulysses*, “a more accessible and humorous part of the book.”

Bob has been teaching Irish literary courses since 2007. He regularly teaches in the summer and fall here and then treks to Arizona for the winter. There, in addition to Yeats, Heaney, and Joyce, he has lectured on the Abbey Theater and Irish history.

“I don’t repeat my courses,” he says. “I try to create something new for the attendees and myself. My style is informal. In the just-completed course on Yeats, I lectured but also set up work groups that would analyze and report on some of Yeats’s work. Then, where available, I ran audios of expert commentary on the selected works. In a way, the work groups had a way of assessing their assessments against that of an established critic. They were often spot on.”

Undoubtedly it worked. “To a person, the class said they enjoyed the course and the format. And some said they couldn’t get enough. So I can expect some of them will be with me this fall, which for me makes it all worthwhile.”

Considering Portland’s Irish heritage, Bob found it odd that, when he moved to Portland in 2005, he could find no observances of Bloomsday (June 16, the day in 1904 when Joyce met his future wife, Nora Barnacle). Bloomsday is celebrated annually by Joyce devotees throughout the world. There’s a Bloomsday marathon, re-enactments in many cities, cover-to-cover readings outside of bookstores in cities as far apart as New York and Tokyo. With the enterprising and commercially oriented Dubliners leading the charge, many people regard Bloomsday as be a national holiday. In the last few years, through the Irish Heritage Center and the AIRE theater group, Portland has joined in this fun-for-all.

—Don King

Those returnables are adding up for OLLI

Thank you to everyone who has dropped off a bag of returnable deposit bottles and cans at Hannaford using one of the OLLI Clynk bags.

As of early August, OLLI has made over $150! So far, we have distributed more than 200 empty bags. If you have a bag at home, don’t forget to fill it and drop it off at any Hannaford.

If you haven’t picked up a bag yet, they are available on a table in the Wishcamper lobby or in the OLLI office.
Art Studio “en plein air”

On one of the most perfect days in July, the spring term’s OLLI Art Studio class got together for a full day of “en plein air” painting at the home of Dona Sherburne in Scarborough.

Some of the artists had not painted outdoors before, and they found it to be a great new experience. Tables, chairs, and easels were set up at 9:30 a.m. and out came the oils, pencils, and watercolor paints. We broke for lunch and then got back to work, finishing up at about 3 p.m. In typical “Studio” fashion, we worked hard, laughed a lot, and solved many of the art world’s problems! Everyone had a great day!

The OLLI Follies are coming soon!

Remember the dead cat that turned out to be a raccoon?
Or the phone call from God?
How about the hit song “At OLLI” or the Irish step dancing and poetry recitations by fellow OLLI members?

No? Well, you must have missed last year's OLLI Follies. Don’t let it happen again. Be sure to join us next month for this year’s OLLI Follies. We have a whole new lineup ready for your entertainment and enjoyment. Come on down and share the fun.

Day: Saturday, October 15, 2011
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Where: Hannaford Hall, next to Wishcamper Center. The parking garage will be free.
Suggested donation at the door is $7.00, but you can make an advanced donation of only $5.00 at the OLLI Office when classes start.

—Ann Landsberg

Conversations program to start in October

You are invited to join college-age English language learners in International Conservations on Thursday afternoons 1:15 to 2:45 p.m., October 13 to November 10.

This is an opportunity to engage in fascinating conversations with students from, for example, Japan, China, Peru, Vietnam, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia. A classroom instructor will suggest topics and offer interactive activities to keep the classroom lively.

Contact Barbara Trenacosta (barbarat@usm.maine.edu or 780-4365) to join the conversations.
Olli is a volunteer organization

The newsletter you’re reading was written, edited, designed, and laid out by Olli volunteers. The person you see at the OLLI office reception desk is usually a volunteer. The classes you take are taught or led by volunteers. The education program is created by volunteers. The SAGE lectures are coordinated and managed by volunteers. Reflections, the OLLI literary journal, contains poetry, prose, art, and photography by volunteers, and it is edited by volunteers.

See a pattern here? We have a very capable staff at OLLI that keeps things going day to day, but without OLLI volunteers there would be no classes, no Reflections, no SAGE, no newsletter. These volunteers are your fellow OLLI members. They understand that OLLI is far more than an educational institution for seniors: it is a community.

Please consider becoming more involved in our OLLI community by volunteering. The time commitment can be as little as an hour or two a week. For more information, e-mail Lenore Fleming, the Volunteer Committee Chair, at Lfleming@maine.rr.com or call her at 878-9279.

We need your books! Raffle for free courses!

The OLLI book sale will take place in late October. We encourage you to drop off books at the OLLI office beginning this month and through mid-October. If you would like to be a volunteer to set up and sell during the two-day sale, contact Dick Sturgeon at rbsturgeon@juno.com. This is a good chance to clean out your unnecessary books for a good cause. Most book types are accepted.

The raffle will be conducted during October; the prize is two spring-term courses. More information to come.
OLLI Night Out set for Kon Asian Bistro

Join OLLI members and friends for dinner at a local restaurant each month! For September, you have an opportunity to have dinner at Kon Asian Bistro at 1140 Brighton Ave. in Portland, on Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 5 p.m.

Since Kon opened, it has become a very popular place for dinner. There is a full bar, and you will have a choice of eating in the regular restaurant or in the Hibachi Grill area. Each grill table seats 20, and it’s great fun watching your food cooked right before your eyes by an entertaining chef. Check it out at www.konasianbistro.com

To make a reservation or ask for a ride, call Terry Foster at 780-4895. Or you can e-mail him at tfoster@maine.edu for more details.

Walking Club schedules two September treks

The Walking Club will meet at Back Cove (in the parking area across from Hannaford) at the usual time of 10 a.m. to carpool for the September walks.

September 14, Wednesday: We will hike in Horton Woods in Saco. There is some steep terrain, and the trail wanders through marshes. If you are meeting us there, call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304 for directions.

September 27, Tuesday: Our destination is the Fore River Sanctuary and Jewell Falls between Brighton Avenue and Westbrook Street.

Bring bug spray, sun screen, water, and your lunch.

OLLI-backed play to take look at marriage

An OLLI-sponsored one-act play, Jill and Jack, a funny and insightful look at marriage that is sometimes like and your own and sometimes not, will be performed Sept. 23, 24, 25, and 30, and Oct. 1 and 2 in room 133 in the Wishcamper Center.

The play is written by John Man-derino and directed by Mel Howards.

The weekday and Saturday performances are at 7:30 p.m., and the Sunday performances (Sept. 25 and Oct. 2) are at 2 p.m.

The cost is $5 for OLLI members and $10 for others.