Profile

Jim Janak

For Jim Janak, life means searching for answers

Jim Janak is amazed by mathematics. “It always seems to work,” he says, extolling math’s ability to explain aspects of myriad phenomena, from astrophysics to climate change.

An OLLI faculty member, Jim has taught several courses a year for the past decade.

He earned his B.S., M.S., and Sc.D. in electrical engineering from MIT, academic training that emphasized physics. He minored in mathematical physics; thus his profound admiration for the field.

This semester Jim is once again teaching “The Earth’s Climate,” which examines the complexities of climate and climate change in the U.S. and around the world. He also offers “The Physical Universe,” which addresses the massive space beyond the earth — solar systems, galaxies, and cosmological relationships. Finally, Jim teaches “How Things Work,” about the mysteries of modern technology, not the least of which are computers.

As an instructor Jim obviously has to determine and generate course content. He also must come up with graphics to illustrate sophisticated mathematical concepts that might be too challenging for some OLLI students. He assembles these by searching the web, including NASA materials, and by creating them himself.

He can do all this because of his “lifelong scientific bent.” Jim grew up in Yonkers, New York, and lived there until he went to college in Cambridge, Mass. Thereafter, he taught for three years at MIT before becoming a research scientist at IBM. He arrived at
Jim Janak (continued from page 1)

IBM in the early years of the computer revolution, and this was the initial focus of his work. After 30 years with the company, he retired in 1996. He also served for many years as adjunct professor of physics at Pace University. He has authored several books and numerous scientific papers.

Jim and his wife, Anne Kendall Janak, a certified social worker who hails from Maine, relocated to Scarborough in 2002, a move prompted by the horrors of 9/11/2001. Maine “beats the rat race of New York,” and Jim feels that that its people are friendlier on the whole than the denizens of other New England states. The Janaks have a daughter who lives in Dijon, France, and a son who is an attorney in Brooklyn. They also have six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

In Maine Jim has been involved with Friends of the Scarborough Library. He also previously volunteered with RESEED (formerly Project SEED, now Maine School Science Volunteers), which places former scientists in middle and high schools to bolster the science curriculum and stimulate interest in science. Jim presented lectures, helped devise experiments, and developed lesson plans.

Jim is a musician who used to play the trumpet with various amateur bands. He thinks that his musicianship may have had its roots in the fact that his uncle was a recording engineer for Columbia Records. These days, his interests include crossword puzzles and Sudoku, as well as the woodworking that has been a longtime hobby.

For reading, Jim prefers nonfiction. The most recent book he read was *What If: Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions*, by Randall Monroe, which is about “physical explanations of weirdo things.” A sample question: What would happen to a steak if you dropped it from six miles up? Answer: It would char on the outside and remain raw on the inside. You’ll have to read the book to find out more.

Jim is a learned man, but not one to rest on his intellectual laurels. “There are so many unanswered questions,” he says. And he keeps probing for answers.

—Amy Liston

Registration made easy for OLLI members

For the first time, OLLI members can register themselves for the SAGE lecture series. All lectures will be held in Wishcamper 102 so space is limited. Don’t be left out.

Online registration will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 10:00 a.m. If you have never used the OLLI registration system and would like some one-on-one assistance, you can use a computer in the OLLI office that is completely dedicated to registration. Office staff will gladly help you.

The OLLI office will begin processing mailed-in and phone registrations on Friday, Feb. 27.

OLLI book sale set for May

OLLI is resuming its popular book sale, but it will be a May event this year rather than in the fall as in the past. It will be expanded to include puzzles, games, and possibly some art.

So begin to save your books (non-textbooks please) to deliver to Wishcamper sometime in April. A drop-off schedule will be announced in a future Newsletter and will be posted in Wishcamper as well.

OLLI Runs on Volunteers • OLLI Runs on Volunteers • OLLI Runs on Volunteers • OLLI Runs on Volunteers
Advisory Board

With February’s arrival, we’re halfway to spring! With all the cold days we saw in January, this is a reason to smile. Still, aren’t we lucky to have so many stimulating OLLI courses to capture our attention during this indoor season?

OLLI Committee News: One of OLLI’s Standing Committees has changed its name and clarified its focus. The Advisory Board voted to drop “Marketing” from the Marketing and Resource Development Committee’s name because, with our rapid membership growth, marketing for new members is not a current focus.

The Resource Development Committee, chaired by Jim Thorne, will put all its energies into raising money to support the OLLI scholarship fund. Scholarships amounting to nearly $5,000 were given last year to assist OLLI students in registering for classes, and the committee has targeted this amount as its annual goal.

The Resource Development Committee, under the leadership of Dick Leslie, organizes the raffles held each fall and spring. OLLI members continue to be generous in responding to the enthusiastic volunteers who solicit our dollars for this good cause.

The committee is full of good ideas and is thinking of new fundraising ideas for this year. Meanwhile, the book sale continues! It will be held in May with Dick Sturgeon chairing the event and planning increased publicity to attract more non-OLLI buyers. Please start saving your books. However, due to space restrictions, do not bring donations to OLLI until the committee announces that they are ready to collect.

If you’d like to help out on a fundraising event, please e-mail Dick, OLLI’s Volunteer Coordinator, at: dicksturg13@gmail.com.

The 2015 OLLI Membership Survey has been finalized and will be emailed to all members, in Survey Monkey format, about the time that you read this. Paper copies will be available in the office. It is short — only 15 questions — and takes less than five minutes to complete. We hope for a great response rate. We do carefully analyze the information gathered, and it helps the Advisory Board respond to member ideas and concerns.

—Susan Gesing, Advisory Board Chair
susangesing@gmail.com, 207-567-8097

OLLI NEWSLETTER

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

Deadline for the March issue is February 15.

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 members are invited to attend Advisory Board meetings. Check with the OLLI office for date, time, and place. Please contact the Chair if you wish to address the Board.

Remember to pick up a CLYNK bag at the office for your deposit bottles and cans! Proceeds benefit OLLI.
NOTES FROM SUSAN

As I write this, it is a cold winter day…and I mean cold! But focus in the OLLI office has turned to spring. By the time you read this, you should already have received your spring course catalog. If for some reason you have not received it in the mail, you can view it at the OLLI website by clicking HERE.

I’m sure you are aware by now that OLLI at USM has gone to an online registration system. Over 700 members have already used it, either registering for a winter class or setting up an account. It’s easy and very intuitive.

Spring registration begins on Feb. 10 at 10:00 a.m. You can register from any computer with Internet access. OLLI Advisory Board members will be available in the Wishcamper computer lab on Feb. 10, and 11 from 10 to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. for anyone who would like assistance. Complete instructions for online registration are on the OLLI website HERE.

I’m sure you will agree that we have an outstanding lineup of classes this spring. We have courses in history, literature, finances, art, music, theater, movement, writing, religion, and spirituality. We’re offering classes in both French and Chinese. Courses will be looking at “Education Reform in the 21st Century, Pre-K to College,” “Ireland’s Legacy of Learning,” as well as “Re-imagining the Urban University.” With 64 courses and 14 workshops, it’s going to be difficult to choose.

In addition to classes, OLLI will be offering One Book/One Community on March 6. One Book/One Community is one of the special educational events OLLI presents periodically. It is an all-day exploration of one book for the OLLI community. This year’s book is Euphoria, by Lily King. See the announcement elsewhere in this newsletter. Online registration for One Book will begin at the same time as class registration, February 10 at 10:00 a.m. One Book/One Community is limited to 150 people and will fill up fast.

This will be the first time SAGE registration will be online. SAGE registration will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 10:00 a.m. SAGE will be held in 102 Wishcamper, so it, too, is limited to 150 people. Be sure to register early to assure your seat.

Remember, spring is just around the corner!

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program
ONE BOOK / ONE COMMUNITY
March 6, 2015 - 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**Euphoria by Lily King**

*Inspired by the Life of Margaret Mead*

- Winner of The Kirkus Prize for Fiction, 2014
- Winner of The New England Book Award for Fiction, 2014
- NPR, Best Books of 2014
- Amazon, 100 Best Books of 2014, #16
- Oprah.com, 15 Must-Reads of 2014

OLLI’s One Book/One Community event is privileged to open the morning with a keynote address by award-winning author Lily King, to be followed at 10:00 by five breakout sessions on topics related to her book *Euphoria* and led by OLLI instructors. Each of the sessions is repeated at 11:00, so you will have the opportunity to participate in two workshops.

**Breakout sessions are as follows:**

- **Dr. Steven Piker, an anthropologist**, will explore the local life from the indigenous peoples’ point of view.

- **Dr. Lee Anderson, also an anthropologist**, will focus on Margaret Mead’s role in the early development of ethnography and anthropology.

- **Dr. Kathleen Sutherland** will discuss the problems women faced entering into scientific fields in the first half of the 20th Century.

- **Joan Aldrich** will facilitate a discussion of Lily King’s novel *Euphoria*.

- **Bonus session**: a filmed interview with Margaret Mead’s biographer, Jane Howard.

Sign up online at [www.usm.maine.edu/olli](http://www.usm.maine.edu/olli) – starting February 10, 2015

Sign up by phone or in person – starting February 12, 2015

Price $25 for the day

You must be an OLLI member to participate
Reflections submissions - April 1 deadline. No foolin’!

It’s that time of year again. Time to polish your poems, shine up your short stories, memoirs and essays. Time to digitize your best photos and art works for submission to Reflections 2015.

Here are the general rules:

- You must be a current OLLI member.
- The submission must be your original work.
- You may submit up to two pieces in each genre: Poetry, Prose, and Art.
- Submissions must be done online. Paper submissions will not be accepted.
- We regret that we cannot accept revisions to your submission after we receive your entry.
- Simultaneous submission to other publications is O.K. But if you submit the same piece or pieces to other publications, you must notify the other publications if you are accepted by Reflections — or, conversely, notify Reflections if you are accepted by another publication.

Be sure to submit a short biography with your entry; nothing fancy, just something you’d like readers to know about you.

Submit your best work through our submission process, starting in February. We will send an e-mail to all OLLI members with instructions and a link to the on-line forms as soon as we have them.

Submissions are blind; this means that your name and your submission will be kept separate. Tim Baehr will manage and track submissions. He is not on the Reflections committee and will not be reviewing submissions. The instructions will include contact information for him if you have questions or problems with the submission process.

Deadline is April 1st. No foolin’!

Open positions on the OLLI Advisory Board

There will be positions open on the Advisory Board for 2015! This is the leadership team that helps determine OLLI’s policies and programs. If you would like to be considered for membership on this dynamic leadership group, now is the time to apply.

We are looking for candidates with the following qualifications:
- A collaborative working style
- Previous volunteer experience at OLLI (for example, as a teacher or as a member of a standing committee, special committee, or ad-hoc committee)
- An understanding of the academic/nonprofit environment
- Comfort in using basic electronic media
- Availability for monthly Board meetings (September through June)
- Commitment to serving on at least one standing committee

Nominations will close on March 15. Recommendations will be made by the Nominating Committee to the Advisory Board for members who will serve a three-year term beginning July 1, 2015.

Nominating forms are available at the OLLI volunteer desk or by e-mail and may be returned to the Nominating Committee mailbox on the second floor of Wishcamper Center. If you have questions or wish to receive a form by e-mail, please contact Joy Larrabee at joylaraby42@gmail.com.
Senior Moments

OLLI member Ed Scwartz has published his book, *The Jews that I Knew: Voices from the Invisible Ghetto*. From the publisher: “In *The Jews that I Knew*, Schwartz deftly merges prose and poetry to explore how Yiddish culture dissolved into American life, its effect on first- and second-generation American Jews, and its continuing influence even after the world of their fathers effectively ceased to exist.” There is a review on *Kirkus Reviews*, and the book is available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and local bookstores.

Want to be a thesis “reader” for a USM undergraduate?

This spring a few OLLI members will have the opportunity to volunteer as second or third thesis readers for USM undergraduates in the Honors Program (http://usm.maine.edu/honors).

We expect that each OLLI reader would participate in occasional meetings with a student, his or her thesis advisor, and a “first” reader dealing with the thesis proposal, revisions of the written thesis, and the thesis defense.

More involvement is possible if the undergraduate and the OLLI volunteer desire it. For spring 2015, we are looking for OLLI members with interest and/or expertise in the following subject areas: Classics, Fine Art/Education, Philosophy, Finance, Political Science, and Environmental Science. Please e-mail Jack Lynch for more information. (jlynch001@maine.rr.com).

Jack will e-mail you a few more details and ask you to submit some brief information about your background. He will then forward the information of all the volunteers to the Honors Program Assistant Director, who will select OLLI volunteers and schedule further coordination with them.

OLLI Follies cancellation

For various reasons, we have decided that it is necessary to cancel the OLLI Follies, which was scheduled for March 29. We want to thank those of you who had planned to be part of the show. Hopefully, we can revisit this at a future date.

—Lynne Gammon and Darrell Morrow

Snow closings

Remember, the only authoritative source for information about closings or delays at USM and OLLI is USM itself. USM’s Storm Line is 780-4800, or you can set up an automated text and/or e-mail alert here: http://www.usm.maine.edu/usmalert/
Walking Club planning two snowshoe trips

**Wednesday, Feb. 11**

Weather permitting, we will be attempting to snowshoe at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. There are a few rentals available there by the hour. We can eat our lunch inside in their lobby.

For both of these locations, you can walk on the trails if you prefer, though snow conditions are usually more conducive to using snowshoes. Please dress in layers with suitable foot gear. Hand warmers are very effective. Bring your own lunch and water for the Feb. 11 walk.

We will meet at the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 10 a.m. to carpool — or you can meet us at the sites. If you have questions, please call Pat LeFebvre at 883-2936.

**Tuesday, Feb. 24**

We will snowshoe at Winslow Park in South Freeport, which provides expansive views of the ocean. We plan to eat lunch at the restaurant by the big Indian on Route 1.

Submitting to the OLLI Newsletter

Here are some guidelines for submitting articles to the *OLLI Newsletter*:

We publish only articles that touch on OLLI matters or the OLLI community. Mostly, articles are submitted by staff or by committee heads or people they have designated. We do occasionally accept “over the transom” contributions — for instance, OLLI trip summaries, obituary notices, or accomplishments for the “Senior Moments” feature. If you have questions about submitting an article, get in touch with the managing editor (Tim Baehr: tbaehr@aol.com).

Send articles in Microsoft Word or Rich Text (rtf) format only (we cannot read or covert Apple Pages; sorry). Attach the article to an e-mail and send it to ollinews@usm.maine.edu. The deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

Do not try any fancy formatting, including fonts, tables, pictures, borders, and so on. We’ll only have to undo everything when we format the Newsletter layout. (You can send pictures separately as .jpg, .jpeg, or .png files.) If you have a particular idea about how an article should appear, send us a note.

Thank you!