

OLLI NEWSLETTER

December 2020

www.usm.maine.edu/olli

The Year That Was Almost Canceled

By Donna Anderson, OLLI Director
and
Sue Jennings, Advisory Board Chair

It was early March, and OLLI had just held a successful “Wrinkle in Time: Perspectives on Racism,” with plans to follow through with a series of Brown Bag lunches and other forums to pursue topics raised. The spring term was ready to start with 1,272 people enrolled in courses and workshops and 119 ready to attend SAGE lectures. Special Interest Groups were meeting regularly, and travel plans were underway for a trip to Madrid in early December. OLLI and its Advisory Board were focused on keeping up operational momentum and implementing their strategic plan with experiments in social media and distance learning. Then in mid-March everything changed. USM suspended face-to-face classes, committee meetings, travel, and gatherings of all sorts. The OLLI offices were closed, and staff started working from home.

But all was not lost. Thanks to OLLI staff, faculty, and other volunteers, we were able to move forward with a Remote Learning Plan that was our roadmap for navigating a split spring session and full summer and fall sessions. These were truly heroic efforts from all who stepped forward to learn and teach Zoom, to gear up courses and workshops for presentations in new ways, and to support each other through tip sheets, training sessions, and endless patience. We saw the best of OLLI and how our strength lies in our collective commitment and sheer hard work.

As we near the end of this challenging year, we have continued to do what we do best, albeit remotely—offer classes and workshops, meet in Special Interest Groups, interact in lively social events, and keep in touch with other OLLI members. Winter classes start on January 12, and proposals are coming in for the spring term—both of which will be run remotely.

These have been difficult times, and we all hope to return to life as it was pre-Coronavirus, but we need also to celebrate what we have learned in the process and use this experience to grow OLLI in new ways. For example, remote learning has opened up the pos-

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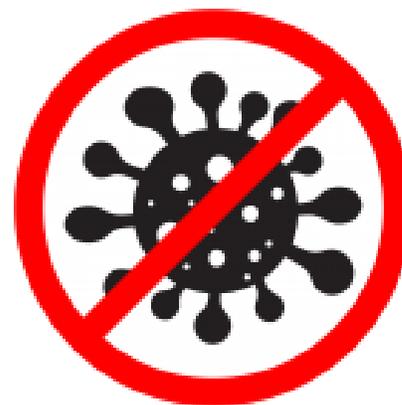



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sibility of offering classes with other OLLIs across the nation and other senior colleges here in Maine. We are discussing co-teaching a class with the other USM OLLI—University of Southern Mississippi. We have opened up a new relationship with the Maine Audubon Society for workshops and other events. We are challenging ourselves to become more engaged in working with other community organizations, and we are exploring the many different ways that we can meet, share, and enjoy learning and social events.

Here's hoping for turning our difficulties into new possibilities. Happier New Year!



SAGE Concludes First Virtual Series Spring 2021 Series Announced

SAGE completed its first virtual Zoom series on November 10 with quite a final “bonus” program featuring Opera Maine. Zoom makes it possible to include participants from virtually anywhere. Opera Maine’s team joined us from New York, southern New Jersey, and Brunswick, as well as the Portland area.

Next spring SAGE will take full advantage of this Zoom capacity:

[Kelly Martin](#), retired Chief of Fire and Aviation for Yosemite National Park and the National Park Service, will be connected from Idaho. (Click on her name to see a video.)

Eckart Preu, Music Director of the Portland Symphony, is expected to participate, either from Spokane, Washington, or Long Beach, California.

Closer to home, Preti Flaherty attorney Tony Buxton, perhaps the most knowledgeable Mainer about the increasingly speedy expansion of renewable energy; and Ed Myslik, Principal Investigator for the State Bureau of Consumer Protection, will join SAGE from Augusta.

Four spring speakers will participate from Portland:

USM professor and Director of the Muskie School Firooza Pavri will discuss environmental and societal changes in Greenland and Iceland resulting from climate change.

Dr. Stephen Pelsue, science director at the Portland office of BBI Solutions, a Welsh company that is one of three in a consortium that won the UK government contract for their Covid-19 testing, will address vaccines.

Music education will be discussed by Dr. Jean Murachanian, Executive Director of Portland Conservatory.

USM Business School Instructor Richard Bilodeau, will provide insights into entrepreneurship.

The spring 2021 brochure will be online in late January.

ADVISORY BOARD

Sue Jennings, Chair
 Steve Schiffman, Vice-Chair
 TBA: Co-Chairs, Teaching and Learning Committee
 Peter Curry, Secretary
 Anne Cass & Karen Day, Co-Chairs, Membership and Administration Committee
 Gael McKibben & Elizabeth Housewright, Co-Chairs, Social Relations Committee
 Paul Doherty, Chair, SAGE Committee
 Star Pelsue, Chair, External Relations Committee
 Matt Goldfarb Georgia Koch
 Steven Piker Penny Davis Dublin
 Bob Greene David Morton

OLLI members are invited to attend Advisory Board meetings. Check with the Chair for time and place, or Zoom link, if you wish to address the Board.

WEB SITES

Maine Senior College Network
www.maineseniorcollege.org
 OLLI National Resource Center
www.osher.net
 OLLI at USM
www.usm.maine.edu/olli

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OLLI NEWSLETTER

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 Please send newsletter material to the OLLI Office, via our e-mail.

Deadline for the January issue is December 15.

A Holiday Gift Is on Its Way to You!

The very special 2020 issue of *Reflections* is now in the last phase of production, and you will find it in your mailbox later this month. It is indeed special, stunning in appearance, engaging in its variety of expression from fellow OLLI members, and celebrating the 20th anniversary of this annual publication.

The pandemic delayed its publication a bit, but we are confident you will find it well worth the wait. This year OLLI is arranging for copies to be mailed to all current members, and it is projected to be available by December 16.

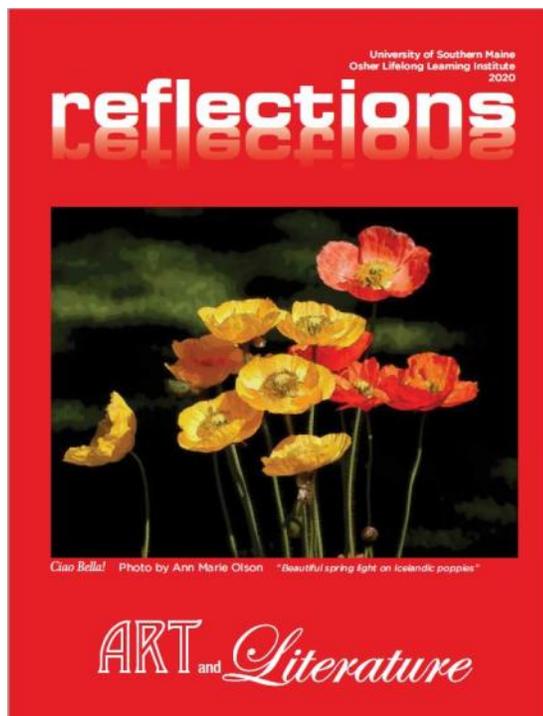
Look for more information in a future newsletter for news of a virtual Zoom launch, to hear from some of those represented in the issue and from those who have helped make this sharing of ideas and images possible through the years.

And when we can be together in person, there will be more celebration...perhaps tied to the return to our normal fall launch of the 2021 issue!

Yes, let's look forward. And we want to start by inviting all of you to think about submitting your work to the 2021 *Reflections*. Surely we have the opportunity to dig deep and seek what is meaningful. Instructions for submissions to the 2021 edition will appear on the OLLI website. We'll let you know when it is posted.

Happy reading, and happy holidays!

—The Reflections Team



POP!



Do you know about OLLI's fun and free titillations?

They can't be found in the course catalog.

They can't be found in the newsletter.

They are the OLLI POPUPS!

Some are never-to-be-repeated.

Some have occurred more than once.

You have already missed

*talks about genealogy, mystery authors,
games of Trivia, discussion of a Portland Stage production.*

Watch your e-mails from robert.hyssong@maine.edu,

Subject Line: OLLI Social Events

Check it out. See what December offers.

Though free, you must register as you would for a class.

A Special Gift

While we are all working remotely and supporting OLLI's distance learning activities, we are planning for the future. Barclay Palmer of Brunswick has donated a baby grand piano to OLLI, and thanks to Rob's hard work, it is now waiting for us in Room 102. This wonderful gift will allow us to have small concerts, to improve the quality of music in classes such as Terry Foster's music courses, and to provide accompaniment to our singing Special Interest Group. Watch for a special debut for the piano early in 2021.

— Donna Anderson



Walking Club News for December

The Walking Club started with a revised schedule in June after a delay of two months because of the pandemic. Because we were able to meet outside and choose locations that allowed for social distancing, we began to gather for our twice-monthly outings, wearing masks. Walkers signed in at each event to provide for contact tracing, which thankfully we never had to undertake. Attendance was very robust, with 130 visits from OLLI members over the last six months. Because we were not carpooling as we normally did, we had to choose places with adequate parking for 20 or more cars, a factor that influenced our choices of sites.

Unfortunately we will not be holding our traditional holiday luncheon in December, where we view a slide show of all the walks of the past season. But we may try to have such an event in 2021 once the virus is under control. We will hold an annual meeting in January on Zoom—more on that in the next newsletter.

There will be a Walking Club schedule for the coming year, but until April, continue to read your *OLLI Newsletter* for the first notice of upcoming walks. I thank all of the walkers who have continued to join us and have enjoyed the great outdoors and the health benefits of seeing one another, even with restrictions. We have a better year ahead; so keep walking.

—*Rae Garcelon*



The walk at Pleasant Hill Preserve in November.



Group at Wolfe’s Neck Woods in October



The walk at Pleasant Hill Preserve, and yes, some of us ate on the beach!

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