A Message from the President

Time has a way of traveling very quickly without any input or say on our part. I am now 80 years young and was wondering what happened to the teenager that was playing stick ball and punch ball in the school yard at PS244, in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. Or going on Monday and Wednesday evenings to play basketball in the elementary school gym.

My year is up as president and in my mind it went by so quickly, as there was just so much to do during that time, so many challenges to meet and so many people helping to achieve our goals. I can’t thank Judith Greiman, Senior Vice President for Government and Community Relations-Chief Deputy to the President, and Joan Dickinson, Community Relations Director at Stony Brook University enough, for the help they gave us in understanding what we needed as an organization to achieve our goals.

(Continued on page 2)

My year is up as president and in my mind it went by so quickly...

Ira B. Kurtzberg
Psychologists will tell you that one of the most difficult things for seniors to do is to adjust to “change.” Change in the way we live and change in the way we play. I just finished reading a book by John Leland entitled *Happiness Is a Choice You Make. Lessons From a Year Among the Oldest Old.* “Think of your life as what you do and not what you have done.” And then I added, and certainly not what happens to you. We must look at the present and make it work for us. I must follow that advice because one morning, I woke up when my mind and body were having a heated discussion, as my mind thought it would be a great idea to run a 10K race at Cow Harbor, East Northport, in 42 minutes and my body was saying “you must be kidding” that can never happen anymore at this time. There is no looking back as to what was. We must look forward.

In spite of what psychologists have said we adjusted to our new program and we proved them wrong. For those of us who stayed in the program and gave it a chance, we proved that seniors can adjust to new circumstances and that the psychologist underestimated our abilities. Because of that, our program will not only survive, it will flourish. We will be looking forward to working with our new Program Manager and our new Coordinator of Member Relations, to lead us with a shared decision making process with the office and the administration. And as I have always said Together We Shall Succeed.

As I have said many times, our program is a work in progress and changes will continue in a positive way. I have outlined a lot of those changes that did take place, and some that will be taking place in my Chronicles article in March of this year. I firmly believe if our present program started for the very first time and there were no prior programs to compare it to, I truly feel that people would jump at the opportunity to go to class on a college campus for 3 days a week, choose from 72 workshops, each class being one hour and fifteen minutes, and take part in our special events and activities by taking trips to Gettysburg, PA, to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, West Point, Philadelphia Flower Show, the Bronx Zoo and a myriad of other places, as well as taking part in the Staller Center for the Arts, or becoming a member of the chorus, which sings the National Anthem at CitiField, senior citizen centers and the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook. It would be a bargain and it would be a fantastic experience for everyone.

We have a right to be proud of our program and when I went to the OLLI National conference in Scottsdale, AZ I met with a lot of other presidents and directors as part of our experience. I took part in a regional round table discussion as we were paired with 7 different schools some of which were the University of Connecticut, American University, University of Delaware, Rutgers, the State University of Rutgers, etc. and after comparing what they have and how they conduct business, and what we have. I was very proud of our program and impressed with how we rank in comparison with the workshops and activities that those other schools have. The general consensus from the people I met really felt that we have a program to be emulated.

I want to thank our membership for allowing me to be President and serve our program to make it one of the best. We must work with the school, the administration, and the OLLI office. Always keep in mind, *Together We Shall Succeed.*

*Ira B. Kurtzberg*

*President of the OLLI Advisory Board*
It has been a spring semester filled with an enriching assortment of special events for OLLI members. In March we went to Pennsylvania to attend the world class Philadelphia Flower Show. In April we stayed closer to home and had the opportunity to take a private tour of the Cold Spring Harbor Labs. Guiding us through the myriad of research facilities and grounds, PhD students provided us with insights into possible solutions to unanswered scientific questions (some of which they were helping formulate). The setting was absolutely beautiful and the scattered artistic renditions of scientific phenomenons amazing. Because we had worked up such an appetite traversing the extensive property, we headed off to Ben’s for lunch. Sated, we spent the afternoon at the Nassau County Museum of Art, viewing the influential artists of the 1980s that contributed to the “Age of Excess” and the fabulous sculptures that populated the museum grounds.

The sun finally came out on May 6th and it was an auspicious start to a wonderful day for 51 of our members who went to the Bronx Zoo. Under the expert guidance of our member Barbara Bunting; who by the way is a docent at the zoo, we had a fabulous day filled with seeing amazing animals in their natural settings; riding the zoo shuttle and monorail through Wild Asia along the Bronx River. These modes of transportation were especially welcome when our feet were weary from walking. Barbara gave us a personal historical tour tour of Astor Court and The Beaux Arts buildings which formed a pavilion around the sea lion pool.

We saw the sea lions fed; visited some of our closest relatives, the gorillas and chimpanzees, were fascinated with the baboons and their markings and the striking colors of the flamingoes (caused by the shrimp in their diet). We saw the large brown bears lumbering in their large natural area and marveled at the colors of birds we saw. The peacocks, that wandered freely, were constantly displaying in order to gain the attention of the pea hens and as our monorail wound its way along the Bronx River we saw tigers, elephants, rhinos and wild horses. I don’t know about anyone else, but the walking and being outside provided me with one of my best nights sleep!!

And now look for our next happening. On Friday evening June 14th, at the Reboli Center in Stony Brook village, we have arranged to have an evening of Music and Reminiscing with Steve Katz. Steve was an integral part of the Greenwich Village scene in the 60’s. Being the guitarist for Blood, Sweat and Tears, a friend of the many performers that defined the era, and later a record producer, author, and raconteur, no one knows better than he what it was like.
2019 Spring Luncheon

Member Relations Committee

On Wednesday, May 1 OLLI members celebrated the end of the Spring Semester with a luncheon at Lombardi’s On The Bay, in Patchogue, which had a spectacular ocean view.

President Ira Kurtzberg welcomed the gathering and introduced the Chorus group and sang along with them, as he was one of the members. The Chorus sang several melodious songs and the highlight was “Sweet Caroline”, which the luncheon guests happily sang along.

Then Ira thanked the volunteers who were instrumental in organizing the event and introduced the Advisory Board members one by one and awarded them, a Certificate of Recognition.

Then our honored guests, Workshop Leaders and Co-Leaders, were introduced and acknowledged. They are the lifeblood of OLLI, sharing their expertise, time and energy, as they lead their courses. This takes much planning, effort, and dedication.

This is the time to acknowledge President Ira Kurtzberg for his superb leadership, at a time when OLLI was going through a trying time. With his foresight, courage, and negotiating skills, he kept OLLI on SBU campus and secured additional parking. This is a work in progress. We appreciate Ira’s efforts, to try to get more summer sessions and Thursday afternoon classes on campus for our Fall Semester.

The Nominating Committee Chairman Doug Hodges informed everyone, that a record number of OLLI members voted in this year’s election. Then the election results were announced.

OLLI members enjoyed the cocktails and the butler-served hot hors d’oeuvres, vegetable crudite and crostini station.

The sumptuous menu began with a course of Penne Filetto Di Pomodoro and Tuscan Garden salad. Diners then had a choice from the following entrees: Roasted Shell Steak, Chicken A La Francaise, Herb Seared Mahi Mahi and Egg Plant Parmigiana. The meal was topped off with Occasion Sheet Cake accompanied by coffee or tea.

The In the Mood Productions DJ, provided the background music for the meal and played the songs that OLLI members enjoyed and danced to their heart’s content.

A warm moment happened when a huge bouquet of flowers was given to Linda Kurtzberg by Ira, and the dinner participants sang Happy Birthday to her!

The success of such a large event depends on contributions from numerous volunteers working together. Special thanks go to Bunn Ye Avril, Carlo Curcio, Dena Fagan, Carole Gambrell, Ira Kurtzburg, Ed Metzendorf, Paul Mohan, Sue Parlatore, Diane Perillo, Paul Taub, Thelma Taub, Harry Walsh, and Laura West, who worked with Co-chairs Fred Avril, Jothi Curcio and Sheryl Sessa at numerous meetings before, and during the dinner.

The next event for the Member Relations Committee is the New Member Orientation in the Fall. Please consider joining us and sharing your ideas as we plan for the 2019-20 OLLI year.

Jothi Curcio
Co-Chair Member Relations Committee
An Open Letter to Ed Metzendorf

Mr. Metzendorf will become President of the OLLI Advisory Board on July 1, 2019

Dear Ed,

I have been told by quite a few of our members that I was the right person, at the right time, to be President of the OLLI Advisory Board regarding the many issues and problems that had to be addressed, which threatened our very existence.

I never thought about it in those terms, as whatever problems existed had to be handled and resolved in a positive way.

Following that same scenario I truly believe that you are, most definitely, the right person at this time to lead our organization in the right direction and deal constructively with the administration and the new Managing Director and our new Coordinator of Member Relations in continuing to bring success to our membership in your new position as President of the OLLI Advisory Board. Your involvement in just about every aspect of OLLI life from President Elect, Co-chair of the chorus, Co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, member of the Special Events Committee, and serving on the Interview Committee in helping to choose the new Program Manager are outstanding accomplishments and therefore the job as President, although challenging, will make it easier for you to handle.

We have always worked together in all of our capacities over the years and it was a great help to me in seeking your advice for the many issues that we were faced with for that year.

You once told me when you became President Elect, that I should never worry because you would always have my back and be there for me whenever you were needed. You certainly lived up to your word and we became close friends over the years. I in turn told you I would return the favor by doing all that you asked to improve our organization and I too will always have your back, as well.

We never had a disagreement on the direction that we should take for our program and I wish that you will have a similar relationship with your President Elect, Jothi Curcio, in moving forward in a positive way.

We need to carry on the things that you and I had discussed over the years that have not been completed at the present time, as follows:

A) More involvement in intergenerational programs as we discussed in a recent focus group meeting with some of the workshop leaders. We must continue to work with the school in as many aspects as we can so that they will understand that our involvement and presence is extremely important to the students and to the school in general.

B) More involvement with the local community and profit and non-profit corporations to enhance our relationship with them and help the community as a whole.

C) Writing a monthly article in the local newspapers so the community will have a better understanding as to what our organization is all about. This will also help in bringing in new members so that our organization may grow.

(Continued on page 6)
OLLI Chorus Sings at the Long Island State Veterans Home

On March 31, 14 members of the OLLI choir arrived with their conductor, Miles Massicotte, to entertain the veterans at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook. Armed with clear joyful voices the members began their performance with the National Anthem, followed by songs by the Beatles, Neil Diamond, and Billy Joel. The performance ended with God Bless America.

Throughout the evening the veterans were encouraged to join in. Our wonderful conductor performed two pieces on the piano as well. The evening was broken up in to sets where, after a few songs, the choir members and Miles mingled with the veterans, which brought so many smiles to so many including the singers.

Rachelle Psaris & Ed Metzendorf

An Open Letter, continued from page 5

D) Develop the skills of our members who have unlimited abilities and resources to contribute to our organization in developing new workshop leaders and have courses of interest to our members.

The list is never ending, but the above are just a few of the things that you and I have discussed over the years.

As an aside, I thought our membership should know at least one thing about you that not too many people know and that is that you are a member of the Long Island Bowling Hall of Fame having bowled 300 games and maintained an average over the years that was most outstanding. And not to leave out Ginny, your wife, who in the course of her tennis league this year, served up at least 4 aces for the very first time. It’s nice to know that athleticism runs in your family.

One again I wish you the best of everything. And remember, Together We Shall Succeed.

Ira B. Kurtzberg