Profile

Bob Greene

Meeting a former president changed Bob Greene’s life

When Bob Greene, writing in 1958 for a black weekly newspaper, *The Kansas City Call*, arrived at the Harry S Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, he learned that performer Sammy Davis, Jr., who was scheduled to meet with the former president, had become ill. So Bob asked Truman’s secretary if he could meet the former president.

The answer was “yes,” and the meeting was to change Bob’s life. He talked with the president for 45 minutes, telling him that Kansas City’s leading department stores and restaurants were refusing black customers, a fact that Truman didn’t know because the major newspaper, *The Kansas City Star*, didn’t report that blacks were boycotting the businesses.

“The meeting changed my view of my profession as a journalist,” Bob says. “He could have said the most important things in the world, and no one would have known about it if it wasn’t reported. It made me realize that the messenger is just as important as the person giving the message.”

The Portland High graduate had gone west, majoring in journalism at the University of Kansas, but taking more courses in history than in journalism.

After working at a black weekly Indianapolis newspaper, he went to *The Kansas City Call* and was covering Davis’s appearance at a fundraiser at a synagogue (Davis had recently converted to Judaism). After receiving a Humanitarian Award, Davis said thanks by giving a 40-minute concert.

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In this issue: New exhibit at Osher Map Library, Climate Reality lecture, scholarship fund raffle, brown bag lunch panel discussion, OLLI Excursions, OLLI Creative Arts Exhibit, Ninth Week Art Exhibit, World Affairs Council lecture.
A Gallup poll of more than 340,000 people nationwide, ages 18 to 85, discovered that people get happier as they get older, and researchers are not sure why.

Results showed that we start out at 18 feeling pretty good, feel worse and worse until we hit about 50, and then suddenly we get happier and more content until, at the age of 85, we are more satisfied with ourselves than at any other time of our life.

Well, isn’t this good news for all of us? Further examination of the findings shows that stress declines from age 22 onward; worrying stays steady until around 50, declines to 73 and rises slightly to 85; anger decreases steadily from 18; but enjoyment and happiness decrease gradually until 50, then rise steadily for the next 25 years.

I am greatly encouraged by this survey. With all the negative aspects of aging staring us in the face — getting shorter, heavier, deafer, blinder, wrinklier — it’s nice to know we’ll be happy.

Sometimes it’s just hard to figure us out.

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program

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**Torn in Two: 150th Anniversary of the Civil War**

New exhibition at the Osher Map Library from April 2 to Aug. 22

*Special tour for OLLI members:* We invite OLLI members to join us on April 5 for a free, docented tour of the Osher Map Library’s new Civil War exhibition. It commemorates one of the most defining events in U.S. history through maps and historic items. The overarching theme of the exhibition is the central role geography has played in the causes, conduct, consequences, and commemorations of the American Civil War.

OML is the final stop for this traveling exhibition, which originated at the Boston Public Library. Dr. Ronald E. Grim, who curated the exhibition, will present an overview and give a gallery tour for OLLI members on Friday, April 5, from 11:40 am to 12:35 pm. He will also sign the accompanying exhibition catalog for those who wish to buy a copy.


*Note:* The gallery capacity is limited to 25. Please RSVP by Wednesday, April 3. E-mail olli@usm.maine.edu or call the OLLI office at 780-4406.
OLLI Advisory Board

As you read this, the spring term is well underway. We are offering a full 48 courses and seven workshops, with nearly a thousand of you enrolled. I guess that is an indication OLLI is doing something right!

I want to pass along some preliminary information regarding an OLLI collaboration with The Muskie School of Public Service at USM. We are planning a series in the late afternoon next fall. These free seminars will focus on “Politics Then and Now.” Presenters will be former and current political figures from Maine and national politics. Look for more news about this in future OLLI Newsletters.

Is anyone interested in forming a Special Interest Group in bridge similar to that of Mah Jongg? If so, contact me by phone or e-mail.

—Dick Sturgeon, Chair
773-3174
dicksturg13@gmail.com

“Climate Reality” lecture and slide show

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute presents an evening with Sharon Tisher, J.D., a lecturer in the School of Economics and Honors College at UMO. She will present “Climate Reality,” a lecture and slide show, on Thursday, April 4, from 7 to 9 p.m., in Wishcamper 102.

Tisher was recently trained by Al Gore, 2007 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to give the current version of his slide show on climate change. Through remarkable photographs, instructional animations, and film, the show explores the connections between global warming and extreme weather events, including severe and damaging storms, droughts, and wildfires.

Please pre-register for this event, by calling the OLLI office at 780-4406. Attendance is free and open to the public.
Bob Greene (cont’d from page 1)

Bob became sports editor of the Leavenworth (Kan.) Times before joining the AP in Kansas City. In 1968 he transferred to Milwaukee, where a year later he covered what turned out to be the beginning of pro tennis. Later assignments included the Virginia Slims tournaments featuring Billy Jean King.

But it wasn’t until he reached New York after AP assignments in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Maine, that he was offered the job as tennis writer in 1980. “The writer who had it was moved up to management. There was the job of winter sports writer but [winter sports] became important only during the Olympics. So I took the tennis offer.”

This was the heyday of tennis. During his last 21 years with the AP, Bob traveled the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia. He met the greats of yesterday such as Don Budge and Fred Perry. Some of the later greats he knew: Jack Kramer, Arthur Ashe (who attended the same church in New York as Bob), John McEnroe, Ivan Lendl, Marina Navratilova, and Chris Evert. He’s covered 33 U.S. Opens, and, although he has retired from the AP, he’s hoping for someone to pick up the tab for the 34th. As he says, “Have computer, will travel.”

Bob’s travels have given him a fascination with China: “I’ve been traveling there since 2001, and the more I know the more I like it; it’s not the country that I was told. The people are very friendly, and in the countryside very much like what Pearl Buck wrote in The Good Earth.”

But the 21st century is there. Traveling up the Yangtze from modern day Shanghai he took a side bus trip to a small village. “There was a satellite dish over a garage-like building with the sign ‘Café Internet.’”

Another thing Bob has gone back to is his roots. His oldest son asked if they had any relatives, since the children had grown up in the Midwest, where Bob’s father’s family was from. Bob knew his mother’s side went back at least seven generations to a Boston Reuben in New Gloucester. Reuben may have been a slave owned by an Anglican priest who fled Falmouth (now Portland) during the Revolutionary War.

Bob has done research at the Maine Historical Society and in the Maine State Archives, digging out information about family members who served in the Civil War, as well as a Texas state senator from Galveston during the Post-Civil War Reconstruction.

This interest in family history led him to OLLI, which he first learned about from the late Lucille Sheppard, who urged him to teach at the Senior College. He has taught courses on “Black History of Maine” as well as on the newest members of the community. The reaction has been very good. “OLLI students are there because they want to be and want to learn. Many are former teachers, and they bring a lot to the class.”

Did it!

Olga Meleshkova, a longtime member of OLLI, has written and published a book of memoirs entitled Uncertain Journey about her life during WWII in Russia and Germany.

It will touch many hearts with its optimistic outlook. The book may be reviewed at: www.theauthorsguru.com; when connected, click on Library. The book is on sale for $14.95 at Nonesuch Book Store at Mill Creek, South Portland, and at The Shops at Biddeford Crossings, Biddeford. It is also available from Dona Sherburne at 207-883-2688.

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

David came to OLLI after his wife, Natalie, volunteered him for a role in the Senior Players. He was asked to join the Advisory Board in 2004. In 2006, when the late Nancy Payne was on the nominating committee, she asked David to become the next board chair. He said yes — you don’t turn down Nancy Payne.

David had just retired from Maine Medical Center as head anesthetist after an affiliation of 34 years. It was the climax of a career for the Ossining, N.Y., native that began with his nursing education at the Westchester County hospital in Valhalla, N.Y.

After nine years of active duty with the U.S. Air Force, David and his family moved to Falmouth so David could continue his career in anesthesia at a major teaching hospital. David was a medical team member of the N.H. Air National Guard until his retirement from the USAF in 1985.

He became chair of the OLLI Advisory Board during the time when OLLI moved into the Wishcamper Center and classes increased to five days a week with some Saturday workshops. During his tenure there were several great OLLI trips: Prague, Ireland, Greece (85 on board), Canada, Sicily, and the West’s National Parks.

During his professional career David admits he had little time for leisure reading. Now at OLLI, he has enjoyed a great many courses, history in particular but also music, philosophy, and art. He is also a member of a book club formed by the late Keith Sherburne and made up of OLLI members.

David has become a docent at the Portland Museum of Art. It’s a great opportunity to learn about and show others the great collection of art, especially when the Winslow Homer exhibit was in place. David can also be seen occasionally in local theater productions.

He admits that when OLLI went to five days a week, there was concern that it would lose its sense of community; but that hasn’t happened.

David has special praise for OLLI’s Assistant Director of Program, Susan Morrow. He noted that she makes the right decisions all the time and was very supportive and helpful when he was on the OLLI Advisory Board. “I have loved working with her.”

—Don King

Movers and Shakers

It’s raffle time!

Twice a year OLLI bolsters its scholarship fund to provide course opportunities for students who cannot afford the tuition. Members have been generous in their support by purchasing raffle tickets, which will be available starting April 24.

A drawing will be held during Ninth Week festivities at the end of the semester. First prize will be tuition for two classes or their equivalent in SAGE programs or workshops. Second prize will be tuition for one class or the equivalent. Tickets are $2.00 each and 3 for $5.00. Think of this as a Win-Win Raffle: two lucky people will receive free courses, and our OLLI scholarship fund will benefit from generous donations from the rest of us. Look for the table in the lobby or a fellow student in your classroom and get your tickets.

SAGE reschedules

Suzanne Nance

The opening spring series SAGE lecture for March 19, featuring Suzanne Nance of MPBN, was canceled because of a snowstorm. Our April 2 speaker, Tom Roderick, has had to cancel his appearance due to unforeseen circumstances. Luckily for us, Suzanne Nance will be able to give her presentation on April 2 in his place. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause OLLI members.
Day trip June 12 to Fruitlands and Museum of Russian Icons

Join OLLI Excursions on Wednesday, June 12, for a visit to the Museum of Russian Icons and nearby Fruitlands in Harvard, Mass. Popular OLLI faculty member John Sutherland will be our lecturer for the historical aspects of the site.

Our first stop is the seven-year-old Museum of Russian Icons, a world-class educational and cultural institution for Russian icons that contains the largest collection of Russian Orthodox religious art in North America. It often features exhibits on loan from other countries as well as showing its own revolving collection. For more information, check the museum’s website of this little-known but spectacular treasure at http://tinyurl.com/ru-ico.

Lunch will be on your own in downtown Clinton (home of the icon museum), which offers a variety of restaurants including Thai, health food, and traditional New England fare.

Fruitlands is the site of a 19th century utopian commune founded by Bronson Alcott and other New England transcendentalists. Beyond being the home of that community, it now houses the largest archive of Harvard Shaker documents, a collection of local Native American and a very large collection of Hudson River landscapes. The historic farmhouse, gardens, labyrinth, nature trail, and museum store have been a draw for many years.

The cost for the trip is $47 per person, which includes admissions to museums, bus, and driver gratuity. We will depart from the rear entrance to the Wishcamper Center promptly at 8:30 a.m. Please arrive by 8:15 for boarding. Expected time for arrival back at Portland is 6:30 p.m.

To reserve, mail your check to OLLI at USM, P.O. Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104, or call the OLLI office at 780-4406 to pay by credit card. You may also register in person at the office. There will be no refunds after May 31.

For further information call Anita Jones at 797-3612 or Johanna Hart at 773-4046.

Two upcoming Brown Bag Lunch panel discussions

Have you considered becoming an OLLI instructor? Or are you already teaching, but thinking about teaming up with others, to address a particular topic? The Education Committee can offer support and encouragement. Bring your lunch and join in for a relaxed and informal discussion, along with a great panel presentation.

“Team-Teaching at OLLI” will be facilitated by Janet Gunn, Kathleen Sutherland, Ed Schwartz, Joan Aldrich, Joy and Tan Larrabee, and Sarah Franklin (and hopefully Betsy Wiley). The time: Monday, April 22, 11:40 a.m. to 12:40 p.m., or a bit later.

A similar event will be offered on Tuesday, May 7 (same time and place). More details to follow in the next newsletter. That topic will be “Tips for First-Time Teachers.” For more information about either event, call Joan Aldrich at 799-2931.
Walking Club sets sights on Falmouth, Topsham

Wednesday, April 10: Our destination is Mackworth Island in Falmouth. There is limited parking on the island. You may want to use your poles on this woodland trail.

For both walks, we will meet at the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 10 a.m. to carpool. Wear proper footwear, bring your lunch, and dress appropriately for the weather.

Tuesday, April 23: We will once again walk at the Cathance River Nature Preserve at Highland Green in Topsham. There are several wooded trails for hiking. After our walk, we will join Cheryl Sleeper of CREA (Cathance River Education Alliance) in the Ecology Center for lunch and an update on the latest community programs initiated by the Alliance. This outing will require more time than usual.

Jewel of India next for OLLI Night Out

OLLI Night Out is planned for Tuesday, April 16, at 5:30 p.m. at The Jewel of India at 45 Western Avenue, South Portland.

According to the Maine Sunday Telegram “Jewel of India treats the palate, from subtle of spicy.” Food here can be cooked to your taste: mild, medium, or hot and spicy; and all cooking is done with cholesterol-free oil.

Don’t be left out; it will be lots of fun. Lots of choices for vegetarians, too.

Please call or e-mail for reservations no later than Monday, April 15.

—Barbara Bardack
865-2009
Lascal@comcast.net

Get Ready!

All you OLLI artists! Join the 9th week one-day exhibit on Friday, May 17.

Categories for entry may include Painting, Drawing, Photography, Collage, Fiber Art, Craft, Mixed Media, and Sculpture.

Entry Forms are in the OLLI office. They should be returned to the office by May 1.

Get creative!

OLLI Creative Arts Spring Exhibit
Second floor of Wishcamper

Exhibitors: Jim Knox, Bert Sutton, Barbara MacDougall, and Didi Washburn.

Photo by Jim Knox
Two years into the Arab Spring, women feel marginalized. Despite the contributions that women made to the successful outcome of the Arab revolutions, the agenda for the empowerment of women is being gradually eroded. Women’s participation and presence is being challenged in the political, social, and economic arenas. Women’s legal rights are under siege. Their safety and security are becoming a pressing issue, and as the public space is becoming more dangerous for women, the scope of women’s activities is growing more limited. Haleh Esfandiari will discuss these topics and more. Please go to www.wacmaine.org for Dr. Esfandiari’s bio.

Registration
$10 Members (WACM or OLLI), $15 Non-Members, $50 Program and Dinner (Members only)
Go to http://tinyurl.com/WAC-Esfandiari and click on Register