Profile
Janet Gunn

Sharing with OLLI students the joy of reading

Janet Gunn admits she was “at sixes and sevens” when she returned from a year as a visiting professor of English at Birzeit University in the West Bank of Palestine in 2009-2010.

Newly retired after a distinguished career in the academic field, she heard about OLLI from a friend and, she says, “it was just what I was looking for.”

So she began offering courses on works she had taught and had long enjoyed over 40-plus years of teaching, primarily in departments of English and Religious Studies: Flannery O’Connor, Dostoevsky, Cervantes, James Agee, and more recently, Raymond Carver and Diane Arbus.

If there’s enough interest, she wants to teach the first volume of Marcel Proust’s Remembrance of Things Past in the winter term. If it flies, she will go on to the second volume. The other five depend on longevity, both hers and her Proust devotees.

Janet comes to Maine from a career that began after she earned advanced interdisciplinary degrees from the University of Chicago in religion and literature (1964), and Duke University in religion and culture (1979). She continued to expand her interests in the fields of narrative theory, trauma studies, and women’s studies.

She says that all those subjects “seemed to fall my way,” and she describes them as forming a cross-cultural cobweb that expanded and toughened over the years. She adds, “I like to see connections.”

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OLLI presentation made to area newcomers

New Advisory Board member Sue Gesing recently made a presentation about OLLI to 60 members of the Newcomers & Neighbors of Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Arundel using a newly created PowerPoint presentation.

Many in this audience had not previously known of OLLI’s existence and, after the talk, picked up all available copies of the Fall catalog and the SAGE brochure. The question-and-answer session elicited many positive reactions, and a number of people said they would be calling to register for a course.

As one woman commented, “It’s a really interesting organization. Can’t believe we’ve been here three years without knowing anything about it.”

If anyone knows of a group that would like to learn about OLLI, please contact the OLLI office to arrange for a presentation.
Every 18 months or so, I like to repeat this column to help clarify the relationship between OLLI and USM. With almost 300 new members this fall, I think this column bears repeating.

- **OLLI is a department of USM.** We are not a separate, independent program. We are very fortunate that USM has allowed us to be a hybrid organization of volunteer and staff leadership. As a USM department, we get free use of classrooms and office space, media support for all classroom technology, parking in the USM garage, and free use of USM’s computer labs and libraries. All OLLI money is held by the University, and OLLI has an operating budget just like every other department. OLLI money is designated as such, and is used only for OLLI.

- **OLLI is part of the Division of Professional and Continuing Education.** The Division includes Summer/Winter Session, ESOL, Off-Campus Programs, CTEL, Continuing Education, Conferences, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute National Resource Center.

- **OLLI students are non-credit students of USM.** As such you are registered in the University database, you are able to obtain a free USM ID card (http://usm.maine.edu/usmcard/overview), you can use the University libraries, and you are able to access the University e-mail system and computer labs. You also qualify for any discounts offered to USM students: http://tinyurl.com/USM-Discount.

- **OLLI does NOT own the Wishcamper Center.** It is a University building. Yes, the Muskie School and OLLI contributed toward its construction, and yes, we have priority of occupancy, but it is a University building and is used by the University at large when not in use by us. This is why all OLLI groups and committees need to book space through the OLLI office. Just because there are no OLLI classes in session does not mean space is available.

- **The OLLI office suite is shared by two separate programs** — OLLI at USM and the National Resource Center. Kali, Fran, Kyle, and Ann are the NRC staff. They coordinate information and communications among the 117 OLLIs nationwide and work closely with the Bernard Osher Foundation in California. Rob and I work full-time for OLLI at USM, while Linda and Sue each work half-time. We are fortunate this year to have 11 office volunteers and a work-study student. We work closely with the OLLI Advisory Board, various committees, OLLI faculty, various USM departments, and our 1400-plus OLLI members to keep the program running as smoothly as possible.

I know this is a lot of factual information, but I hope it helps everyone understand our University relationships. Our relationship with USM is unique. Many other OLLIs around the country are charged by their university for space, equipment, upkeep, and general overhead. We are very fortunate that USM views OLLI as a vital, growing program that fulfills the ideal of lifelong learning.

—Susan Morrow
Assistant Director for Program

**NOTES FROM SUSAN**

OLLI closings

OLLI is closed any time USM is closed. On Monday, Oct. 8, we will be closed in observation of Columbus Day. There will be no classes and no one in the office.

Winter weather closings are announced at the USM Storm Line: 207-780-4800.
Olli Advisory Board

I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer and are enjoying OLLI’s fall term of classes and activities.

We are celebrating the 15th year of OLLI at USM. Our OLLI is the oldest active OLLI in the United States, and we are proud of OLLI at USM’s continued growth since its creation 15 years ago.

We begin the fall with the largest number of classes ever and our biggest enrollment — at 1,320 — in our history. Thank you all for your help in making this possible.

The Advisory Board has just completed a planning process that will carry us forward through the next three years.

Have a great learning experience this fall!

—Dick Sturgeon Advisory Board, Chair, 773-3174

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Calendar

Columbus Day Observed
Mon., Oct. 8. OLLI and USM closed.

Walking Club

Reflections

OLLI Night Out

Cookie and Book Sale
Fri., Nov. 9, and Sat., Nov. 10. See page 4 for details.

SAGE
9:30–11:30 a.m. All lectures will be in 102 Wishcamper Center.

Tuesday, October 2
Expedition to the South Pole
Presenter: Eivind Rynning

Tuesday, October 9
The Presidential Election of ’12 – 1912, That Is!
Presenter: John Sutherland, Ph.D.

Tuesday, October 16
Pioneering Bluegrass in America
Presenter: Allerton “Al” Hawkes

Tuesday, October 23
Portland’s Challenges and Opportunities
Presenter: Michael Brennan, Mayor, Portland, Maine

Tuesday, October 30
See page 7

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Web Sites
Maine Senior College Network
www.maineseniorthcollege.org
OLLI National Resource Center
www.osher.net
OLLI at USM
www.usm.maine.edu/olli

OLLI Newsletter
OLLI Office:
Wishcamper Center 210
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Jo Morris, Layout Editor
Tim Baehr, Managing 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.

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At the last Advisory Board meeting, Kali Lightfoot presented Dick Sturgeon with a plaque from the Maine Senior College Network congratulating OLLI at USM on our 15th anniversary. See page 8 for a picture of the plaque.
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In addition to the more recent year in the West Bank, her teaching career brought her to South Africa for two years at Rhodes University, first as a Fulbright Lecturer in the Department of English and then, in the second year, as visiting lecturer in the Departments of English and Journalism and Media Studies.

Janet says that when she worked earlier in Palestine from 1988 to 1990, she found herself in the midst of a revolution she could not ignore. In South Africa from 1994 through 1995, she had a front-row seat on Nelson Mandela’s ascent to power. The earlier two years in Palestine led her to write *Second Life: A West Bank Memoir*.

Before going to Palestine the second time (the first was a 1986-87 sabbatical year that started out in Israel), she had been Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Department Chair at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. She resigned her tenured position to return to human rights work in East Jerusalem.

In addition to her memoir, Janet has published widely in academic publications, including a 1982 work, *Autobiography: Toward a Poetics of Experience*, a revision of her Duke dissertation. One area that has claimed her special interest is the treatment of torture survivors, which brought her as a participant to international conferences in Capetown and Dubrovnik.

In the summer of 1999, she traveled to trauma centers in Holland, Germany, and Prague, spending four days in Sarejjevo to hear the story of a Croatian psychiatrist, Momir, who, with his Serbian wife — also a medical doctor — continued their respective practices under the three-year siege during the Bosnian war.

One of the especially sad details in Momir’s story was the decision to send their teenage son to Zagreb in the dead of night under the special care of priests.

The family feared for his life just because he was so full of life, trying always to play in the street in front of their apartment building in direct line of sniper bullets from the surrounding mountains. At the same time, the boy would insist upon drawing maps for his mother’s safe walk to her hospital every morning, their car having been stolen soon after the war had begun.

After 10 years on the road and her 14 years of living and teaching in the South (1979-88), Janet was ready to return to her Yankee roots — she’s from Western Pennsylvania. Following a one-semester appointment at the former Westbrook College, she decided to put down her roots in Maine. Quoting Gertrude Stein, she asks, “What good are roots if you can’t take them with you?”

—Don King

Cookie and book sale: Mark your calendar for Nov. 9

Continuing with our plans for the Cookie and Book Sale, the Resource Development Committee has scheduled Friday, Nov. 9, for members-only access to the delicious treats and fabulous array of books, which will become available to the general public on Saturday, Nov. 10.

To make this a reality requires YOUR HELP!

Volunteer bakers can call Dona Sherburne (883-2688) to get details for contributions to the cookie table. Folks who would like to join the fun of putting on this day-and-a-half-event can call Henry Warren (653-1198) to schedule a time to pitch in.

And above all else, get those terrific books into the office whenever you can. If you need help getting them from the street to the office, give Henry a call for assistance. And be thinking about how these items can make your holiday shopping easier and less expensive. Stay tuned for more!
Though he now lives in North Carolina, Harry still maintains strong ties to the Portland campus. He recently came to our campus to teach the course “A Jewish Dialectic.” Wherever Harry lives, he has left a permanent imprint on OLLI.

OLLI members can also link to him on Facebook.

—Don King

Four OLLI artists showing works

Hanging along the second floor landing, the latest OLLI art show is awaiting your perusal. It features the work of four artists and is interestingly diverse in color, medium, and execution.

“It’s always rewarding and exciting to see new work by our fellow students and teachers,” said Sidney Lincoln, chair of OLLI’s Art Committee. “I hope to see more people volunteering to have their work shown.” Sidney can be reached at linck7s@myfairpoint.net.

About the artists in the current show:

Kathleen Sutherland, an OLLI teacher since 2005, has been painting for some 12 years. Her inspiration for art stems from her experiences in Egypt and, more recently, Maine.

After a long and varied career, Paula Steffen recently returned to her earliest interest, painting, reflecting the B.A. and M.A. in Fine Arts she earned at the University of California.

Linda McLoon, a former director of Portland Harbor Museum, says retirement has given her time to write two soon-to-be-published books and “take advantage of all OLLI offers,” including her work in the art show.

Norman Abelson, an author who teaches writing courses at OLLI, began painting late in life, “surprised as the devil that I could do it and enjoying it more than I can say.”

Keep on CLYNKing

13,133 containers — enough to fill 116.8 lobster traps.

We have saved enough energy to light 19 light bulbs — 24 hours a day — for a year.

We have saved the emissions equivalent to driving a car 3,785 miles (from Portland to White Hall, Alabama, and back!)

Pick up your CLYNK bag at the OLLI office today!
A USM student looks at OLLI

This past spring, Kayla Barstow, a USM undergraduate, attended, observed, and then wrote a paper about OLLI classes. Here are some of her observations:

- “It was approximately nine o’clock in the morning. I am usually still trying to pull myself together at this time, and the most to come out of my mouth may be a sentence or two. These [OLLI] students seemed alert and talking;...they have a lot to say because they have had busy mornings to talk about.”

- “There was at least one student in each class ... that seemed to always argue with the teacher. It was nice to see that as we age, we still challenge things.”

- “I enjoyed attending OLLI for many reasons. Although it was obvious that I did not fit all of the Institute’s requirements, such as the age, the people did not treat me any differently. The open minds, desire to learn, and kindness is not something you see in every class, especially at the average university. Although I was at the same campus I go to every day for my classes, I did not feel the same. I learned as much from the students as I did from the teachers.”

New student orientation held

Thirty new students gathered at the Wishcamper Center on Sept. 11 to learn the OLLI basics. The makeup of the group, like OLLI’s membership in general, was diverse in age and geography, with people coming from an area stretching from Old Orchard Beach to Parsonsfield to Harpswell.

OLLI Board members Pat Muzzy and Sue Gesing facilitated the meeting, which included a PowerPoint presentation, providing extensive information for new students, and a question-and-answer session.

Here’s a chance to talk with foreign students

OLLI members are invited to join USM undergrad English language learners in International Conversations on Thursdays, Oct. 11 through Nov.15, from 1:15 to 3:15 p.m. in room 205 Payson Smith Hall.

This is an opportunity to engage in fascinating conversations with students from all over the world, including Japan, Brazil, China, Jordan, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Korea, Congo, and Saudi Arabia.

Classroom instructors will suggest conversation topics and offer interactive activities to keep the classroom lively. There is no charge.

Did it!

Stephen Jenks and Fritz Steele have just published a new book, *The Arrogant Leader: Dealing with the Excesses of Power*. The book looks at the causes of arrogance, its effects, ways of coping or reducing it, and related topics. The overall goal is to help readers understand arrogance and deal with it (in ourselves and others). A longer description can be found on Jenks’s website [www.greyledgeconsulting.com](http://www.greyledgeconsulting.com).

Two books by Linda McLoon will be published in October by Trafalgar Square Books. *Crown Prince* and *Crown Prince Challenged* are young-adult books about a young girl who acquires an off-the-track thoroughbred and trains it as a horse for eventing. The books are already garnering praise for their characters, story line, and equestrian details. For more about the books, see Linda’s website at [http://lindasnowmcloon.com/](http://lindasnowmcloon.com/)

[Want to share news about your publication, award, or the like in the past couple of months? Send us a note: ollinews@usm.maine.edu.]
Announcements / Calendar / Special Events

Bruno’s is next for OLLI Night Out

*Ciao, signorine, signore e signori!* What better way to celebrate fall and October than a delicious Italian meal with friends?

This month’s OLLI Night Out will be on Wednesday, Oct. 24, at 5 p.m. at Bruno’s, located at 33 Allen Ave. in Portland.

Bruno’s is famous for steak and chicken sandwiches, pizzas, and calzones. Homemade pasta and desserts are a real treat here. You can see a complete menu at www.brunosportland.com. Or call me for some idea of what sounds appealing.

Get back to me by Oct. 22 if you will be joining us. Hope to see you there.

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

Reflections available Oct. 12

The 12th edition of *Reflections*, OLLI’s art and literature publication, will be available on Friday, Oct. 12.

Please join us at noon in the Muskie Forum (Wishcamper) to receive your complimentary copy, toast the OLLI creative spirit, and meet the artists and writers who contributed to *Reflections*.

Tuesday, Oct. 23: We will travel to Mt. Tom in Fryeburg to view fall foliage.

For both of these dates, we will meet at Back Cove parking lot across from Hannaford at 10 a.m. to carpool. As usual, bring your lunch and beverage, bug repellant, and sunscreen if needed. If you have questions about either walk, please contact Rae Garcelon at 846-3304.

History Book Club

The OLLI History Book Club will meet on Wednesdays, October 10, November 7, and December 12, at 3:00 p.m. in room 113 of the Wishcamper Center. The book we are reading for the October meeting is Lewis Gould’s *Theodore Roosevelt*. For information, call 420-3624.

New SAGE speaker for October 30

The speaker originally scheduled for the October 30th SAGE lecture, Richard Patenaude, will be unable to join us. Matt Ward, a perennial SAGE favorite and highly regarded lecturer, will speak on a topic to be determined. A former foreign service officer and member of the World Affairs Council of Maine, Matt has also presented at many of OLLI’s Great Decisions classes.
The Maine Senior College Network congratulates the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Southern Maine on its 15th anniversary.

Thank you for your continued commitment to lifelong learning in the State of Maine.