Happy 20th Birthday to Us!

[Note: This article is adapted from one of our 15th Anniversary articles.]

On Friday, September 12, 1997, a group of seniors and instructors gathered in Payson Smith Hall on the USM campus for the first classes of the USM Senior College.

Initially, the plan had been to offer just four classes, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. But something happened that has continued to this day: the response was more enthusiastic and larger than anticipated. Three additional classes were thus added to the roster, in order to accommodate the numbers of students who wished to enroll. The seven classes would be familiar today: World Religions; Current Issues, Domestic and Foreign; Environmental Awareness; History of Art; Estates and Wills; The Last Great Stage of Life; and Ballroom Dancing.

How did this all begin?

The organization was first established as “USM Senior College,” thanks primarily to the efforts of Rabbi Harry Sky and Terry Foster, along with significant support from USM.

Rabbi Sky, retired in 1989 from Temple Beth El, had been learning about and investigating programs geared toward educating older adults. He approached Richard Pattenaude, then President of USM, with the idea that USM should host a senior college. Richard Pattenaude, in turn, sought the help of Terry Foster, who was then serving as USM’s Director of Extended Academic Programs (later to be known as “Division of Outreach”).

(Continued on page 2)
Incorporating suggestions from Richard Pattenaude, Rabbi Sky and Terry Foster put together a nine-person Senior College Executive Board, with the aim of developing a needs assessment, resource identification, and recruitment and promotion plan for a Senior College. A generous funding grant was secured from USM to help with startup costs, including mailing campaigns and special events.

Early on, the Board discovered just how much interest there might be in a senior college. On Memorial Day weekend of 1997, the board hosted an open house at the USM Student Center. Recollections vary about how many seniors were expected. It was at least 100; Terry Foster remembers that 200 to 300 people were expected—550 showed up!

**What were the early years like?**

Back in 1997, students had to be 55 or older to enroll; now, the age for membership is 50. Membership fees were the same as they are today, $25.00, and tuition costs were $50.00 for the first class and $25.00 for the second.

Because we shared space with the University, classes were offered only on Fridays, when fewer University classes met. Senior College students could take only two classes, one each in the morning and afternoon.

From 1997 to 2008, most classes were held in Payson Smith and Luther Bonney Halls of USM. A special tradition that arose on Fridays during that first eight-week term, and then continued for many years, was that members lunched together, first in the basement of Payson Smith, and later in the USM Student Center.

**How did the Senior College expand?**

Beginning in 1999, the Senior College idea began to spread. After lobbying efforts from our board, the state provided seed money for a Senior College Initiative. This led to the employment of Kali Lightfoot, a portion of whose task was to spread knowledge and enthusiasm for Senior College throughout the state. This then led to the establishment of the Maine Senior College Network and the 17 Senior Colleges that exist today.

**How did we become OLLI?**

By 2000, Bernard Osher became aware of the USM Senior College. Osher, a former banker then living in California, had Maine connections. He was born in Biddeford, Maine, and his brother still lives in Portland. Bernard continues to have a great passion for education and the arts. He has been described as “the quiet philanthropist,” and has said that reading letters from the recipients of his generosity is the high point of each day.

Osher came in 2000 to visit the USM Senior College and to meet with Kali Lightfoot and Vice-President Rosa Redonnett. He provided a substantial grant to establish our OLLI—the first Osher Life-long Learning Institute. Osher went on to make further grants available toward funding educational opportunities for people over 50. His grants have helped establish or strengthen 120 OLLIs similar to ours currently in existence throughout the nation.

**And so...**

Had it not been for the drive and passion of Rabbi Sky, Terry Foster, and many others, and the community spirit that they generated and nurtured, the Bernard Osher Foundation’s generous gift would never have come to this community.
Happy 20th Birthday to Us!  

Look for the rest of the story in the special commemorative booklet being prepared for you next spring.

—Joan Aldrich and Tim Baehr

Advisory Board

In the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, we are once again confronted with our vulnerability in the face of natural disaster, and of loss in general.

Imagine being one of those nursing home residents in southern Florida who, having survived the storm, were then faced with days/weeks of sweltering heat and diminishing supplies, waiting for power to be restored and life to return to some semblance of normalcy.

We here in Portland seem to be blissfully immune to Category 4 storms, but we continue to be vulnerable in other ways. Personal challenges and losses know no boundaries.

OLLI serves to remind us how fortunate we are to be able to share the stability of classes and workshops with others so inclined, especially when much in the world is so uncertain and unpredictable.

I’m loving my OLLI classes this term, and hope you are too.

—Janet Stebbins, Board Chair

A New Volunteer Opportunity

The OLLI communications team is responsible for the Newsletter, the annual Reflections journal of literature and art, and other one-shot projects to share information with all OLLI members. The committee is starting work on a booklet to commemorate 20 years of our history, including features, photos, and commentary to bring now almost 2100 of us behind the scenes of what we richly enjoy throughout the year.

We invite you to consider joining us to help out. If you have writing or layout skills, great! If you would like to learn and assist, especially with this special keepsake booklet, we would be so grateful to hear from you. Your input would be truly valuable. Please contact the Communications Committee chair, Elsa van Bergen, ejvanbergen2@gmail.com.

Deadline for the November issue is October 15.
NOTES FROM SUSAN

A 20th Anniversary Special Offer

It is well known that regular exercise is an important aspect of healthy aging. So what’s holding you back? To encourage OLLI members to exercise regularly, OLLI at USM and the Sullivan Gym are partnering to offer OLLI members six months of FREE membership at the Sullivan fitness center, located on the Portland campus. To take advantage of this incredible opportunity, simply go to the Sullivan Gym and identify yourself as an OLLI member. All participants must have a USM ID. If you have one, be sure to take it with you. If you don’t have one yet, come into the OLLI office and staff will assist you in getting one. Once you have a card, you simply scan it when you arrive and you’re good to go.

Still hesitant? The fitness center is offering two informational tours for OLLI members to ask questions and check out the available equipment. The tour will last approximately a half hour and will be held on October 18 and 19 from 12:00 to 12:30 pm, timed to fit perfectly into the OLLI class schedule!

But don’t procrastinate. This offer expires December 31, 2017. So what’s holding you back, now? I think that even I have lost my last excuse.

See you at the fitness center!

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program

It’s Not Too Late!

Share your story or picture with us!

To celebrate our 20th anniversary, we are putting together a booklet with your memories and pictures.

Send us a brief (about 150 words or less) with a large or small memory: how you found OLLI, your favorite class or activity, your experience as an instructor or volunteer, how your interest widened or branched out—anything! It doesn’t matter if you’ve been in OLLI for a decade (or two!), or if you just joined this year. The e-mail address is olli20th@aol.com.

You can also just fill out a card at the bulletin board across from the elevator on the ground floor.

Did you take pictures on an OLLI Expedition or Excursion? Another OLLI event? A class you attended? Ninth Week celebration? We’d love to see any pictures! Just send to the same e-mail address, olli20th@aol.com.

Deadline is October 15, with a possible one-time extension. But you’ll feel so much better if you do it now.
OLLI Excursions Travels to Worcester on October 28

This fall OLLI Excursions will take you to the Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts. Built during the city’s heyday, it was formally opened in 1898 amidst much fanfare. At the time Worcester was at its height as one of the leading industrial and manufacturing areas in New England and there was a healthy philanthropic class. It was also the state’s largest center for the arts outside of Boston.

The WAM became the first museum in the United States to purchase works by Claude Monet as well as Paul Gauguin. The museum was also the first institution to transport a medieval building—a chapter house—from Europe and install it in America.

As the second largest art museum in New England, it houses more than 35,000 works of art dating from antiquity to the present day, representing cultures from all over the world. In addition to the Roman mosaic-laden Renaissance courtyard floor and the French chapter house, strengths of the permanent collection include collections of European and North American painting, prints, photographs, and drawings; Asian art; Greek and Roman sculpture and mosaics; and Contemporary art.

Recently WAM reinstalled its medieval galleries and its outstanding collection of ecclesiastical artwork with the chivalric arms and armor of the John Woodman Higgins Collection to tell a new story for 21st-century audiences.

At the opposite end of the historical arc, in the Contemporary Gallery, Shih Chieh Huang’s *Reusable Universes* will provoke the viewer to consider society’s rapidly changing relationship with technology. He has transformed mundane manufactured objects into novel and remarkably complex sculptural forms.

OLLI’s own art historian, Tan Larrabee, and his wife, Joy, will accompany us and lecture about the collection on the bus trip going to the museum, giving you an orientation and historical details as well as highlights to check out.

Lunch will be on your own.


*Trip is limited to 49 OLLI members. Cost is $65 and includes the tip for the bus driver. Departure is from Wishcamper Center on Saturday, Oct. 28, at 8:15 a.m., returning to Portland at approximately 6 p.m. Deadline for registration is Oct. 20. There will be no refunds after that unless the space is filled from the waiting list.*

You can reserve a place on the Excursion in any of these ways:

**Beginning Oct. 4**
- Use the online OLLI registration system at the OLLI website ([www.usm.maine.edu/OLLI](http://www.usm.maine.edu/OLLI)).

**Beginning Oct 9**
- Mail your check to OLLI, PO Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104
- Call the OLLI office at 780-4406 to pay with a card
- Register in person at the office

For further information call Gael McKibben at 774-7177.
Upcoming SAGE Lectures for October

The Fall 2017 SAGE series of lectures continues in October with these excellent presentations:

October 3, 2017: Janet T. Mills
  Topic: Legal Challenges to the State of Maine
  Location: Wishcamper Room 102

Janet Mills is Maine’s chief law enforcement officer. She is the first woman to hold the position of State Attorney General in Maine.

October 10, 2017: Peter S. Onuf
  Topic: The Rise and Fall of Jefferson’s Empire
  Location: Wishcamper Room 102

Peter Onuf is a leading historian, author and editor. He is a retired American history professor known for his work on U.S. President Thomas Jefferson.

October 17, 2017: Kara Wooldrik
  Topic: Walking Can Change the World
  Location: Wishcamper Room 102

Kara Wooldrik has been the Executive Director of Portland Trails since 2012. Take a virtual walk with Kara as she explores Portland Trails at the crossroads of health, economy, environment, and transportation.

October 24, 2017: Chet Lunner
  Topic: Fake News and “Alternative Facts”: Is American Journalism Dead?
  Location: Wishcamper Room 102

Chet Lunner was an original member of the team that designed and created the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). He went on to become a senior executive at the Department of Homeland Security, specializing in state, local, tribal, and private sector counterterrorism efforts and retired in 2010 as a deputy to the DHS chief of intelligence.

October 31, 2017: John and Carol Farrell
  Topic: Not Your Kukla, Fran, and Ollie
  Location: Hannaford Hall — NOTE LOCATION CHANGE!

John and Carol Farrell are founders and co-directors of Figures of Speech Theatre. Together they forged a unique vision of performance incorporating puppets and actors, masks, music, and dance. They have created 18 original works of theater, and have toured the world for over 30 years.

Come join us for entertaining and informative lectures. Walk-ins are welcome for $10 for each lecture on a space-available basis.

Reflections Coming Soon!

The 2017 edition of OLLI at USM’s journal of literature and art will soon be ready for your reading pleasure. Join us for the Reflections launch and reception on Wednesday, October 18, at 11:45 a.m. in room 211. Copies of the journal will be available.

The committee for this 17th edition of Reflections includes Ruth Story, chair; Joan Kotz; Rose Ducey; Sidney Lincoln; Nancy Bills; and Jane Ann McNeish. The production editors were Tim Baehr and Ann Landsberg.

All submissions were “blind”: the committee did not know the names of the people until after the submissions were selected.

We most heartily thank all of you who submitted art, photography, poetry, and prose.
News from the OLLI History Book Club

OLLI members are invited to join the History Book Club, which meets the second Wednesday of the month at 3:15, from September through June. Book suggestions are submitted and voted on by group attendees in the spring, and then a calendar is created.

There is no obligation to read or attend regularly. For more information, e-mail Susan Gesing at susangesing@gmail.com.

Oct. 11—Notes on a Lost Flute: A Field Guide to the Wabanaki, by Kerry Hardy
Nov. 8—Cod: A Biography of a Fish That Changed the World, by Mark Kurlansky
Jan. 10—Hillbilly Elegy, by J. D. Vance
Mar. 14—The Wright Brothers, by David McCullough
Apr. 11—Lincoln at the Bardo, by George Saunders
May 9—The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783–1789, by Joseph Ellis

The OLLI Education Committee

Brown Bag Lunch on Wednesday, Oct. 11, from 11:45 to 12:30 in Room 211

Featuring faculty member Tom McGovern talking about his newly published book:
Jesus and Well Being: A Spiritual and Psychological Good News Story

Tom will present a case study with audience Q&A interactions to demonstrate how Jesus’s parables stimulate us to think today about using character strengths in difficult situations.

His book draws directly on gospel parables, inviting readers of diverse faith commitments to explore the virtues of wisdom, love, justice, courage, temperance, and transcendence.

Tom explores how Jesus’s first-century life can be newly interpreted as a paragon of character strengths that may contribute to mindful spirituality and well being in the 21st century.

Change of Venue!

The October 31 SAGE presentation by Figures of Speech Theatre has been moved to Hannaford Hall in the Abromson Center connected to the parking garage. Hannaford Hall provides much better sightlines for this unique experience, which involves masks, puppets, actors, music, and dance.

Remember to pick up a CLYNK bag at the office for your deposit bottles and cans!

Proceeds benefit OLLI.
Bike & Nosh October Rides

The Bike & Nosh group plans bicycle rides of varying lengths and difficulty levels, so there is something for everybody. If you’d like to find out how to participate and receive notice of future upcoming rides, please send an e-mail to: shoshanahoose@gmail.com.

Friday, Oct. 6, 10 a.m.—Cumberland Orchards

This is a relatively short route, about 17 miles, but with several hills. Meet at the Cumberland Food Company spot on Tuttle Road at the corner of Route 9. They have a good-sized parking lot. We’ll head west through a couple of apple orchards first. Then we’ll explore the area with just a very short time on Route 9. We hope the foliage will be colorful. Café items, salads, and sandwiches are available for noshing on our return. Contact Steve Shapiro to join in, at spshap@maine.rr.com. (Possible rain date of the following Monday, Oct. 9, Columbus Day, or a weekend date might be preferable.)

Friday, Oct. 13, 9:45 a.m.—Deering neighborhood and Evergreen Cemetery loop, Portland

Meet at 201 Bradley St., at the corner of Brighton and Bradley Streets (ride start/street parking/restroom facilities). This charming city ride will be a loop of about 11 miles on neighborhood streets and bike byways, and through Evergreen Cemetery past the Wilde Memorial Chapel, the Chisholm Mausoleum, and the Ponds. Midpoint stop with facilities will be at the Barron Center. This is a pleasant and leisurely ride (with a few hills), with autumn foliage color. Lunch at the Crooked Mile Rosemont or Espos on Caleb and Congress—TBD. Please let group leader Ann Babbitt know if you are coming at 233-4266 or ababittg@gmail.com. Rain date is Sunday, October 15, at 9:45 a.m.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 10 a.m.—Apple Orchard Ride

Meet at Thompson’s Orchard, 276 Gloucester Hill Road, New Gloucester. Bike to Pineland and back (10 miles), and then enjoy delicious bakery treats and cider. You can stay and pick apples afterwards. Please let ride leader, Shoshana Hoose, know if you are coming at shoshanahoose@gmail.com (766-6854).

OLLII Night Out Goes to Macaroni Grill This Month

October will see us convening at Macaroni Grill in South Portland for food and fun at dinner.

Ingredients are the key to the unforgettable meals at this familiar restaurant. They use Artisan olive oil from Itri, Italy, specially reserved from the first cold pressing. Round tomatoes from Emilia Romagna are picked at their best; and Lupara buffalo mozzarella from Caserta, Italy, add a creamy decadence to many dishes. Smoky little Calabrian peppers make the arrabbiata sauce addictively spicy.

The open kitchen is busy but not intrusive, and we usually have a large table in the back of the Grill ... comfy and sort of private. Another plus is that they encourage the combining of appetizers, which lots of our folks enjoy. On the Web: www.macaronigrill.com.

We would love it if you would join us.

When: Tuesday, Oct. 17, at 5:30 p.m
Where: Macaroni Grill, 415 Philbrook Ave., South Portland, Maine, 780-6620
Reservations: Call or write by noon, Monday, Oct. 16: Barbara Bardack, 865-2009; lascala2@comcast.net
Walking Club Lists Two October Trips

On Wednesday, Oct. 11, we will visit Higgins Beach and learn some of the interesting folklore of the area from a longtime resident, who will be our guide. We will have lunch at a nearby home.

On Tuesday, Oct. 24, we will return to the Edwin Smith Preserve in Kennebunk and take the Seashore Trolley Museum Trail through this forest landscape. Weather permitting, we will eat outside at the Trolley Museum.

For both walks we will meet at the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 9:50 a.m. to carpool. (Remember we are back to our usual time.) Bring your lunch and water. Bring a few dollars to share fuel costs with your driver on this longer outing. You may need bug spray if it’s warm.

If you are a new walker or have questions, please call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

Cally Field pauses by the river at Clifford Park in Biddeford.

Charles Allen on the Prout’s Neck walk in August.

Spectacular views from Prout’s Neck.

Courtesy Reminders

Here are some things to keep in mind as you attend classes:

- Please silence your phone or other device.
- Please don’t wear cologne, perfume, or scented skin products. Some of us are allergic.
- Please wear your name tag so your instructor and other students know who you are. If you need a name tag, the OLLI office will gladly make you one—just ask.