Profile
Ed Schwartz
“A restless soul” discovers a home in OLLI teaching

Ed Schwartz comes from a family of “very good storytellers.” No surprise, then, that he became a writer of “oral readings” and “choral poetry,” and has authored three books.

His parents owned a hotel in the Catskills, where Sid Caesar and other comedians and former vaudevillians performed in the summer. Schwartz developed an early love of words, language, and oral performance.

He came to OLLI about seven years ago, shortly after moving to Maine. The first class he took explored the poetry of Robert Frost. The OLLI Players (now “Readers Theater Performance”) soon began performing Schwartz’s plays. They are based on mythology and designed to be read aloud.

He had to be nudged to join the faculty. Outgoing Advisory Board member Joan Aldrich, who also chaired the Education Committee, gave him the push he needed by co-teaching “Our Search for Meaning” with him in 2012. Course texts included Victor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* and Schwartz’s own book, *Faithful Voices*. His book features a series of “famous people of strong belief” delivering fictional statements based on Schwartz’s reading and listening to recordings. In one script, the anarchist Emma Goldman declaims, *Stars...they feed you / (and platters of stripes)*.

Schwartz is a restless soul. As a writer he always wanted “to invent forms, let the content dictate what the form would be...and let it go, almost like jazz.” As a student, he had “very little concentration” and attended several colleges before earning a combined bachelor’s and master’s degree in education from Cambridge Col-

And the winner is...

There were 107 people who responded to our “Contest” in the June issue of the OLLI Newsletter.

Congratulations to Barbara Kenney, whose name was drawn at random from among the entrants!

She will receive a $30 gift certificate to Longfellow Books.

Many thanks to all who entered!
He met his wife, Dr. Barbara Schwartz, a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of incarcerated sex offenders, when they were volunteering for VISTA in Appalachia in the 1960s. The program changed his life in that “it taught me that I could actually do things.”

After living in Harlem for six months, he and Barbara moved to Albuquerque. They had two children: Betsy, now a professional actress, and Ben, a webmaster. Schwartz stayed at home with the children and pursued his craft while his wife developed her career outside the home. He wrote works based on myths from diverse cultures. Four of these myths (from India, Africa, ancient Greece, and Native America) became his third book, *Bringers of the Light*. In Albuquerque he also ran a free school on the Summerhill model. His students performed plays that he wrote for them.

After 18 years, the family moved to Seattle, which Schwartz loved. He continued to write, and became affiliated with peace organizations, which occasionally performed his work.

Then came a move to Plymouth, Massachusetts, which he found something of a culture shock after Seattle. One upside, though, was that he became a Quaker. The silence of the Friends meeting appealed to him, and he became its clerk. Ever the spiritual seeker, he has more recently engaged with Buddhist thought, and meditates regularly.

Schwartz’s reading is both eclectic and deep. He knows his Shakespeare well. His second book, *Shakespeare Poemscripts*, takes up what he considers to be the core of these famous plays. He has remained consistently interested in his Jewish heritage, reading the works of Franz Kafka, Martin Buber, Hannah Arendt, and other Jewish writers.

He calls OLLI “pretty amazing.” Before becoming involved, he had thought it might be a quasi-senior center. He has since found distinctly otherwise, and is impressed that “when you ask a question, these students really talk!”

Schwartz’s second course at OLLI, “The Beat Generation: Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*” delved into that experimental novel, which influenced Schwartz as a writer. This winter he taught “The American Hometown,” the idea for which stemmed from his own upbringing in Livingston Manor, New York.

This fall, Schwartz will co-teach a course, “Experiencing the World,” with anthropologist StevenPicker. It will compare the concept of the hunter-gatherer with the Adam and Eve story. For now, he continues reading and writing, and is working with a composer to set some of his myths to music.

—Amy Liston
From the Board Chair

I am pleased to send greetings to you all in my new role as Advisory Board Chair. I am looking forward to working with our capable Board members, staff, and many volunteers to continue providing you with the variety of high-quality educational and cultural enrichment programs you have come to expect. Our OLLI at USM was the first OLLI in the network of 117 OLLIs throughout the country, and it is certainly one of the most vibrant!

We say that “OLLI runs on volunteers.” You see those words in every newsletter, and it is true. Some of you might want to become involved for the first time in working on an OLLI event or committee but are not quite sure how to do that.

I am pleased to announce that the Board has created the new position of Volunteer Coordinator to assist members in making connections to volunteer opportunities. Dick Sturgeon will fill that role this year. He will query the committee chairs and staff to identify needs for volunteers and advertise those positions in the newsletter. He will also collect information from members as to their interests and experience and share this with the appropriate people. If interested, you may e-mail Dick at dicksturg13@gmail.com or submit a volunteer form, available at the OLLI reception desk.

If you are a new member of OLLI, we invite you to attend an orientation session on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 1 p.m., in Wishcamper Center, Room 102. There will be a brief presentation, which should provide you with valuable information about getting started at OLLI, and members will be on hand to answer any questions you might have about the OLLI experience. If you plan to attend, please call the OLLI office at 780-4406 to let us know.

Enjoy your summer!

—Susan Gesing; susangesing@gmail.com
Happy summer! July 1st not only officially kicks off summer in Maine, it begins a new fiscal year for OLLI at USM. It is also the perfect time to reflect on the past year. At the June OLLI Advisory Board meeting, each Standing Committee chair, as well as the Board chair, presented a summary of our accomplishments of the past year. Here are some of the highlights:

- 172 courses, 17 workshops, and three Writers’ Workshops
- 18 outstanding SAGE lectures
- *Wrinkle in Time — The 1920s*
- *Reflections* magazine
- The First OLLI Literary Fair
- Collaboration with the Muskie School of Public Service for “Maine Politics Then and Now” and “Conversations with the Gubernatorial Candidates”
- 15 Special Interest Groups
- Two Ninth Week Celebrations
- Two international trips (Turkey and France)
- Day excursions: Portland’s “Hidden Libraries,” and a Boston cruise and JFK Library tour
- A two-day book sale for OLLI scholarships
- Two raffles for OLLI scholarships
- Establishment of an OLLI Lending Library
- 11 issues of the *OLLI Newsletter*

In addition, at the end of June, OLLI membership was at 1,797 members. Wow! What an amazing program we have!

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program

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**Layout editor sought**

After many years of excellent and faithful work as the layout editor for the OLLI Newsletter, Jo Morris is stepping down. She will be spending less time in Portland, and working remotely has been a challenge (which she handled very well).

Now we need help to fill Jo’s shoes. If you, or someone you know, is adept with Microsoft Publisher (PC version), I’d be eager to talk to you or your friend. I can be reached at 899-1043 or tbaehr@aol.com.

—Tim Baehr
Managing Editor
Join OLLI to experience the Greek side of Boston

OLLI Excursions is joining with the Hellenic Society of Maine to offer a unique experience focused on The Greek Side of Boston on Wednesday, Sept. 10. Boston is the site of one of Greece’s few consulates in the USA, and it was the first American city to be named “The Athens of America” by the Greek government! On this trip we’ll have the chance to see contemporary church “frescoes” and icons, ancient artifacts, and contemporary Greek art.

Along the way, our first stop will be at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Saco where we will be greeted by Fr. Basil Arabatzis or another guide. Our introduction to Greek art will begin here with a talk about the icon-covered walls of this Byzantine-style church, painted by iconographers from Greece. Also on our way to Boston, we will stop for an early repast at Brothers Kousina. Lunch, from an extensive Greek menu, will be on our own.

When we arrive at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, we will make a focused visit to the several galleries that house the Classical Greek collections of sculpture, vases, coins, and jewelry. Just across the street is the MFA’s Museum School. Its Grossman Gallery is host to a traveling exhibition of contemporary Greek art, celebrated with a gala opening the night before our visit. We are privileged to have Eirene Foteini, one of the exhibition’s curators, speak to us before her return to Athens.

Concluding our Greek immersion, and a very special highlight, is a visit to the Greek Consulate on Boston Common and a welcome by the Consul General, Iphigenia Kanara.

The bus will leave from the Wishcamper Center at 8:45 a.m. and return at about 6 p.m. Cost is $60 and includes transportation, driver’s tip, and entrance to the MFA. Please note that for this and any OLLI Excursion, you must be able to walk a quarter of a mile unassisted. Also please note: the Greek Consulate has no elevator.

Deadline to sign up for this unique trip is Aug. 26. Don’t procrastinate too long as seats will fill quickly with both OLLI and Hellenic Society members.

To reserve, mail your check to OLLI, PO Box 9300, Portland, ME 04104; call 780-4406 to pay with a credit card; or register in person at the office. There will be no refunds after Sept. 3. For further information contact trip leaders Mary Snell (msnell@maine.edu) or Gael McKibben (774-7177).

June 18, a beautiful day with OLLI Excursions touring Boston Harbor—the USS Constitution and the Boston skyline...

Photo credit: Ellen Richards
Demographic and Behavioral Characteristics of OLLI Members: USM and National Data

Last winter Jack Hansen from Furman University in South Carolina, Anne Cardale from the OLLI National Resource Center, and I conducted a national survey to examine demographic and behavioral characteristics of OLLI members. Eight institutions representing diversity in both geographic location and program size were invited to participate.

These were USM, Furman, University of Connecticut, University of Kansas, Colorado State University, Boise State University, University of California at Irvine, and the University of California at San Francisco. A total of 3,023 people responded to the survey, making this the largest study undertaken thus far of OLLI membership. Of the total sample 690 (22.8%) were from USM.

This short article will describe findings from the USM portion of this project with comparative national data on several of the variables studied. A more detailed article summarizing the national findings is being written this summer with the hope of publishing it in the national literature later this year.

The age of USM at OLLI members correlates closely with the other seven programs in this study. Because of the way we collected data, we were not able to calculate an average age. However, we do have data about the age distribution of membership.

The age range with the largest participation at USM is 65–69 (28% of membership; national = 29%). The second largest age range is 70–74 (26%; national = 25%). Following these are ages 75–79 (USM = 15%), 60–64 (USM = 13%), and 80–84 (USM = 8%). National data are nearly identical to USM in these age categories.

At USM seven out of 10 OLLI members are women (70.7%). There was a wide range of variation across the eight OLLIs regarding gender distribution with some programs having as low as 60% of its membership female and others as high as 80%. However, the average across all eight OLLIs was 70.1% which is just about what the gender distribution is at USM.

As we know from previous demographic surveys at USM, and also from just talking with one another, the OLLI membership is very well educated. This study found that 22% of OLLI at USM members have an undergraduate college degree, 13% some graduate school, and 55% have one or more graduate degrees! The percentage of USM OLLI members with graduate degrees is larger than the national OLLI average (51%) and greatly exceeds the educational attainment of the general U.S. population. For example, according to the Census Bureau 20.2% of the total population age 65 and over have a bachelor’s degree and 8.5% have advanced degrees.

One of the behaviors we explored in this survey was use of technology. Before we get into the numbers, it’s important to point out that this was an online survey (using Survey Monkey) so only people who use a computer responded. According to the data we received, almost every OLLI at USM member who responded uses either a laptop or desktop computer (98.8%) while less than half use a smart phone (40%) and iPad or notebook (37%).

With regard to social networking, we found the following: use of Facebook (89%), LinkedIn (24%), and Instagram (20%). There are few if any online courses at USM or at other OLLIs at the present, so a question related to online participation attained nearly a universal “no.” However, when asked about...
involvement with online learning external to OLLI, for example a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), 14% said they had had such an experience.

The last question on the survey asked people to note their top three curriculum preferences. The five most popular topics at USM were: (1) fine arts/music/theater (2) history (3) literature (4) current affairs (5) religion/philosophy. While we are still analyzing the national data, there do not seem to be appreciable differences between curriculum preferences at USM and the other seven OLLIs in this study.

—Mike Brady

Mike Brady is a founding member of the Senior College that became OLLI at USM. In his role as senior research fellow at OLLI, Mike investigates a wide range of issues related to learners over the age of fifty. He is currently Professor of Adult Education and Coordinator of the Adult & Higher Education Program.

### OLLI is going to Croatia and Slovenia Nov. 14-24

Once part of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia have more than 400 miles of coastline along the Adriatic Sea, historic castles and cathedrals, and amazing natural wonders. We’ll begin our tour in Zagreb, Croatia’s capital city. From Zagreb, we’ll travel to Slovenia and visit the cities of Bled and Ljubljana, and then return to Croatia to visit the coastal towns of Opatija, Pula, and Poreč.

We’ll then travel to Plitvice Lakes National Park, home of some spectacular waterfalls and natural beauty. Then it’s off to Zadar and Split. We end our tour in Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Breakfast and dinner are included each day of our 10-day tour, but all lunches are at your own expense. We will be staying in a total of six hotels — which means moving almost every day. Not only will we have our agent from AAA, Randy Scott, along with us, we will have an English-speaking escort for the entire trip and local guides when appropriate.

Our tour is set for Friday, Nov. 14, to Monday, Nov. 24. Cost for the trip is $2,995 plus mandatory travelers’ insurance purchased through AAA (OLLI’s rule, not AAA’s). Single supplement is an additional $480, and only four single rooms are available. All travelers must be OLLI/Senior College members. **All travelers must be able to walk a half-mile, unassisted, on uneven terrain, and be able to climb the equivalent of two flights of stairs.**

You may pick up a registration form in the OLLI office beginning July 17.

Registration will begin Tuesday, July 29. The trip is limited to 40 travelers. You must register through the OLLI office. A $250 deposit is required with your registration. This trip will fill quickly, so don’t delay.
For OLLI members, an unforgettable nine days in France

For 36 OLLI members it was a busy nine days as they toured France in May, a trip filled with visits to historical sites, fabulous gardens, cathedrals, museums, and much more, covering 900 years of history. These are some of the outstanding visits—

**Caen:** It was fitting that our tour should begin in Caen, William the Conqueror’s city and burial place. It is also the first major city retaken by the allies after D-Day. More than 70 percent of its buildings were destroyed, but a few medieval structures remain.

**Rouen:** It was here that Monet painted the façade of the cathedral many times, setting up seven canvases in a building across the street, enabling him to capture the light at different times and in different weather. Rouen is also where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake.

**Bayeux:** Like each of the other medieval cities we visited, Bayeux is a museum in and of itself. Virtually untouched by the war, the museum houses the Bayeux Tapestry. This priceless piece of art is 70 meters (230 feet) long, and dates from the 11th century. It chronicles William the Conqueror’s defeat of England in 1066.

**Mont St. Michel:** This World Heritage Site is a huge abbey and fortress built on a rock mount surrounded by tidal flats that flood in unusually high tides, cutting off the mount. Most of us were able to climb to the top.

**Chartres:** Chartres Cathedral, another World Heritage Site, is considered to be the finest example of Gothic architecture and can be seen for miles across the plain. A small miracle at Chartres for us pilgrims — when our guide did not appear, Susan Morrow discovered someone who teaches at an OLLI in Minneapolis, and who agreed to guide us.

**Versailles:** Versailles was built as a hunting lodge by Louis XIII but it was greatly enlarged by Louis XIV to 1,000 rooms and many square miles of gardens. The Hall of Mirrors, where the treaty ending World War I was signed, is truly beautiful, with its marble walls, mirrors, and crystal chandeliers.

**Giverny:** This is where Monet lived and painted his water lilies as frequently as he had Rouen’s cathedral, at every time of day, and in all weather conditions, and seasons of the year. The gardens are breathtakingly beautiful, and his house is cool and inviting, decorated in greens and yellows.

**Paris:** For our one day in Paris, we stayed in a hotel in Montmartre, the hangout of artists such as Van Gogh and Toulouse Lautrec. It is still arty and alive with street performers and crowded outdoor cafes. The Paris of today, with its broad boulevards, parks, and squares, is very much a product of its transformation by Haussmann in the 19th century.

**Omaha Beach:** We visited Omaha Beach, one of the main landing sites of the American troops on June 6, 1944. We saw the expanses of beach that needed to be crossed and the heavily fortified heights that had to be scaled. We saw the graves of the more than 9,000 American soldiers who died there. It is peaceful there now — all green and birds singing in the trees. All Normandy is peaceful, green, and lush agricultural land. The contrast reminds us that time heals.

—Mary Collins

Pictures of Trip on page 9
(Clockwise from upper left): Chartres, Eiffel Tower, Rouen Town Clock, Bayeux Tapestries, Mont Saint-Michel, Hall of Mirrors, Normandy Cemetery, The Traveling Group

(Photo credit: Susan Morrow)
Walking Club plans two busy months

In July and August we return to our summer schedule and meet at Back Cove, across from Hannaford’s, at 9 a.m. We have an exciting schedule of new destinations and some guided walks.

On Wednesday, July 9, we will try a new location at Camp Ketcha & Libby River Farm, maintained by the Scarborough Land Conservation Trust and located off Route 77. We will eat lunch at a nearby home.

On Tuesday, July 22, we will visit the beautiful River’s Edge Gardens on Merrill Road in Falmouth, a walk we were rained out of last year. This will be a guided walk.

On Wednesday, Aug. 13, we will try our third new walk at the Pisgah Hill Preserve in New Gloucester, which will also be guided. On Tuesday, Aug. 26, we will have our annual outing to Great Diamond Island, with lunch nearby.

Please be prompt at Back Cove and bring your own lunch and water. Sunscreen and bug spray are needed, and dress appropriately for tick-infested areas. If you have questions, call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

OLLI History Book Group — a Special Interest Group for history lovers

Open to all OLLI members, the History Book Group meets at 3:15 on the second Wednesday of every month from September through June, except for December. We compile a reading list for the year in the spring, based on member recommendations and voting; then members take turns facilitating the discussions.

This fall we are reading two books. The first is *The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Discussion of this 752-page book will be facilitated, in two sessions, by Draper Hunt, on Sept. 10 and Oct. 8. On Nov. 12, John Sutherland will facilitate discussion of another long book, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, by William Cleveland.

We invite you to consider these books for your summer reading, and we hope you’ll join us in the fall. For more information, please contact Susan Gesing at susangesing@gmail.com.