



January 2019



Profile

Peter Curry

Welcoming Peter Curry to the OLLI Board

Peter Curry has an abundance of energy — and, luckily for OLLI, he has agreed to devote some of that energy to the OLLI Advisory Board. Although a newcomer to the Board, he has been a member and participating student for more than seven years, taking classes in a variety of subjects including religion, anthropology, philosophy, and current events.

Peter and his wife, Anne, moved from Rockport, Massachusetts, to Cape Elizabeth in 2011 and find that life in Greater Portland offers everything they could want. First and foremost, that means living near their children and their grandchildren. “I guess we’re like most people,” he said with a smile, “we wanted to be near our grandchildren, so we followed them.”

It also means having easy access to “really wonderful restaurants” without the hassle and expense that was inherent in a trip to Boston. And he was quick to add that OLLI has been a very important factor in loving their lives here. As a member of the Board, Peter said, “I hope to help OLLI keep doing what it does so well; doing more of the same for more people.”

He was born in Pittsburg, raised in Connecticut, and attended Princeton University, where he graduated with a degree in Latin American studies. Following that, he was in the U.S. Marine Corps

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Weather Reminder

When USM’s Portland Campus is closed on account of the weather, or if the day’s official start or end time is modified, the same will be true of OLLI.

The most reliable information is available on USM’s Storm Line: 780-4800.

Even if USM is officially open, use your judgment about whether to leave home.

Peter Curry*(Continued from page 1)*

for three years and then spent a year in business before entering law school at Columbia University. It was an unusual path to his career as a Boston lawyer with a securities background. After a long career in law, Peter retired in 2003.

For the past six years, he has been tutoring Portland High School students from around the world who are not yet proficient in English. “I started with one student and when he graduated there were others, so now I tutor several students throughout the week.” Although most of his tutoring is in the field of math, he tutors in other subjects as needed. Peter speaks Spanish and explained that his Spanish language ability comes from five years of early childhood in Puerto Rico, majoring in Latin American studies in college, and working in Colombia. His tutoring is not limited to Spanish-speaking students, however, and so teaching English as a second language gets incorporated into his tutoring as well.

Peter has an obvious love of learning that he shares with students, and now, as a new Board member, he shares that enthusiasm with OLLI.

—Shelley Dunn

A Grateful Farewell from Norman Abelson

Hello, I must be going.
I cannot stay,
I came to say
I must be going.
I'm glad I came
but just the same
I must be going.

Groucho sang that rather plaintive song as Captain Spaulding in *Animal Crackers*, the Marx Brothers' second movie. The film was released in 1930, just one year before my birth. I quote it here because it kind of mirrors my own feelings as my 88th birthday draws near.

When I first came to OLLI a decade ago to lead writing courses, a new and exciting door opened on my life. Now, with some 30 of those courses behind me, it seems a good time to bid adieu. While there's still some fire in the belly, it has become increasingly difficult at times to give it my all.

Of course, one should never say never. Change is the one constant. If things pick up, I'm open to giving it another try in the future. And, of course, joining or dropping in on one of the great OLLI courses is still a happy option.

What I really want to say at this point is: Thank you, thank you, thank you! To my incredible students, who taught me so much; to the ever-patient staff who made my tasks so easy and doable; to the Oshers and others who started and nurtured OLLI, and to the terrific new friends I've made along the way. OLLI always gave me back so much more than I gave.

I'd be happy to hear from you (naftali@maine.rr.com).

Like Groucho.....I'm glad I came, but just the same, I must be going.

—Norm



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**OLLI members are invited to attend
 Advisory Board meetings. Check
 with the Chair for time and place, or
 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

OLLI STAFF

Rob Hyssong, Program Coordinator
 Linda Skinner, Admin. Assistant I
 Sue Schier, Admin. Assistant II

OLLI NEWSLETTER

OLLI Office:
 Wishcamper Center 210
 P. O. Box 9300
 Portland, ME 04104-9300
 Phone: 207 780-4406 or
 1-800-800-4876
 TTY 1-207-780-5646
 Fax: 207 780-4317
 E-mail: online@maine.edu
 Tim Baehr, Editor
 Don King, Editor Emeritus
 Elsa van Bergen, Contributing Editor
 Shelley Dunn, Contributing Editor
 Mogens Ravn, Layout Editor
 Please send newsletter material to the
 OLLI Office, via our e-mail.

**Deadline for the February
 issue is January 15.**

OLLI Gets a Glimpse into Forbidden City

When my husband and I read that the OLLI Excursion to the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, was to see “Empresses of China’s Forbidden City,” our interest was sparked.

Then we found out the special exhibit was organized with the Smithsonian’s Freer/Sackler museums in Washington, D.C., as well as the Palace Museum in Beijing, and we knew we had to go.

Gael McKibben, who has planned many OLLI Excursions, was the mastermind of the charter bus trip from Portland, which took place November 29.

After signing a couple of forms, the near-capacity crowd loaded onto a brand-new Custom Coach with Paula Johnson helping with arrangements and favorite OLLI driver Becky at the wheel.

By mid-morning we pulled up next door to the museum in central Salem in front of the Visitors’ Center. After a half-hour of learning the ropes of the museum, we broke up into three docent-guided groups and entered the stunning exhibit with two-story banners of exquisite portraits of prominent empresses and dowager empresses from the Qing dynasty (1644–1912).

Designed to explore the role of the empresses in shaping China’s last dynasty, the exhibit includes 200 special objects from the Palace Museum in Beijing, marking the 40th anniversary of the establishment of US-China diplomatic relations.

Our docent had been to China and was obviously extremely well-informed and well-trained. She explained how empresses were chosen by the emperor from among the harem-like consorts, picked from the daughters of the Manchurian elite and not from the predominant Han Chinese. Also supremely important was the mother of the emperor, the dowager empress.

The objects chosen included finely embroidered gowns and huge wall hangings, paintings of life in the Forbidden City, headdresses, jewelry, furniture, and sculpture. The items in the exhibit had never before been seen by the public, even in China. The exhibit in Salem will continue through February 10, 2019, after which it will move to Washington, D.C.

Since little has been written about most of the empresses, their influence on art, religion, court politics, and international diplomacy remains elusive. A notable exception involves Empress Dowager Cixi (1835–1908), who merits a full biography.

Some of our OLLI group sampled the sandwiches and salads of the museum’s cafe in the light, airy atrium, while others ventured out into the blustery city for more choice.

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Forbidden City (Continued from page 3)

Many of us returned to the exhibit for a more leisurely visit on our own and then explored the fascinating Chinese traditional house, which was dismantled, shipped to Salem, and reassembled as a permanent part of the Peabody Essex Museum to give insight into the life of an extended Chinese family over generations.

We were all sorry that we missed the preview lecture planned by Denney Morton, which was to have been held two days before the trip. Gael said that a great deal of work had gone into this lecture, which was to have included a video and some other visuals. An unexpected snow day was announced for all of USM the day of the lecture, so all classes were cancelled and all the buildings were closed. However, copies of multi-page sets of some of Denney’s material were handed out on the bus, with topics to deepen our understanding of the exhibit, so not all was lost. (Reminder: Anyone wishing to get the most accurate info on USM snow days should call 780-4800.)

On the way home, Gael suggested that we mention for the benefit of those interested in current China, the 32nd Camden Conference’s topic “Is this China’s Century?” on February 22–24, 2019, which will be live-streamed to USM’s Luther Bonney Hall. See camdenconference.org for details. OLLI’s winter course previewing the Conference is already filled.

Other OLLI Excursions will be planned to start in the spring. Look for these in coming issues of the *OLLI Newsletter*.

Congratulations and many thanks to OLLI Excursions for this excellent trip.

—Vee and Fred Sheehan



OLLI's Exploration Team

The fact that you are reading these words makes you part of a community that has been kept informed about happenings on our Portland campus for over two decades. In 1997 *Senior College News* debuted as a one-sheet newsletter, printed in black on colored paper, the only graphic a line drawing of our owl logo. Your eyes tell you how very far this monthly publication, The *OLLI Newsletter*, has come!

Under Editor Tim Baehr, profile articles, news items, graphics, and special features are planned and solicited, written and gathered, to be copy-edited and proofread by a crackerjack team currently including Laurie Jensen, Ann Landsberg, and John Sutherland. Judith Harris, Joan Kushner, and Pat Walsh are among those assisting in past years. Don King is the Editor Emeritus. For many years, he was active in doing preliminary editing and writing the profiles of OLLI members. Currently Shelley Dunn and Amy Liston provide profiles that allow members to better know fellow members. The final steps: the approved content goes to our talented layout editor, Mogens Ravn, and then a new issue is posted via the OLLI website. If you have a submission, it is due by the 15th of the month preceding posting, and should be e-mailed to OLLINews@maine.edu.

So what's this about an exploration team? The Communications Committee, which oversees student-generated publications such as the newsletter, is constantly investigating new ways to effectively reach the growing OLLI student body. Surveys indicate most of us prefer to get news from the *OLLI Newsletter*, but anecdotal findings indicate many do not read it fully or regularly. This year—in conjunction with the OLLI Advisory Board—Sue Jennings, chair of Communications, and Elizabeth Housewright (both Board members) are spearheading an effort to explore using social media to get the OLLI word/s out. Research by Steve Schiffman and Rob Hyssong at a recent national conference of OLLIs helped formulate a series of questions the Board's social media subcommittee will ask other OLLIs and senior colleges.

Over the years a number of one-shot publications (such as our 20th anniversary booklet) and recurring periodicals have been issued. In the fall of 2000 Keith Sherburne, one of the early movers and shakers of Senior College, was behind a proposal to create an annual magazine in which OLLI members would share their poetry, prose, and artistic talents. The resulting *Reflections*, published each October, has not only provided a platform for members' creative expression: it has become something of a two-way street when some contribution sparks a reader's own reflection on roads taken or places visited, and a personal exchange of e-mails results. For the 2018 edition, Ruth Story completed her 3-year editorship with a selections committee composed of Nancy Bills, Rose Ducey, and Joan Kotz. Each year the *Reflections* team reads "blind" submissions; the identity of a submitter is unknown until after a piece has been accepted. The rules for submissions, usually due in April, appear on our OLLI website.

To better oversee the growing number of OLLI publications, the Communications Committee was formed in 2010 as a Standing Committee of the OLLI Advisory Board. Sue Jennings heads the group currently consisting of Tim Baehr, Anne Cass, Shelley Dunn, Steven Piker, Ruth Story, and Elsa van Bergen. Their meeting discussions might range from ways to bring attention to special events to monitoring the website and bulletin boards to status reports on forthcoming publications. And to where exploration is taking all of us.

This Standing Committee is eager to hear from you if you are interested in joining it or wish to share your ideas about communication outreach. Please contact the chair, Sue Jennings (Jensusa10@gmail.com).



Senior Moments

OLLI Poets Selected for New Anthology

Poems from three of OLLI's Shiny Day Poets were selected for inclusion in *Balancing Act 2: An Anthology of Poems by 50 Maine Writers*. The book contains 118 poems from both established and emerging poets representing many generations.



The OLLI poets are Muriel Allen, Deborah Crimmins, and Mary Tracy. These poets took part in a poetry reading on December 15 at the Space Gallery. This celebration was the first of many that are planned for the next few months. *Maine Today* posted an article about *Balancing Act 2* on December 10 (<http://mainetoday.com/do-this-2/littoral-books-celebrates-second-book-poetry-43-years-first/>).

Celebrate MLK Day with a Bar B Que



Last month our folks were craving barbecue so here's what we came up with. It's a chain, but for BBQ the closest local computer listing can't offer the space we need.

According to my sources, "Prices are on point; atmosphere is casual, clean, and fun; and the service is friendly." "The brisket and ribs were tender and juicy... falling off the bone." They have counter ordering and will serve you at your table. If you are ready for real winter food, this is it.

On the Web: www.moesoriginalbbq.com/lo/portland/.

Please join us.

When: Monday, January 21, at 12:30

Where: Moe's Original Bar B Que, 209 Western Ave., Unit A, South Portland, ME, 956-7623

Reservations: Call or write by noon Sunday, January 20.

—Barbara Bardack

bravalascale@gmail.com (NEW), 829-1240 (NEW)

Walking Club

After a successful final walk of 2018 at Mackworth Island and a joyous holiday lunch at the Egg and I in December, we start off the New Year with a snowshoe outing at Ft. Williams Park in Cape Elizabeth on **Wednesday, January 9th**. If there is little snow on the ground, we will simply walk around the area. I think most will want to drive by themselves, as there is plenty of parking. We will meet at the lower parking area facing the water to the left of the road as you enter the park. Let's meet there about 10 a.m. We may find an interesting place to eat nearby, where you may buy something for lunch.

Because our annual meeting was scheduled for January 21 and that is Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, OLLI will be closed then. So we have moved the Annual Meeting up a week to Monday, January 14th, at 10 a.m. in Room 203. There will be several announcements of interest, opportunities to talk about the walks, to suggest new ones, and a chance to view the past year on the big screen. If you have questions about this schedule, call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.



The group on Mackworth Island in November

