Profile

Rita Rubin-Long

*Her life goal is to continue shining candles for peace*

Rita Rubin-Long is a person of peace and for peace. Yes, she did go to Woodstock — icon of 1960s peace-seeking — but that in many ways is the least of it. Even as a child she felt that “the world could be a community of peace,” and she continues to embrace this possibility.

Rita came to OLLI two years ago, when she retired after 30 years of teaching elementary school children in the Portland system. Very shortly afterward, her proposal to teach “Discovering Your Inner Resources: Exploring Peace” was accepted.

She co-taught this media-based, peace education class with Stephen Farrell. The course was based on a program of the Prem Rawat Foundation that is taught in prisons, cancer centers, and educational settings around the world. The Foundation’s mission is to address the fundamental human needs of food, water, and peace so that people can live in dignity, peace, and prosperity. Through the foundation Rita is a coach for anyone who wishes to teach this course at OLLI institutions elsewhere.

Rita integrates peace into her life chiefly through the expressive arts, which she considers “tools for personal peace, and for people to enjoy themselves.” She studied ballet as a girl, played the piano, and took up the guitar. For many years she has played bass pans for the Blueberry Pancakes, a steel drum band based at her former workplace, Hall Elementary School. She owns and plays the djembe, a West African goblet drum; she previously took classes with Annegret Baier, a founding member of Inanna: Sisters in Rhythm, a Maine-based women’s percussion and vocal ensemble.

*continued on page 2*
Rita Rubin-Long (continued from page 1)

Rita also paints (a couple of her acrylics hang in her kitchen) and sings. She has sung alto for 10 years now with Women in Harmony, Portland’s 60-voice women’s chorus. “Something in me gets stronger,” she says of her singing with WiH, whose mission is one of social justice. “You can really open up an intelligence with singing, with expressive arts in general.”

At OLLI, Rita has taken “Improv for Everybody” with David LaGraffe (a former Portland Schools teaching partner) and “Tai Chi: Practices and Related Philosophies” with Fred Brancato, among other classes. She especially enjoyed Elizabeth Chapman’s “Origins of Creative Experience.” She appreciates OLLI’s “beautiful facility as a place to continue my interest in learning.”

Rita lived in New York City and environs until college. She attended Kent State University in Ohio, where she was a protester as well as an eyewitness and survivor of the National Guard shootings on May 4, 1970. Rita was a friend of three of the victims. She will speak in memory of Sandy Sheuer this spring on the 45th anniversary of the tragic events at the university. She has spoken on the anniversary several times before, and has written a song commemorating that harrowing day.

In addition to her degree from Kent State, Rita earned a Graduate Leadership Certificate, Leadership for Tomorrow’s Schools, from USM in 2001. She taught for most of her career at Hall School, where she was a cofounder of the Many Rivers program. This progressive program emphasizes developmentally appropriate practice and partnership with parents, while de-emphasizing teacher direction and stressing student choice.

At present, Rita serves on a task force for the future of the Many Rivers program. She is also a part-time education consultant, working with the Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sciences in Gray, Maine.

Rita and her husband enjoy living in Portland and biking on Portland trails. You can find her almost every day (season permitting) wheeling her way around Back Cove and on the Joseph E. Gray Trail, East End Beach to the Casco Bay Ferry Terminal. She and her husband look forward every year to riding the carriage roads in Acadia National Park.

Rita’s optimistic outlook is born of her appreciation of the individual. “Each person has a gift to share in the world. Your everyday life can be like a candle. The fact of being alive is the candle, really.”

How brightly Rita’s candle shines.

—Amy Liston

New Group to Focus on U.S. Foreign Policy

We are pleased to announce the formation of an American Foreign Policy Special Interest Group at OLLI.

The group will meet on the fourth Wednesday of every month from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m.

The issue to be discussed each month will be selected by group members, and the discussion leaders will rotate among the members. Our first meeting will be held on April 22.

We invite all OLLI members with an interest in American foreign policy to come, join the group, discuss, and learn. For more information, e-mail Betsy Mayberry at betsy.c.mayberry@gmail.com.
The calendar says that spring is here, and hopefully by the time you read this, we might actually believe it! Spring Term is well underway. The vast majority of OLLI members registered themselves online, but the staff was happy to assist anyone who chose not to use the online system.

We have 1,190 enrollments for over 50 classes and workshops plus three ongoing writers’ workshops. Over 70 individual faculty members are teaching this term.

One of the highlights of OLLI this year has to have been last month’s “One Book/One Community” program featuring author Lily King. Organizing such an event takes a lot of hard work. We certainly appreciate Ruth Story and her committee for orchestrating such a successful day!

The USM Honors Program-OLLI Readers Program is on its way to becoming a reality. We have had four OLLI members indicate interest and are exploring options with the assistant director of the USM program. Thanks to Jack Lynch for initiating this project and making it happen.

This past month I spent time in South Carolina and joined OLLI at the University of South Carolina, one of the 118 other OLLIs in our network. How rewarding it was to be in another region of the country and be able to plug in immediately to a wide array of stimulating classes filled with interesting people.

Almost all the classes at this South Carolina OLLI are short-term — two to four hours in length. This gave me renewed appreciation for all of our teachers, many of whom do lengthy preparation for term-long classes of six or eight weeks. We are lucky to be blessed with such a dedicated volunteer faculty.

The OLLI membership survey has been completed by nearly 700 of us. The snapshot of OLLI’s membership in 2015 will be helpful to the Advisory Board and staff in program planning, and we will share information with you from the survey report in the near future. Thanks to all who participated.

—Susan Gesing, Advisory Board Chair susangesing@gmail.com, 967-5660

**Senior Players Invite You**

Come to OLLI Senior Players lunchtime performance on Wednesday, April 8, from 11:50 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Room 102 for staged readings of new material by familiar faces.
NOTES FROM SUSAN

Spring has arrived at OLLI. Now if it would only arrive in Southern Maine!

Here at OLLI, the Spring Term is in full bloom, with over 50 classes and workshops, 16 Special Interest Groups, and numerous committee meetings. The Wishcamper Center is a busy place.

But OLLI isn’t the only group that uses the Wishcamper Center. We share the space, not only with the Muskie School of Public Service, but also with the entire University community. OLLI has priority booking for Wishcamper space until 3 p.m. After 3 p.m. University classes (especially Muskie classes) are the priority, with most classes starting at 4 p.m.

Lately, we have been having a problem with squatters. Just because a room is empty at 3:15 does not mean that it is available for an OLLI group meeting. Always check with the OLLI office before meeting in a Wishcamper space. We are happy to book a space if it is available.

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program

Don’t Forget: The Book Sale is Coming

The OLLI Book Sale will be held at the Wishcamper Center on Friday, May 1, at 3–5 p.m., exclusively for OLLI members and members of the USM community, and on Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. for the general public as well.

Donated books (no textbooks please), puzzles, games, DVDs, and art pieces (with a maximum sale price of $75) will be accepted in the OLLI office on only these dates: April 13–17, April 20–24, April 27–30.

Questions about donated art may be directed to Julie Neuls at julieneuls@gmail.com.

If you’re interested in volunteering at the sale on May 1 or May 2, contact Dick Sturgeon at his e-mail address: dicksturg13@gmail.com.

Remember, the proceeds go toward OLLI scholarships — so pass the word along to your friends and family to donate and attend the Book Sale at the Wishcamper Center.

Cookie Makers Wanted

We would like to have a cookie sale in tandem with the upcoming OLLI book sale scheduled for May 1 and 2. We need members to bake cookies and other individual portion items (brownies, bars, etc.) for the event. All proceeds will benefit the OLLI Scholarship fund.

If you enjoy baking and would like to participate, please contact Sarah deDoes at 774-1520 or sdedoes1@maine.rr.com.
Senior Players to Honor Founder

At the end of their performance during Ninth Week in May, the OLLI Senior Players will present Mel Howards with a token of gratitude for his founding of Senior Players fifteen years ago. Those of us who are Players, and those of us who have been audience or students in his classes, have benefitted from Mel’s vision, and we want to thank him. He will also have copies of his new book of essays to autograph. Light refreshments will follow. Stay tuned for date and time.

—Susan Bassler Pickford

Calling all OLLI Artists for the Ninth Week Arts Show

This one-day show on May 13 is a chance for all OLLI artists to strut their stuff and show the world what a creative, talented bunch we are. Whether your medium is watercolor, acrylic, oil, fabric, ceramics, photography, or sculpture, this show is for you! Just fill out an application form so that we can save space for you.

You can pick up forms in the OLLI office or get in touch with any of the following:

Sidney Lincoln at link7s@maine.rr.com or 781-7309
John Sutherland at jsuthkarina@gmail.com or 420-3624
Edith Yonan at edithyonan@gmail.com or 878-3950
Sharon Hickey at sharonlh@gwi.net or 846-7974
Betty Smith at Elisabeth.smith@maine.edu or 799-3567

If you could return your completed form by April 28, that would be awesome.

Two Teachers to give Previews of Classes

Beginning this term, the Education Committee is offering two brown-bag lunches. Each will feature faculty making brief presentations from classes they teach at OLLI.

Thursday, April 23. 11:45 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Literature instructor Sarah Franklin: “Derek Walcott and How I Became a Post-Modern: A Glimpse into Omeros.”

Thursday, April 30, 11:45 am.–12:30 p.m. Math instructor Stephen Schiffman: “Solve this Problem and Win $1,000,000!”

We hope this event will broaden the educational experience beyond our regular course offerings and help OLLI members become acquainted with more OLLI faculty. And we expect that these previews will become a staple of future Fall and Spring Terms.

Senior Moments

OLLI faculty member Mel Howards has published Provocations: The Wit, Wisdom, and Whimsy of Mel Howards. The essays are often controversial, usually serious and unadorned, alive and pulsing, with hints of humor—a wide range of ideas, insights, musings, and opinions that cry out for discussion. The collection will be available from the publisher (www.maineauthorspublishing.com), Amazon, and E-books in mid-April.

OLLI faculty member Mel Howards has published Provocations: The Wit, Wisdom, and Whimsy of Mel Howards. The essays are often controversial, usually serious and unadorned, alive and pulsing, with hints of humor—a wide range of ideas, insights, musings, and opinions that cry out for discussion. The collection will be available from the publisher (www.maineauthorspublishing.com), Amazon, and E-books in mid-April.

Senior Moments

OLLI faculty member Mel Howards has published Provocations: The Wit, Wisdom, and Whimsy of Mel Howards. The essays are often controversial, usually serious and unadorned, alive and pulsing, with hints of humor—a wide range of ideas, insights, musings, and opinions that cry out for discussion. The collection will be available from the publisher (www.maineauthorspublishing.com), Amazon, and E-books in mid-April.
Walking Club to Trace Two Familiar Paths

We begin our new season with some familiar walks that we hope will keep us out of the mud and snow remnants.

On Wednesday, April 8, we will head to Pine Point Beach for a hike along our beautiful coast. We will eat lunch at the home of one of our members.

For both walks we will meet to carpool at the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 10 a.m. Bring your lunch and water, and wear the proper foot gear. It may be wet underfoot, so be prepared. Be sure you are currently a member of OLLI and have signed a release form.

If you have questions, please contact Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

Ricetta’s is Next for OLLI Night Outers

This month we’ll be going north for OLLI Night Out — to Northern Italy — at Ricetta’s in Falmouth.

Serving greater Portland for over 20 years, this well-thought-of restaurant prepares old favorites as well as modern dishes. Famous for pizza, Ricetta’s menu also includes homemade soups, pasta, mouthwatering entrees (think Tuscan Seafood Stew), and delicious desserts. As we say, “a tavola!” (See Ricetta’s menu here: http://ricettas.com/menus/dinner/.)

When: Tuesday, April 28, at 5:30 p.m.

Where: Ricetta’s Brick Oven Pizza; 240 US Route 1 in Falmouth

Reservations: Absolutely required by noon Monday, April 27. Call or write me to reserve.

—Barbara Bardack, 865-2009 lascala2@comcast.net