Profile
Val Hart

Love of teaching still strong with Val Hart

Val Hart has been a teacher most of his life. Now he’s teaching at OLLI.

With a BA in history from Middlebury College, the Connecticut native did two stints in the VISTA program (Volunteers in Service to America), first as a community organizer in Alaska and then, following nine months traveling and working in Europe, as a teacher at an alternative high school in Hartford.

With a fresh MEd from the University of Hartford, Val looked into teaching at a free school in northern New England. “I read an ad in the Boston Phoenix of a Harvard medical student looking for people willing to help build a house in Swanville, Maine. Along with six others, I showed up on-site in mid-September 1971, a day after my 29th birthday. There was no pay, but the owner paid all expenses. We built the house from the cellar hole up and moved in on Halloween.

“I bought a house up the road and fell in with a small group of people who wanted to open a daycare center. We got town approval and available state funds and started what is now the Belfast Area Children’s Center. It’s still going strong.”

Val stayed with daycare in Maine, and briefly in Cambridge, for several years; but when he saw an ESL (English as Second Language) job advertised at a bread shop in Portland in 1980, he started a career that was to cover a quarter-century.

continued on page 4
NOTES FROM SUSAN

I’ve had enough of winter, and especially snow! Thankfully, all efforts in the OLLI office at this time are geared toward Spring, which means warm weather can’t be far behind. The Spring line-up of OLLI classes is terrific. If you haven’t registered yet, I encourage you to do so soon. Classes are filling on a daily basis.

SAGE, our Tuesday morning lecture series, also begins in March. Registration has been brisk, but most lectures still have space available. All SAGE lectures will be held in 102 Wishcamper, so seating is limited. Pre-registration guarantees a seat.

If you have misplaced your catalogs, remember all information can be found on-line at www.usm.maine.edu/olli.

In addition to classes and lectures, OLLI is offering workshops, special interest groups, a trip to Boston, and many committee meetings within the next month. What a busy, vibrant organization!

—Susan Morrow, Assistant Director for Program

Impromptu Workshop on the Grimm Fairytales

On Saturday, March 23, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Michael Bachem will offer an impromptu workshop exploring the genesis of fairy tales collected by the brothers Grimm. He will examine their broad Eurasian origins and trace their journey from the Mediterranean region into Italy, France, Germany, England, and the U.S. Understanding their true ancestry will provide deeper insight into their meanings. OLLI members can call the OLLI office at 780-4406 to register for this $15.00 workshop.

Michael Bachem has a PhD in German Literature and Comparative Literature. He relocated to Portland after having chaired the Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages at Miami University in Ohio. Widely published and a former cross-cultural trainer, he is currently a Facilitator for Maine Humanities Council.
OLLI Advisory Board

Thanks to all of you who attended the most successful winter term OLLI has ever experienced. The spring term is shaping up to be one of our most successful as well. Every available OLLI classroom has been scheduled to accommodate the number of classes offered by our outstanding volunteer faculty.

I want to remind you all that Advisory Board and all Standing Committee meetings are open. The only restriction is that if you would like to address the Board or a committee, you need to contact the chair beforehand so you can be included in the agenda.

The Standing Committee (Education, Community, Communications, Nominating, and Resource Development) chairs are listed in the Newsletter. All upcoming meetings are posted, in the week being held, on the video board in the lobby. You may also get schedule and contact information by calling the OLLI office at 780-4406.

OLLI Advisory Board position openings: Nominations for three OLLI Advisory Board positions for a three-year appointment beginning August 2013 are now taking place and will close on April 1. Nomination papers are available at the OLLI volunteer desk on the second floor of the Wishcamper Center or from Pat Muzzy at pmuzzy@maine.rr.com. You may nominate a candidate or self-nominate if you desire. A leadership position in OLLI can be very rewarding, as you help set policies and procedures for the entire organization.

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

“Climate Reality” Lecture and Slide Show

Sharon Tisher, J.D., a lecturer in the School of Economics and Honors College at UMO, will be offering a lecture and slide show on Thursday, April 4, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in Wishcamper Center 102. She was recently trained by Al Gore to give the current version of his Nobel Prize-winning 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 preregister for this event by calling the OLLI office at 780-4406. Attendance is free and open to the public.
Hart (cont’d from page 1)

He spent two years teaching Asian refugees in Portland. Then, at a conference in Toronto, he not only met his future wife, Grace, but also applied for a position in her native country, the Philippines. After finishing his coursework in a master’s program in teaching ESL at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont, Val went to Asia. There, he was first a teacher supervisor at a refugee processing center in the Philippines, and then an English language proficiency tester for Southern Asian refugees in Indonesia and Thailand.

After returning to Maine in 1986, Val worked for ten years as a teacher, trainer, and curriculum writer specializing in ESL career education for Portland Public Schools. Val started and headed, for nine years until retirement, the Multilingual Intake Center, charged with identifying, registering, testing, and placing in appropriate programs all Limited English Proficient Students, K through 12, entering the district.

Choosing to retire in fall 2005, Val isolated himself for a week in a cabin at Indian Point at Harpswell. The idea was to reflect deeply on what retirement would mean to him, and on whether or not writing would be an important part of it. Except for daily kayaking and biking, he wrote almost continuously: describing the interior of the cabin, every sunrise, even the meditation exercises he was practicing at the time. He liked much of what he wrote, so he decided to give freelancing a try.

“I found I could just talk to people and go to places and events that interested me, write up my experiences, and sell some of the stories to local publications. My first article, which was published in the *Brunswick Times-Record*, was about a Run/Walk fundraiser to support a remarkable program in Guatemala City that allowed children to attend school instead of scavenging in the dump. Another story was about a successful effort to minimize bullying and bias at Deering High School. That story was published in *Port City Life*, and a modified version in the national publication *Educational Leadership*.”

Val has also edited three books and has just started writing a novel.

Val loves taking and teaching courses at OLLI – “the best students in the world.” He has taught courses on Mark Twain, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, and Election Reform, among other subjects. He serves on OLLI’s Education Committee.

Val has two daughters: Kirsten, who works as a landscape ecologist for the state of Virginia; and Elizabeth, who is a student at the College of Wooster in Ohio. His wife, Grace Valenzuela, is the director of Portland’s Multilingual/Multicultural Programs.

—Don King

Make a tax-free gift to OLLI from your IRA

If you are age 70½ or older, you may make a charitable gift using funds from your individual IRA account without incurring any tax on the use of the funds. It is not taxable income as it would be if you took it as income or as a Required Minimum Distribution.

This unique benefit expires at the end of 2013. You can make this gift while you are alive and well and able to witness the benefits of your generosity.

An example: Mary, aged 73, has decided to make a gift of $7,500 to OLLI directly from her IRA. She will avoid paying income taxes on the gift and may fulfill all or part of her Required Minimum Distribution for 2013 by making the gift.

If you are contemplating making such a gift, please contact the OLLI office (780-4406) or Bonnie Vance at USM (780-4448 or bvance@usm.maine.edu).
Movers and Shakers:
Bert Sutton

Bert Sutton has been involved with OLLI since its first days as a Senior College. “I saw an ad in the newspaper about Senior College and I felt it would be a great opportunity that would provide a learning experience to keep me growing.” He recalls the first meeting: “They thought 75 would show up but more than 500 did. That explained to me why it was so important to institute the program.”

Bert had retired in 1995 after 28 years at UNUM. The Lewiston native had graduated from Bentley College (now University), and after five years working for General Telephone in New York City, he returned to Maine for good.

When Wallace Nutting left as Board chairman, Bert volunteered to take over and subsequently was reelected for a full term. “These were the days when OLLI was concentrated in Payson Smith and classes were held there Fridays. I was involved in the planning for what was to become Wishcamper Center.” (Assistant Director of Program Susan Morrow notes that Bert spent many long hours in the strategic planning for the new center.) “And while I was chair, OLLI decided to drop the entrance [age] level to 50, a chance to get more people involved.”

Bert quickly started taking OLLI courses, first concentrating on spiritual classes, meditation, and music. But he adds, “I’ve taken many different classes over the years, and this spring I signed up for 20th century novels and biology classes.”

When the late Keith Sherburne was organizing the Puppeteers group Bert was quite involved. “However, the group faded away when plans for Madame Butterfly never came about.”

A new venture in OLLI is an art exhibit that Bert is arranging for this spring. “I’ve always been painting, and this will give me a chance to show some of my mainly abstract work.”

Bert keeps busy in other ways. He’s a member of a non-OLLI book club, which has OLLI members John and Kathleen Sutherland as members.

Another interest, although somewhat reduced, was his interest in NASCAR racing. “My son got me interested and took me to the races in Loudon. However, I admit that I couldn’t hack the traffic, so I’ve given up going there.”

Upon becoming Board chairman, Bert was asked what he visualized for OLLI. He said that, with baby boomers coming along, “we needed to expand, have an intergenerational, diverse group of people. However, I think we’re reaching a plateau with enrollment at 1,400. We didn’t get as much space as we hoped, and we’re running out of room to hold classes.”

—Don King

World Affairs Council program
Libya and American Foreign Policy


Date: Wednesday, March 6, at 5:30 p.m.

Place: Wishcamper Center Room 133, USM

Registration: $10 Members (WACM or OLLI), $15 Non-Members

FMI: http://tinyurl.com/WAC-Pope
Don’t procrastinate too long ....

Reservations are filling quickly for the Wednesday, April 3, OLLI Excursions trip to Boston’s Gardner and Fine Arts museums.

Cost per person is $67 and includes transportation, driver’s tip, and entrance to the museums.

Contact the OLLI office at 780-4406 to save your seat!

Would you like to talk with foreign students?

OLLI members: You are invited to join USM undergrad English language learners in International Conversations on Thursdays 1:15–3:15 p.m., April 4–May 2, in Wishcamper Center room 133 (Lee Community Hall).

This is an opportunity to engage in fascinating conversations with students from, among other countries, Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Thailand, and Saudi Arabia. Classroom instructors will suggest topics and offer interactive activities to keep the classroom lively. There is no charge to participate.

To join the conversations, please contact USM’s ESOL instructor, Jessamyn Schmidt jesamyn_schmidt@yahoo.com or 780-4586.

Get those creative juices flowing!

Reflections is OLLI at USM’s annual journal of literature and the arts. For over a decade, the journal has published creative contributions exclusively by OLLI students and instructors. Members of the Reflections committee review all submissions “blind,” that is, without knowing the identity of the writer, photographer, or artist.

All submissions and their accompanying submission forms should be sent electronically to olli@usm.maine.edu. For reflective art, that means taking a picture of it with a digital camera and attaching the photo to an e-mail. I am ready to help anyone who does not have a camera (or e-mail for that matter). I can help with any other technical problems, too. I am not on the Reflections committee, so the submission will still be “blind.”

[Note: I will be away for part of March starting on the 6th, but I will get back to everyone before the deadline.]

Submission forms with full instructions are on the OLLI website at www.usm.maine.edu/olli/olli-reflections-magazine.

The deadline for all submissions is April 1.

Good luck!

—Tim Baehr, Communications Committee Chair thaehr@aol.com; 899-1043

CALENDAR

World Affairs Council

Walking Club

Senior Players
Thurs., March 14. See page 7 for details.

SAGE Lectures

OLLI Night Out
Tues., March 19. See page 7 for details.

Grimm Fairy Tales Workshop
Sat., March 23. See page 2 for details.

Reflections Deadline
Mon., April 1. See page 6 for details.

Boston Excursion

Climate Reality Lecture
Thurs., April 4. See page 2 for details.
Announcements / Calendar / Special Events

Decisions to face
Walking Club

We have two neighborhood walks scheduled — on Wednesday, March 13, and Tuesday, March 26.

Because of uncertainties about weather and footing, we will meet at Back Cove, in the parking lot across from Hannaford, at 10 a.m. and decide then where to walk. It may be around Back Cove or at Evergreen Cemetery or at another nearby location.

Bring your lunch and beverage, and dress accordingly for the day. Questions? Call Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

Late lunch planned for OLLI diners

Folks had such a great time at our lunch in January, we decided to repeat it — but with a twist. We will have late lunch at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 19, at Parker’s, 1349 Washington Ave. in Portland.

Lunch specials and choices from the regular menu will be available. Check out the delicious Chicken Francese. It’s a winner.

Call or write by March 15 to reserve your place. Can’t wait to see you again!

—Barbara Bardack
865-2009
lascala2@comcast.net

Ski Club

Attempting to outwit Mother Nature, cross-country skiers will change their strategy and no longer have a published trip schedule. They will head out on short notice when snow and weather conditions are at their best, using e-mail to spread the word. Discussions among members will set the venue and date about 48 hours ahead of the event.

Ski events depend on weather conditions, so be sure to sign up for an event in order to get updates, carpool info, and last-minute alerts. To join the Ski Club’s Member Directory, e-mail Steve at stevedonahoe1@gmail.com or call him at 207-239-6517.

Late lunch planned for OLLI diners

The OLLI Senior Players will perform Thursday, March 14, at 1 p.m. in Room 133 in Wishcamper Center.

For more information, call or write Cheryl Squiers at nenegirl@myfairpoint.net or 274-8876.

Senior Players to perform

Keep those deposit bottles and cans coming! Pick up a CLYNK bag at the OLLI office.