Although his role as Resource Development Chair on the OLLI Advisory Board is relatively new, Jim Thorne is no stranger to OLLI. He first started coming to OLLI with his wife, Priscilla.

“We started at the very beginning, when classes were just on Fridays,” he said, “and we loved it.” He enjoys at least one class, sometimes two, each term, classes that cover “a myriad of things — all over the lot,” he said. From music to painting, to philosophy and religion, Jim finds value in each class.

At 84, Jim’s easy manner and enthusiasm for OLLI is contagious. “The staff,” he says, “is phenomenal.”

Born and raised in Madison, Maine, a small mill town on the Kennebec River, Jim worked at the mill when he was a teenager — Fridays and Saturdays unloading boxcars of pulpwood, and summers on the river drive sorting logs with pick poles.

Jim enrolled at the University of Maine, Orono, where in 1953 he earned a degree in history and government. He went on to law school at Boston University, but his studies were interrupted by the Korean War. Jim served two years in the Army and then returned to school, earning his law degree in 1958.

Soon after law school, Jim moved his young family to Hartford, Connecticut, where he worked with a legal team at Traveler’s Insurance. Four years later, he transitioned into estate planning with Connecticut General Life, a move that would eventually bring him back to Maine. And, 11 years later, with a solid background in

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Jim Thorne (continued from page 1)

business as well as insurance sales, Jim became partner at a Portland firm, working as a real estate broker. Though he is retired, Jim still holds an active license.

Jim’s position on the OLLI Advisory board is not his first experience on a board. An avid outdoorsman, he has served on the board at Maine Audubon and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Energetic and sociable, Jim has interests as varied as the classes he enjoys at OLLI. A self-proclaimed “fly fishing fanatic,” Jim enjoys hiking, biking, opera, and the symphony. Nearly 18 years ago, along with two friends, Jim founded the Yarmouth Men’s Book Club, “which has always had two women in it,” he said.

Walking through the farmer’s market in Falmouth this summer, Jim came upon a flower vendor, and they talked of plants and poetry. When he mentioned his poetry class, she surprised him by pulling out “a really old typewriter, a clickety-clack typewriter,” he said, “wrote a poem, and gave it to me.” He returned the favor a week or so later with a poem he wrote.

“I’m not a poet,” he says, “but I’ve had some fun with it” — enough fun to write a few poems for his three children, as well as a humorous take on his encounter with open heart surgery.

It’s been a year since Jim’s beloved wife, Priscilla, passed away. And though he claims “my wife was more inquisitive and smarter,” than he, he’s a close second. OLLI, he says, keeps him busy.

When asked how he came to join the Advisory Board at OLLI, he answered, “because somebody asked.”

So each morning, with a couple of deep knee bends and a nod to the hummingbird that “keeps coming back for that sugar and water,” Jim says he’s thankful. After years of taking classes, he wants to be more involved. “I’ve been participating as a student, and I’d like to give back.”

He may be brand new to the board, but Jim is eager to serve — and no doubt he’s got a lot to offer.

—Christine Richards

NOTES FROM SUSAN

Winter has come early this year. Cold temperatures and snow in early December remind us that we live “up North.” But we aren’t intimidated by a little snow, or we would not live here.

And the weather hasn’t had any sort of a negative impact on Winter enrollments. I know I sound like a broken record, but this Winter term is the largest Winter term ever — over 540 enrollments! Classes begin Jan. 7, and there are still spaces available.

The OLLI Spring Term looks wonderful. We are putting the finishing touches on the class schedule and will soon ship it off to the designer and printer.

The plan is to have the catalogs in the mail by mid-January. The class lottery is set for early February. Be sure to get your registration in to the OLLI office before the lottery date to have an equal chance to get into the class of your choice. It’s always a good idea to list an alternate class choice, just in case.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2014!

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program
OLLI Advisory Board

There is not a lot of OLLI general information to share during this break between Fall and Winter Terms, but the Board and its committees have been busy.

An ad hoc committee of the Board, looking at how to manage OLLI’s rapid growth, has created a phased plan to continue providing access to members as our numbers continue to swell. Some aspects of the plan may be implemented for the Fall 2014 Term if warranted.

The Board Nominating Committee will, in the near future, be seeking nominations for Advisory Board positions and will welcome your nominations for people to begin serving in August 2014. Look for a notice in the next OLLI Newsletter.

Finally, as we continue to grow and need to expand our course offerings, the Education Committee will be seeking additional volunteer faculty. They know there are more potential faculty among our members, and I encourage you to step forward as a volunteer faculty member (there is support for first-time faculty).

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

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Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow
(Well, maybe not!)

With winter weather well upon us, there may be times when OLLI is closed. When? Whenever USM is closed.

Do not rely on TV or radio listings, which can be incomplete. Instead, call the USM Storm Line at this number: (207) 780-4800.

You might want to jot the number down or program it into your phone. Why not do it right now while you’re thinking of it?

Got it? 780-4800

Two feet of snow

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WEB SITES
Maine Senior College Network  
www.maineseniorcollege.org
OLLI National Resource Center  
www.oshernet
OLLI at USM  
... www.usm.maine.edu/olli

OLLI NEWSLETTER
OLLI Office:  
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Christine Richards, Contributing Editor  
Jo Morris, Layout Editor
Please send newsletter material to the OLLI Office, via our e-mail.
Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month before the newsletter is published.
OLLI in Turkey:  
“The GPS Doesn’t Know We Are a Bus”

So said Emre, our wonderful Turkish guide, as our bus carrying 45 members of OLLI wound through narrow streets in an older area of Ankara, trying to reach our hotel. This was not the first such driving challenge for our equally wonderful driver, Orhan, often having to back our bus out of a narrow space!

Emre’s jest captures the spirit and meaning of the trip for me: Turkey is a land of contrasts, both as contemporary as the GPS and yet as old as western civilization itself. While the Turkish Republic is less than 100 years old, founded by Ataturk and the Young Turks in 1923, its roots can be traced back through the 500-year Ottoman Turk Empire, to Constantine’s 4th century Byzantine Empire, to Rome and Greece, and back to Bronze-Age Troy, Hittites, and Assyrians, among others, and even to ancient Mesopotamia. The trip was designed to introduce us to both ancient and contemporary Turkey.

We began and ended in Istanbul, a city occupying two continents, part eastern, part western: Taksim Square youth culture — and headscarves; Hagia Sophia, 6th century Byzantine basilica — and the Blue Mosque, where we had to cover our heads and take off shoes; conservative people, migrating from eastern Anatolia — and cosmopolitan people like Emre. Istanbul is vibrant, energetic, glowing, and growing; new buildings are being thrown up day and night. We experienced the city by walking (a lot!), bus, and on a Bosphorus cruise. We viewed it at night from our hotel’s rooftop restaurant. It is wonderful.

On to Troy, made famous by Homer in The Iliad. Was the Trojan War simply myth? Nine different Troys have been unearthed, with number seven identified as Homer’s Troy. Some of its walls still stand, and other remains have survived the centuries. Heinrich Schliemann, first archeologist to rediscover Troy, found a cache of gems, which he always claimed were Helen’s. Some are displayed in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara.

Next was truly remarkable Ephesus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and capital city of Roman Asia Minor: a city of 200,000 people at its height from the 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE. It destroyed itself by denuding the surrounding mountains of their trees, permitting erosion that eventually buried its harbor and finally itself.

The skeleton of the city is still visible. To stand at the top of the main street — lined with columns and sculptures — and to look down to the remains of the library, is to be in an ancient Roman city. We explored terraced houses, once owned by wealthy Romans, with their intact frescoes and mosaics; the public latrine where Roman men conducted business, while doing their business; even the brothel with its sign directing sailors, arriving for

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We had a relaxed, warm afternoon at Pamukkale, another World Heritage Site, with its warm mineral springs and white rock terraces coated with calcium bicarbonate, looking like glaciers but framed by palm trees. We waded in the warm water and toured the ruins of Hieropolis, a Roman spa city.

Then, after a night in smoggy Konya, a very conservative (no wine that night) but industrial city, we visited Cappadocia. This is a huge national park composed of lava rock formations, something like our Southwest but less colorful, and laced with homes and churches carved into the rocks.

We were blessed with good weather here as elsewhere, with rain following a day or two behind. Emre called us his magical group.

Touring Cappadocia was strenuous but worth it. We flew over in balloons at dawn; climbed up a “castle” for the view; climbed up and down into the cave churches with icons dating from the 12th century CE; and explored underground cities that extend for miles under the park. We also went to an evening Whirling Dervish performance — a lot squeezed into 24 hours.

Finally we turned back west to Ankara, capital of Turkey, chosen by Ataturk over Istanbul because he wanted a new start and a place more defensible. We visited the mausoleum of Ataturk, who is revered, almost worshiped, by Turks. We also toured the Museum of Anatolian Civilization, with its massive Hittite sculptures and bas reliefs, and Greek and Roman relics. Although Emre confessed that he doesn’t much like Ankara, it seemed vibrant and alive to me. In one generation, Turkey has changed from a predominantly rural to urban society, a process that took a century or more in the West.

We traveled 2,000 miles by bus across a third of Turkey. Along the way we ate lunch at a caravanserai, an inn for camels and merchants, all sleeping together inside, on the old silk road; in a cave at Cappadocia; and in an old railroad station in Ankara. We saw demonstrations of leather goods, carpets, and pottery, some of which are being made in regional cooperatives, in an attempt to slow down the migration from the country. And on the long rides, Emre talked about contemporary Turkey — its origins, politics, economics, educational system, religion, marriage and family customs, and the Kurdish problem.

Turkey is young — 60% are under the age of 30. It’s on the move; its economy is growing by 6% per year. The youthfulness and growth create energy and optimism, but they also threaten old traditions. So far, the reaction in Turkey has not been extremist or violent. The violence that has occurred in the past generation has come from Kurdish separatists and that, too, has subsided with new laws that permit the use of Kurdish language and customs.

While not a fan of the current conservative government, Emre is not concerned that religious fundamentalists will take over the country, which remains officially secular.

Emre’s optimism revived mine. I came back restored in a number of ways, feeling younger and less cynical, at least for now. So huge thanks to OLLI staff; Kathleen Sutherland, who taught a course on Turkey; Randy at AAA; and Emre and Orhan for this wonderful trip.

—Mary Collins

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Library at Ephesus
OLLI Dining Out:
DiMillo’s on the Water

To celebrate the New Year and Martin Luther King Day, we will continue our winter lunch-out schedule.

On Monday, Jan. 20, at 12 noon, we will gather at DiMillo’s on the Water on Commercial Street in Portland. You can check out the lunch menu here: http://www.dimillos.com/restaurant/lunch.html.

Be sure to get your reservation to me by Jan. 19. This is an extremely popular event, and you don’t want to miss it. Hope to see you there!

Please note: There will not be another Dining Out until March.

—Barbara Bardack
865-2009
lascala2@comcast.net

Walking Club plans snowshoeing at Pineland Farms

On Wednesday, Jan. 8, our hardy band will meet at Pineland Farms in New Gloucester for snowshoeing. Unless unusual weather occurs before that, we should find adequate snow for our purposes. If you prefer to use cross-country skis, you may bring those. There is no rental equipment available. There are well-groomed trails and areas where you can walk in winter boots as well.

Pineland has a large cafeteria area in their gourmet market, where we can eat our own lunches or buy something from their fine selection of sandwiches, soups, and other items.

On Tuesday, Jan. 28, we will hold our annual planning meeting at Wishcamper in the Forum (large lobby area outside Room 133) at 10 a.m. Refreshments will be served. Your suggestions for new walks are always welcome, but please bring directions from the Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford to the destination of any walk you propose.

See you there!

Questions? Call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

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