WE DID IT!! We soared past the 1,000 member mark this January, with a total of 1,032 members. This is an increase of 51 over our fall registration, far more than the 15-20 new members we usually attract for the spring semester. Thank you to all those who worked on our ad, placed flyers in local libraries and, especially, to those who spoke to neighbors, friends, and relatives about OLLI at Stony Brook. Having 1,000 members, we are now able to apply to the Osher Foundation for a second endowment. We will be working on that soon.

Other exciting things are happening at OLLI at Stony Brook as well:

Our search for a director is almost complete. We had 64 applications for the position. The search committee interviewed 11 candidates and we will be sending our finalists to the Dean for a second interview.

The University has given us permission to place a link on our website to accept tax-deductible contributions to OLLI. Donors may contribute to one of three funds: the OLLI primary operating fund, the Ruth Pasternack Leadership Award fund, or the OLLI Commemorative Fund.

The Executive Board is exploring new events and activities to improve our already wonderful organization. The February “special event” of a meal and tour of the kitchen at Jewel Restaurant, along with a Q & A with the chef and pastry chef, was the beginning of what we hope will be a series combining good food with an opportunity to socialize with other OLLI members. On tap for late spring is a wine-and-cheese event coupled with an auction of art works by OLLI artists and photographers. More on that later.

Exciting news from the staff: Jennifer Galloway gave birth to Shawn on December 25th. Mom, Dad, big sister, and baby are all reported to be doing well. Congratulations, Jennifer!

The start of our spring semester, with a record 102 workshops, was plagued with “snow days” but we will be making those up at the end of the semester — just as our grandchildren will be making up their “snow days” — although they may not be as happy about that as we are.

I have heard rumors that someone saw some crocus leaves peeking up by the side of the house where the snow had melted. Think spring!
February rushed in like a lion and totally disrupted our return to campus. Spring semester was caught up in the seemingly endless series of snows which threatened to cancel our OLLI Information Table in the SBS lobby.

Not at all deterred, our extraordinary team of Member Relations volunteers went dashing through the snow whenever OLLI opened. Those dedicated women and men were comprised of the following:

Tina Alexander, Janet Creamer, Paul Knel, Mel Lantz, Bob Mirman, John Molfetta, Dolores Murphy, Joanne Noonan, Megs Shea, Bob Stone, Abe Trenk and Jaynee Wall.

Their flexibility was especially appreciated by the hundreds of members stopping by for workshop updates and other handouts. The OLLI office set it up daily thanks to Wayne and Steve and Acting Director Laura West. Additional follow-up will be extended to our newest members.

Committee volunteers were also present at the Holiday Party at the Bellport Country Club in December. Registration greeters were Diane Hollander, Sue Parlatore and Doris Weisman who did a great job with the many attendees.

Finally, our Spring planning meeting will be held in early April. We encourage your participation as we prepare for the end-term luncheon (May), the summer home gatherings (August) and the new members Orientation in early September.

Thanks again to all who have so generously helped serve our membership.

From the Conversation Partners

I am directing this article to all the newest members of OLLI, as well as to our more seasoned members. As many of us have noticed as we walk around this beautiful campus, there are many international students enrolled here. Many of them speak more than passable English and every single one of them is highly motivated in his or her particular area of study. What these young people would like very much, however, is to better understand some of our American customs and the many idioms we use in our everyday conversations.

The Conversation Partners Program has been established so that an international graduate student and an OLLI volunteer meet on a one on one basis once a week or so for just thirty minutes so that these young people can better immerse themselves in our everyday way of life. My own experience with this program has introduced me to doctoral students from South Korea and mainland China, as well as a Masters Degree student from South Korea. The purpose of these interactions is intended to benefit these students; however, an unintended consequence for me has been that my life has been enriched through my experiences with these young people. Although I am fairly confident that I have imparted something or other to these relationships, the fact of the matter is that I have come away feeling that I have learned so much more about their culture, their politics, and yes, even their language. These students and I have tasted culinary dishes that are popular in the United States and their native country, and their constant desire to learn, their polite manner, their intelligence, their sensitivity and their sincerity have enriched my life beyond measure.
My oldest daughter graduated from college in 2000. At that time the national average cost for a year’s tuition and fees was $13,393. Of course, my above average daughter went to a school with above average tuition, but that’s another story. Today the national average cost for a year in college is $22,398. I could no longer afford the college she graduated from.

No matter how high tuition goes, it has to be paid. When money gets tight, students often skimp on food to make ends meet. They may not eat or they may turn to cheap foods like ramen noodles, which aren’t exactly at the top of the food pyramid. Last September Stony Brook University opened a food pantry to help students who face food insecurity. Their goal is not only to provide food, but to provide healthy food. During the fall Stony Brook’s food pantry had 521 transactions.

Stony Brook’s $8,000 annual tuition and fees may sound like a bargain, but for many it is still a big stretch. About 57 percent of the full-time enrolled freshmen get need-based aid. Most people ages 18 to 49 enrolled in college are not eligible for state or federal food assistance. Many grants and scholarships for the lowest-income college students only cover tuition. You may not be able to see the need, but it is there.

The food pantry is supported by donations. OLLI will sponsor a food drive from Monday, March 3 to Friday, March 14. Donations can be deposited in a box outside the OLLI office, room S-101 in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Building. They would prefer healthy food such as:

- Canned protein
- Cereal (under 7 grams of sugar, at least 3 grams of fiber)
- Dried fruit with no added sugar
- Fruit canned in water or juice (not syrup)
- Fruit preserves
- Instant oatmeal
- Low-sodium soups
- Nuts
- Peanut butter
- Seeds/trail mixes
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Whole grain granola bars
- Other healthful items that can be distributed to individuals

Without Stony Brook University’s help, OLLI would not exist. One way to say thank you is by helping the college community we are a part of.

In the morning when I rise,
I hit my knees and close my eyes.
With bowed head it’s then I say,
“How can we plan out my day?”

I used to leave it all to chance,
days events and most romance.
“The ounce of caution” a mere retort,
“a pound of cure” always was short.

A simple schedule I need to keep,
if my troubles I’d like to leap.
Daily affairs must be in order,
together planning holds all like mortar.

So ask me not to take a chance,
my eyes will find you in my glance.
I’ll simply say,” It’s just my way,
that a schedule must plan my day.”

by Hema Ravi
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Stony Brook

The Chronicles

OLLI’s Differential Advantage
By Lee Marc Stein

You may well be saying to yourself “What is a ‘differential advantage’? I don’t remember that from calculus.” Bear with me for a few minutes and I’ll explain the term.

In early December, I received an e-mail from Curriculum Co-Chairperson Carole Gambrell. She thought she remembered that in my first life I had something to do with marketing. She was correct – I had spent my career in direct marketing, a trackable, measurable form of advertising that targets messages to specific markets and seeks to produce a “call to action” such as a phone call, snail mail reply, text, or web response. She was looking for some input on an inquiry-generating print ad for OLLI that she and Helen Emmerich had drafted.

I started to review the ad. I really liked the headline – “Because curiosity never retires.” I daresay that each of our members, no matter how old, no matter how schooled, possesses some degree of curiosity. I made a number of suggestions about the text of the ad and about clarifying the special offer, sent my version back to Carole, and thoroughly enjoyed being “back in the game” for a few hours.

It was only a month later that I began thinking about OLLI’s differential advantage. I’m not even sure that term was used any more. When I was creating or directing campaigns, finding the differential advantage for a product or service was the first task. A differential advantage is a major benefit wanted by members of your target market that no competitor or other alternative can duplicate.

So what does OLLI offer that we cannot get elsewhere? Is it –

❑ The only way to satisfy one’s curiosity? Hardly.

❑ Peer-taught workshops? Other adult-learning organizations offer that.

❑ That there are over 100 different workshops in 11 different categories? Maybe.

❑ Special events and trips? Nice “fringe” but not the main reason to join.

I thought about all the people I’ve gotten to know in my five years with OLLI. Many have a different focus in their choice of workshops; many come from completely different backgrounds; some are 10-15 years older, some that much younger… BUT THEY ARE ALL UPBEAT. I don’t find that in the community in which I live, I didn’t find it in the workplace. Our members are upbeat despite physical ailments, despite the mess the world is in. They are upbeat because they crave learning and they crave sharing their experience, whether as Workshop Leaders or simply in conversation with others, and those cravings are met triumphantly.
I have been enrolled in The Business of Sports, a workshop offered by Jerry Ebenstein and Jeff Hollander on Tuesday mornings at 11:20. For a sports fan like myself the weekly 75 minutes I spend in this class offers me the opportunity to learn some of the inner workings of my favorite sports teams from both Jerry and Jeff. Their tireless efforts in digging up topical information and presenting it in an always interesting fashion, along with giving class members their own opportunity to rebut and/or simply debate some of these timely issues, has always been highly interesting.

Among some of the more interesting aspects of this workshop are the guest speakers and films that are brought in by the workshop leaders. Lively class discussions always follow these presentations. Some of the more contentious discussions take place when Yankees and Mets fans or Jets and Giants fans or Knicks and Nets fans square off in building the case that their team is the favorite to win their respective league championship that particular season. Usually, during these lively debates, Jeff and Jerry manage to maintain a sense of order and decorum in the room, though not always.

I would recommend this workshop to all sports fans.
Dear OLLI Chronicles:

I retired in 2012 as a Guidance Counselor from a very prestigious High School in NYC called Brooklyn Tech after working there for 38 years. I was petrified to retire, since working was all I ever knew. It was a fulfilling career. After I retired I learned about the OLLI program, and embraced it wholeheartedly. I am so grateful to everyone who participates in it, giving up their time and making retirees feel as though there is a life after work. My favorite class has been drawing caricatures. The class is fun and constructive.

Sometimes we laugh at each other’s work, but basically all of the classes I take are interesting. Long live our wonderful instructors!

Harriet Epstein

WRITERS WANTED

We would love to publish your short article. Tell us how OLLI has affected your life, what’s your favorite OLLI subject or OLLI instructor. Email your article to olli.chronicles@gmail.com with ‘Article for Chronicles’ on subject line.

If there’s something you would like to say about OLLI or The Chronicles – not just 148 characters – perhaps a line or two. Just email it to olli.chronicles@gmail.com with ‘Letter to the Editor’ on subject line.
At a family gathering, I had just finished describing the course I had been teaching at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Stony Brook: *Classic Films: Modern Myths*.

“…. and one of my most favorite films to teach is *Miracle on 34th Street*.”

Jessica said: “We march in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade every year.”

“Oh my God,” I said: “I would love to do that.”

“OK”, she replied: “I’ll arrange for an application to be sent to you; but you must lie about everything.”

I lied about my weight, a few other health concerns, and my application was thankfully accepted. My mind fleetingly recalled photographing the clown who had died while marching during the parade just one year ago. His wife had reported that there were no regrets, because he lived for the chance to entertain the children.

The confirmation letter stated that I was selected to assist in flying the Happy Hippo Balloon with about 50 other Balloon Handlers, and that I was to report no later than 5:30 am. Even though rumors circulated that the balloons would not fly this year due to the anticipated strong wings and severe cold, I reported at 5:00 am.

For about an hour and one-half, we stood on the corner of 8th Avenue and 35th Street sharing personal information; many of the participants had traveled thousands of miles from all over the country to march in the traditional parade. The bitter cold and biting winds had little impact on the 1500 Balloon Handlers who were selected and trained to safely carry on the memories of Edmund Gwenn and Natalie Wood. In my mind I could see Maureen O’Hara pacing up and down Central Park West attending to the details of creating this magnificent adventure. I was a bit concerned that my injured right heel might cause me to limp during the parade, but I was determined that I could mask the injury and proudly carry our precious cargo.

Finally at 6:30 am, the Happy Hippo Team was directed to the designated suite in the New Yorker Hotel, where we would don our hot pink knitted hats and jump suits, carefully chosen to enhance the massive, deep plum-purple Hippo. A crimson and green ribbon accentuated its generous girth, and a friendly pink welcoming smile was perfectly painted to echo its matching colored ears and toe nails.

Buses transported all the multicolored teams, costumed clowns, patriotic Statues of Liberty, and other participants dressed as yellow cabs, large red apples, and male and female versions of Uncle Sam to 77th and 83rd Street for final preparations before the 9:00 am step off.

Richard Simmons was on the float just preceding our team, and the man never stopped waving, jumping or blowing kisses for the two and one half miles, beginning on 77th Street and Central Park West, through Columbus Circle, eastward along 59th Street, and south down 6th Avenue until we reached the grandstand in front of Macy’s on 34th Street. The sun shone; the balloons flew; the crowds cheered; and the children sang out, excitedly waving their arms and laughing all along the way. Over three million people lined the parade— 10 to 20 deep, except at the intersections, where they were closer to 50 or more deep.

Continued on next page
The Happy Hippo, continued

On 6th Avenue, while passing the Hippodrome Garage, I caught the eyes of a 10-12 year-old boy. His Down’s face reflected the sun; broadly smiling as tears streamed down his cheeks, his arms waving wildly as his voice cried out: “Happy Hippo…. Happy Hippo.”

At that moment, I knew that no gift, no entertainer, no event, and no amount of money could ever have brought more unbridled joy to that young man than our own Happy Hippo.

At that moment I also realized why Edmund Gwenn, Natalie Wood, Maureen O’Hara, John Payne, and the rest of that wonderful cast had found their way into my innermost consciousness 66 years ago and will never leave.

“…. yes, Virginia, there truly is a Santa Claus.”

A Brand New Beginning
by Barbara Golub

I asked her, “Lillian, why did you invite me to lunch at your home?” She answered, “You looked so lonely.” This was the first friendly gesture shown to me since I’d newly moved to Stony Brook. We were classmates in the “Memoir Writing” workshop and even though we hardly knew each other I accepted her gracious offer. This helped a great deal to make me feel more at home in my new community. Sheila was another kind person I owe my new wonderful life to. Through mutual friends she gave me the information about the OLLI program at Stony Brook University. I immediately found the website on my computer and was thrilled to read about this educational opportunity right here in my own backyard.

My daughter was so happy to see me snap out of my doldrums for having had to move out of my home in Jericho she paid my tuition as a birthday gift! The $290 tuition for the full year is the biggest bargain any senior could ever avail themselves of. From the moment I registered I felt camaraderie and a sense of belonging. I was a little unsure of where to go and what to do until I attended the meeting for all new students at the Wang Center where important information regarding the program was reviewed. Out of the many workshops that were offered I was accepted into the four that I really wanted to attend. There were afternoon teas for new students given by some very generous people who also attend and teach at OLLI.

Not only have I loved all of these workshops but have made many friends with similar interests. The teachers are so knowledgeable and have made every session a joy to be part of. The students in the “Memoir Writing” workshop have shown me so much encouragement that I now write every chance that I get.

The new 2014 spring semester will only bring more of the same wonderful excitement and feeling of welcome I experience every time I walk into one of my classrooms and see the smiling faces of my newly found group of friends!
Listen, dear humans, and I’ll tell you a tale
That will make all of you quail.
My boss was Paul Revere,
A man of great renown and endless cheer.

At midnight he rode throughout the farms,
Sounding alarms.
Up every hill and down every dale,
In the midst of a terrible gale.

But, tired, his head began to droop,
Was caught by a British troop.
Life, for me, became so gray.
In Paul’s house I could not stay.

I was alone and forlorn,
The object of scorn.
With nothing to eat.
And I longed for some meat!

My wanderings began so long ago.
A fish out of water, fearful of slaughter.
A bee with no hive,
I no longer had drive.

Not welcome at all in Boston Town,
My life was simply upside down.
I had no place to live, no place to stay.
Of every dog I was only prey.

What if I came upon a pug?
To me he wouldn’t give a hug.
Seized by the neck,
I’d soon be a wreck.

At night I traveled through alley and street,
Hearing the sound of arms and the tramping of feet.
Hearing the sentinel’s tread,
My mind was filled with dread.
“I must get to Long Island”, to myself I said.

Long Island – a place that’s so grand, with the strand and the sand.
A fairyland, a ferryland, I understand.
Where the people are ever so sweet,
And a dog has always enough to eat.
And there I could live on Easy Street.

So I found my way to Long Island Sound
No easy task for a hungry hound.
I’d gotten there by hook and by crook,
And I headed straight for Stony Brook.

My life now is quite so jolly,
Attending classes at dear old Olli,
Where I study the folly
Of humans amusing.

******************************
CAVEAT LECTOR

This story is not just quite correct,
As, I’m sure you do detect.
As, I’m sure you do suspect.
So, when you read, be circumspect.

THE POET’S CORNER
ESCAPE TO LONG ISLAND
by Paul Revere’s Dog

With the collaboration of Henry W. Longfellow and Cornelius J. McDonnell
There was no library in my Bronx neighborhood, but there was a book store about three blocks from my house, down Bainbridge Avenue, just past the corner entrance to the 208th Street subway station of the IND line. The florist was next to the subway station, and the book store was to the right of the florist. My mother or father would give me money to buy a book, (I don’t remember whether it was 25¢, 50¢ or 75¢ and I don’t remember how often, but I had my own library of Bobbsey Twins, then Nancy Drew and Cherry Ames books. There were many in each series, so I always had something to read.)

If I wanted to go to the library, I took the Number 4 bus to Fordham Road and walked down the hill three or four blocks, made a left, and the library was on the right. I don’t think I went there too often, and not until I was nine or ten years old, maybe older. I do remember I had to pass a bakery on the way, and I always stopped to look in the window, marveling at all the baked goods that looked different from the danishes, babkas, potatoniks and marble cakes that were staples in the bakery near my house. This clearly wasn’t a Jewish-style bakery. I remember seeing a cake coated with thin red something, probably jam, and then covered with coconut. I think it had a hole in the middle; maybe it was an angel food cake. My mission was to go to the library, but a look in the bakery window was a built-in bonus to the excursion.

My father read to me on special occasions. A special occasion was when I was sick. I’d beg for my children’s book of bible stories, and my absolute favorite was “The Coat of Many Colors,” the story of Joseph and his brothers. My father would get settled on a chair next to my bed, a glass of grapefruit juice next to him, and he’d read to me, mesmerizing me with the spellbinding story of Joseph and his wicked brothers. It wasn’t so bad being sick and feverish when my father broke the monotony and pain with his dramatic readings.

When I turned ten, I woke up early on the morning of my birthday and found two books at the foot of my bed. I don’t know if I was supposed to have seen them so early, when the sun was just coming up, but I opened one and then the other, and there in the dim light of sunrise, I started reading. These books remain favorites today, translated from the French - Nobody's Girl and Nobody's Boy by Hector Malot. I remember reading Nobody's Boy first. I have them today, and I regret that I didn’t take better care of them; the bindings are just held together by threads. My antiques, my treasures are reread every few years. They are 1928 and 1930 copyrights, not first editions, which were in 1916 and 1922. The French countryside is alive in these two very special loves of mine. When I settle down to reread one of these treasured gems, I feel like the ten year old I was when I was presented with the best birthday gift I ever received. All of these memories are still with me; how wonderful that I remember them.
In The Spotlight

Changing The World
At Home

I truly believe that as a team effort, each one of us in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute is doing something to change our world. As the elderly, we are learning to cope with the rapid changes made by the younger generation. As members, we are being guided by educated leaders of our workshops. As leaders and followers, we are mature members of all faiths and ethnicities, motivated to pursue our interests, as we learn about the similarities and differences in all of us. I attribute the efficiency of our OLLI office staff as an integral part of our team effort to “change the world.”

As active members of OLLI, we tend to forget or ignore aches or pains - physical or emotional - that may exist intermittently. As we listen to others and learn, we share our thoughts, and others learn. Inevitably, we are exposed to a host of subjects, hone our skills in reading and writing, and enjoy camaraderie. Listening to the expertise of others, whether professionals or neophytes in OLLI, we are all on equal status. Past prestigious positions are irrelevant, though we are grateful for its expertise. Despite age-related issues, we have the courage to accept challenges that face us as we are caught in the grip of the complexities of electronics with cell phones, I-pads, etc. Moreover we are prone to the threat of our lives being “open books” and become more aware of being victims of scams. Alluding to age-related issues, my theory of the importance of interaction among us seniors is somewhat analogous to “reunions.” Hofstra University’s Corinne Kyriacou stressed the importance of social “medicine.” Kyriacou says reunions propel people to vibrancy in their lives. She thinks from a social perspective, it’s probably the best medicine. She is director of Master of Public Health and Graduate Community Health programs, which focus on age-related issues. Kyriacou says, “One of the most important things from a research perspective to stay healthy, is social interaction. You can have the best health care in the world, but if you don’t have the social support system, then it can really affect you, not just emotionally, but even your immune system.” [Newsday, Saturday, January 18, 2014].

Finally, thanks to my beloved husband George’s advice: “If anything happens to me, I urge you to continue attending the University ~ being with others and learning,” I joined the Round Table in 1994, and though George’s life ended in 2004, I have yet to miss a semester in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.
Education is the Key - is painted in large letters over the entrance to the kitchen at Hope Children’s Home in Meru, Kenya. That sentiment is becoming a reality for the AIDS affected orphans at the Home. I met the founder of the orphanage, Joseph Kirima Rwito, when he was an 18 year old sophomore at Gikumene Harambee Secondary School, where my wife and I were serving as volunteer teachers while on sabbatical leave 39 years ago. Joseph was one of 13 children living with his father and two mothers on a small “shamba” (farm) outside Meru, Kenya. He was two years behind in his studies because his family had difficulty paying school fees. I taught Joe History and English, and he educated me about the realities of his life in rural Kenya. When we returned to Long Island, we stayed in touch. Several years later my wife and I helped him earn a teaching degree at St. Mark’s Teacher Training College in Embu. This relatively small investment ($4,000) paid enormous dividends! Joe’s two years of college training made it possible for him to become a primary school teacher, and in a few years a headmaster, the President of the Meru Branch of the Kenya National Union of Teachers, and an effective advocate for homeless children.

In 1999, at the same time we were retiring, the AIDS pandemic was ravaging a whole generation in East Africa, resulting in thousands of homeless children struggling to survive. Joe bought a ticket to New York with funds raised from his congregation, and met with me to discuss ways to rescue some of the most vulnerable orphans then living on the streets in Meru. He asked me to help him buy an empty church building, which he planned to turn into a haven for abandoned children. I agreed, and we set about raising money on both continents to establish an orphanage on an acre of ground next to Joe’s church.

We opened Hope Children’s Home in 2005 to 18 of the most desperate street children Joe could find. In the years since, that number has risen to 79. The older children that we took in are now young adults. One is living independently and working as a beautician, and two more are training to be drivers. Thanks to the involvement of caring Americans, four of our young people are now studying at Kenyan Universities. Twenty two year old Kelvin Koome, one of the original residents of the Home, just finished his first semester in the Doctor’s Assistant program at Kenya Methodist University, and earned a GPA of 3.6! If Kelvin keeps his nose to the grindstone, his mentor, a retired bachelor who worked as an AIDS educator for Suffolk County, will see to it that he has the tuition to become a Doctor. Education was the key for Joseph Kirima, the poor farm boy who became a leader in his community, and will be for Kelvin and the other former street children now in school because they live at Hope Children’s Home.

Larry Hohler  www.hopechildrensfund.org
PREVIOUS IN THIS ISSUE NEXT
Sunshine Cards Have Been Mailed To:
The family of Cynthia Ginsberg

Life is short and we have never too much time for gladdening the hearts of those who are traveling the dark journey with us. Oh, be swift to love, make haste to be kind.

--- Henri Frederick Amiel

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