LEARNING AND FUN AT HOME AND ON THE ROAD

Clockwise from top left: OLLI members toured Huntsville’s new Orion Amphitheater. They sang and danced at UAH, led by representatives of Fantasy Playhouse Children’s Theater & Academy. Vickie Goodness, who organizes OLLI’s course schedules, relaxed in Quebec with Elwyn. Travelers from OLLI at UAH had a cake to prove they completed their Alaska trip — until they ate it.

Osher.uah.edu
OLLI at The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Wilson Hall Room 111, Huntsville, AL 35899
256.824.6183 | OLLI.info@uah.edu
George Wallace’s bodyguard stood in the way of some great photos.

Gov. Wallace had just spoken at an outdoor re-election rally in Monroeville in 1974. I jumped onto the platform to take pictures from behind Wallace’s wheelchair. A security man blocked me.

“I’m with the newspaper!” I explained confidently. But, as Tom T. Hall said in a country song, “That part about me bein’ who I was did not impress him.”

“I don’t care who the #@*%! you are,” the security man said. “You’re not coming back here.”

Somehow, though, I soon managed to get where I could shoot — I mean photograph — the faces of local Wallace fans as they chatted with the governor. They were delighted to see those photos in the paper and wanted copies.

(And I forgave the security man when I learned that he had been wounded along with Wallace during a 1972 assassination attempt in Maryland.)

In trying to get into position, I was applying lessons I had learned about making photos for publication. I would now like to share some of those lessons with prospective photographers for The Insider.

I’m looking at you. The Insider team and the OLLI staff take many photos, but we also shamelessly bum photos off other photographers — especially those who attend events that we miss or whose cameras are more versatile. So you may be the next person we ask. And I encourage you to offer your photos. Email them to OLLINewsletter@uah.edu.

My advice is no substitute for OLLI’s photography courses. I have learned much from teachers Barbara Staggs, Charles Gattis and Philip Flowers. And I’m writing here mostly about news photos of people doing things, rather than pictures of landscapes, plants, animals and objects (The Insider needs those pictures, too).

So here are practical tips for taking better news photos of people. They might also apply to your scrapbook photos.

- Move in close, or use a zoom lens. But make some wide shots, too. Shoot several shots from different angles, then select the best one or two.
- Make sure the lighting helps and doesn’t hurt. Avoid sharp shadows. Be sure the focus is sharp, and don’t shake the camera.
- The best pictures show people in action, not staring at the camera, but we usually want to see their faces. When multiple people are in the photo, it’s best if they are close together.
- When you send us a digital photo, don’t let your email app shrink it. Larger files (at least 1 megabyte) result in sharper, higher-quality photos.
- Write down and pass along enough information for readers to understand the picture, often including names.

The best camera is the one you are carrying, which might be your smartphone. By editing and cropping, sometimes we can salvage a photo that is too dark, too light or too far away. But we can’t do much with a fuzzy one.

Thanks to all who contribute photos for The Insider. I’m pretty sure that more people see the pictures than read the text.

In this month’s Insider, Glen Adams writes about OLLI member Vickie Goodness. You may not see her around much, but you see her work every time you consult a course schedule. John Mason invites you to put your own expertise to work by teaching for OLLI.

(continued on the next page)
Jill Stewart muses about the surprises that hit you when researching genealogy. In a poem, John Mason takes the topic of ancestry back into prehistory.

Weekly free breakfasts are back, as you will see in Marilynn Szecholda’s column. Clay Williams tells of coming opportunities, including expert advice on distributions from retirement accounts. Chris Stuhlinger describes a multitude of coming events and how you can invite nonmembers to some so that they can learn about OLLI.

Betty Koval and OLLI’s other Alaska travelers brought back countless memories and pictures that you will see here. John Mason writes about a horse that earned promotions and medals serving American Marines in Korea.

**One more thing:** Does anybody have a grandchild who could write an article for *The Insider* about how to use Facebook and similar services? We might call it “Social media for boomers.”

*Steve Stewart  
Public Relations Committee Chair*

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**RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR OLLI**

Barbara Johnson (left in left photo) and Sue Chatham represented OLLI to prospective members at a Senior Health & Wellness Fair at Regency Retirement Village in Huntsville on Aug. 25. Ruth Bridges (left in center photo) won an OLLI membership as a door prize. Steve Jones and Sue Chatham (right photo) attended the Madison Library’s Newcomer Fair on Aug. 13. Volunteers have attended several other recent events to publicize OLLI. If you know of a good event coming up or want to help in member recruitment, contact the Public Relations Committee at olli.info@uah.edu
Family is family, in church or in prison.
You get what you get, and you don’t get to pick ‘em.

I have always loved the lyrics to this Kacey Musgraves song because they are just so … true. When we go exploring our family trees, we hope to find some noble or notable ancestor and no horse thieves or scoundrels. But, humans being humans, it doesn’t always work out.

Genealogy-related courses have always been popular in OLLI, and I was glad to see our resident genealogist, Cliff Lanham, teaching the “Searching for Ancestors” class this term. Surprises may await the participants.

Several years ago, Gratia Mahony, former OLLI board president and professional genealogist, taught another class where I was a fortunate participant. My goal in the class was to find the origins of the Freshour family, my maternal ancestors. I reached a dead end, though, with my third great-grandfather William Freshour. A spelling change in the surname might be the reason.

Along the way I learned why there was no love lost for my great-grandfather Stanton Freshour, who had been a relatively wealthy landowner in Kansas. In his last will and testament, he bequeathed only a small house each to his son and daughter.

The rest of his large estate was split between the local Catholic and Methodist churches, neither of which he attended. Apparently, Stanton had hoped to secure his status in the hereafter by covering his bets with both the Protestant and Catholic faiths. Newspaper articles showed that my grandfather and great-aunt contested the will, but lost.

A surprise awaited me as I followed the line of William Freshour’s wife, Hannah Robinson. She turned out to be a direct descendant of John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley, who were both Pilgrim passengers on the Mayflower in 1620 — and my 10th great-grandparents.

When I shared this discovery in class, Gratia recounted the history that John Howland had actually fallen overboard in a storm during the Mayflower voyage. Luckily, he was able to grab the topsail halyard dragging behind the ship and was hauled in by the other passengers.

She then said, “If John Howland hadn’t been rescued, neither Jill nor I would be here.”

It seems that Gratia and I are 13th cousins, descending from two different Howland children. Before you think it is a remarkable coincidence that two OLLI at UAH board presidents can claim the same Mayflower Pilgrims as ancestors, it should be noted that John and Elizabeth had 10 children, who each had about 10 kids, and so on and so on. There may even be other cousins in OLLI.

It is estimated that there are over 10 million descendants of John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley alive today. Among many other cousins, past and present, are both Presidents Bush, Chevy Chase, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Alec Baldwin, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, President Franklin Roosevelt, John Lithgow, Christopher Lloyd and Sarah Palin.

This family is a motley crew, to be sure. But, like the song says, You get what you get, and you don’t get to pick ‘em.

Happy ancestor hunting!

Jill Stewart
President, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors

Did your ancestors sail on the Mayflower?
(Art by William Formby Halsall, from Library of Congress)
I’ve searched the past my whole career for that perfect, ancient urn, to land my work in all the texts, Indiana Jones returned. From caves high in the Andes to Ethiopia’s deep'ning Rift, I’ve dug up scores of ancient bones, our family’s precious gift. And always, kneeling in the dust, my mind begins to dream of ones we’ve left so far behind — Australopithecines.

Were they the first of ancient man to stand up on two legs, and stride into a strange new world through burning sands and sedge? But walk they did across the plains for near a million years, then they were gone, new men arose, before they disappeared, The new learned fast, and tools and fire became the catalyst for the coming of a newer clan called Homo habilis.

This “Tool Man” brought new leaps and strides that started man’s advance that soon would see his children move to Asia, Spain and France. Each day brought stresses then unknown; to test those family bands the Younger Dryas climate change brought glaciers to the land. We nearly went extinct just then, our few, poor predecessors, but they survived and from them came one Homo antecessor.

I’ve never held an ante’s bones, but know he left the jungle to live in Europe long ago, man’s old, archaic uncle. From where he came, or where he went, the finds may not express. Regardless, he’s the key to what may be our genesis, for he’s the step, just one before Homo heidelbergensis.

Heidi doesn’t seem to get the credit he deserves, for near as soon as he was born two newer groups emerged. The first would be the man that is our cousin so robust, we know him by his common name, he’s called neanderthalis. Far to the north of human’s range along the ice he roamed, till fifty thousand years ago when new men found his home.

These new men seemed so much like him, though not as short or thick, and quickly occupied his range, of herds they had their pick. That said, for years they got along, the short man and the lanky, they even, says our DNA, indulged in hanky-panky. But evolution waits for none, and skills began to change. And so the new man gained control of neanderthalis’ range.

The old now found he could not cope with newer competition, his numbers then began to shrink, brawn losing to cognition. And that is how we came to rule, we known as “Wisest Man.” We continued on around the globe and conquered every span. Though we’ve lived just some thousand years, a shorter time than most, let’s not forget those early men, our race’s long-lost ghosts. I’ve looked back on the steps they took with pride and realize I’ll never equal Leaky if they never fossilize.

By John D. Mason
Oct 14 | Fri | 11:00 am | **Online/In-Person**  
**Bonus: Aging in Place with CASA**  
Learn new ways to age gracefully in the comfort of your own home. Care Assurance System for the Aging and Homebound (CASA) of Madison County is a local, volunteer-driven, nonprofit agency which provides services that enable individuals 60 and older and homebound (those persons of all ages who are wheelchair or bed bound) to live safely, independently, and with dignity in their homes; thereby, aging in place. CASA’s aging in place core services include: transportation; wheelchair ramp building/repairing; handrails, grab bars installation; and weatherization. Learn how you can take advantage of these services that are provided at no cost to the client or their family.  
Sign up [online](#).  
*Presented by Dr. Jacqueline Horton, Safety Net Health Care Services Manager for CASA of Madison County.*

Oct 21 | Fri | 11:00 am | **Online/In-Person**  
**Lecture: When Cash Isn’t King**  
Cash may be king in the business and investment world, but not in the charitable world! In fact, cash can be the worst way to give! There are many other more tax efficient ways to give and make a greater impact. This presentation explores three easy ways to make your contribution go farther. Sign up [online](#).  
*Presented by Jessica Smith, President of Longview Financial Advisors*

Oct 28 | Fri | 11:00 am | **Online/In-Person**  
**Bonus: Ukraine & Russia: Nationalism, Empire & War**  
This lecture will discuss the complex history between Ukraine and Russia from the 19th century to the present. It will explore the geopolitical and cultural goals of the Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian empires, as well as the emergence of Ukrainian nationalism and the development of the Ukrainian nation-state.  
*Event is open to the public.* Sign up [online](#).  
*Presented by Dr. Molly Wilkinson Johnson, associate professor of history at UAH*

Nov 4 | Fri | 11:00 am | **Online/In-Person**  
**Bonus: Bogart, Nixon, and Sarah Palin**  
A real-life hostage-taking event results in a best-selling novel, a Broadway play, a movie starring Humphrey Bogart, and a featured article in Life Magazine. The family that was taken hostage sues the magazine leading to an historical Supreme Court case in which Richard Nixon argued on behalf of the family. Just recently, Sarah Palin made the news as a result of her suing the New York Times challenging the same free press issues that were argued in the hostage family’s case. This "multi-media" program will explore the unexpected twists and turns in this true story and include clips from the movie, photos from the Life Magazine article, and audio clips from Richard Nixon’s argument before the Supreme Court. In addition, we’ll take a look at the very recent case Sarah Palin filed against the New York Times. Sign up [online](#).  
*Presented by Tom Borcher, retired trial lawyer and current presenter on history, politics, and the court*

Note: The Bonus on Oct 28 — Ukraine & Russia: Nationalism, Empire & War — is open to the general public. Invite your friends, including those who are not OLLI members. This lecture will offer insights into two nations that are now at war.  
Sign-up is required at [tinyurl.com/OLLI-Ukraine-Russia](http://tinyurl.com/OLLI-Ukraine-Russia).

**KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST EVENTS AT OSHER.UAH.EDU/OLLIEVENTS**
The OLLI Insider | October 2022

Fall semester at OLLI is well underway, and we are trying out a new events option to attract new members. For two events (Secret Art Trail and Beaverdam Boardwalk hike), attending members may bring up to two guests (family, friends, etc.) as an opportunity for the guests to get a first glimpse of OLLI, mingle with the members, and learn more about our activities.

Guests must register and agree to the waiver forms at the registration links for the two events, and indicate that they are registering as nonmembers. The same guest may attend only one OLLI event as a nonmember. We hope to make the same offer next semester.

Recap of recent events

- **Cold Spring Nature Trail hike** — During a recent cool morning, several OLLI members hiked at the Monte Sano Nature Preserve to visit Cold Spring and some of the largest trees in our area. Hikers measured the state champion basswood tree along the trail.

- **Orion Amphitheater tour** — OLLI members were treated Sept. 23 to a fascinating tour of the new Orion Amphitheater, where they visited the artists’ rooms, the stage and backstage areas, the concourses, the kitchen and the Skybar. Both musical and community events are held at the Orion.

Upcoming events

- **Friday, Oct. 7** — **Cathedral Caverns tour**, 2-3:30 p.m., Cathedral Caverns State Park, northeast of Grant, Alabama; 637 Cave Road, Woodville, Alabama. Please arrive at least 20 minutes early (1:40 p.m.). Experience the grandeur of Cathedral Caverns, with its massive entrance (a possible world record for commercial caves), beautiful stalagmites (including one of the largest in the world), a “frozen” waterfall, and a 58- to 60-degree temperature year-round. The 90-minute guided tour requires walking for about 1.5 miles on a smooth concrete pathway with several steep inclines and handrails. No seats are available during the tour. Cost is $10 per person. Bring your OLLI name tag. Pre-registration and prepayment are required at this link: tinyurl.com/caverns-tour (you must be logged in). Registration and payment deadline is Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 4 p.m. Waiver/release form is required.

- **Saturday, Oct. 8** — **Flint Creek Nature Trail hike**, 2-4 p.m., Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, southeast of Decatur. Meet in the Flint Creek parking lot on the north side of Highway 67 (Point Mallard Parkway), across the highway from the visitors’ center. Join us for this easy 1.2-mile nature hike through a lakeside pine/hardwood forest. The footbridges have recently been renovated, and hikers will have the opportunity to observe a variety of natural features with occasional glimpses of Flint Creek. Parts of the trail may be muddy; wear appropriate clothing for the weather (hike will be canceled if the weather is bad). Bring water and snacks. Requires pre-registration and a waiver/release form. Bring your OLLI name tag.

- **Friday, Oct. 21** — **Downtown Huntsville Secret Art Trail**, 2-4 p.m. Meet at BeeZr Gastropub + Social Exchange (109 North Side Square, Huntsville). Have your cellphones charged and your walking shoes on for a bit of competitive fun with the Downtown Huntsville Secret Art Trail Scavenger Hunt. We will pair up and receive the clue map at BeeZr. Each team will have one hour to find and photograph as many as they can of the 19 items the Arts Council has currently included on the trail. The winning team will be determined while we re-fortify with BeeZr’s offerings. Requires pre-registration.

- **Saturday, Oct. 29** — **Big Cove Creek/Flint River greenways bike ride**, 10 a.m.-noon, Hampton Cove area. Meet in the Big Cove Creek Greenway parking lot behind Hampton Cove Publix (Wade Road at Old Highway 431). BYOB — bring your own bicycle and pedal along an easy, relatively flat, scenic paved route along Big Cove Creek to Hays Preserve, and then along the Flint River Greenway to Southeast Old Highway 431. Ride length is about 3.5 miles one way (7 miles round trip). Bring water and snacks. Wearing a bike helmet is strongly suggested. Requires pre-registration and waiver/release form.

(continued on the next page)
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INTRODUCE YOUR GUEST(S) TO OLLI, CONT.

Check the fall semester course guide or the OLLI website for more details about these events, scheduled for later in the semester:

- **Saturday, Nov. 12 — Beaverdam Boardwalk/Blackwell Swamp hike**, 10 a.m.-noon, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge near Huntsville Airport. Each attending member may bring two guests (guests must also pre-register and agree to waiver form). forms.gle/4Pi3U1oKa9NYStM99.

- **Friday, Nov. 18 — Burritt on the Mountain tour**, 1:15-3:15 p.m., Burritt Drive, south end of Monte Sano. forms.gle/vxUYVrXNABcRGePA.

- **Friday, Dec. 2 — U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum tour**, 1:15-2:45 p.m., Alex McAllister Drive in John Hunt Park, Huntsville. forms.gle/3Dji2EXvEeBzE8nR8.

Chris Stuhlinger
Events Committee Chair

Coming events include exploring the Downtown Huntsville Secret Art Trail, touring Cathedral Caverns, hiking the Flint Creek Nature Trail with its new footbridges, and riding bicycles on the Big Cove Creek and Flint River greenways.
HIKING COLD SPRINGS NATURE TRAIL SEPT. 10

(Photos by Linda Meek, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)
The Orion Amphitheater, with a capacity of 8,000, is bringing big-name entertainers to Huntsville, and the adjacent Apollo Park will be a leisure, activity and nature area. OLLI members toured Sept. 23, seeing the public areas as well as facilities and artists’ rooms.

(Photos by Glen Adams, Patrice Stewart, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)
I love data! It’s how we continue to gather information relevant to growing our program and improving our curriculum. Data is key to running any successful organization. And one way to gather data is via surveys. That’s why we do them.

Now recently, we at OLLI presented a membership questionnaire to you for this purpose, and I must say, we were more than pleasantly surprised that 121 of you responded. As a result, we have a better idea of what we’re doing, right and wrong, and more importantly, how we can improve. Thank you!

I believe that those of you who participated may well notice that we are already addressing many of your curriculum suggestions. Understand that some suggestions, especially those of a non-curriculum nature, are totally out of our control, but I can promise you that we will work diligently to see to addressing those that are.

But those discussions, particularly as they relate to new types of instruction, bring up another area to consider: instructors. We have a tremendous faculty. But as with everything else in life, we cannot become a static institution. New and broadening ranges of courses require new instructors. It’s a part of educational growth.

We have a broad and diverse membership who have an untold breadth of experience across the total educational spectrum. So tell me. How many of you have ever thought about sharing your expertise with your friends?

As I talk to you at our events, I am continually amazed by all the things you have done and experienced in your careers. You guys are amazing! Backgrounds in music, art, hobbies, literature, storytelling, and just about any and everything else as well. So have you ever considered teaching others about the things you love to do?

I already know you love to talk about your favorite things. I hear you all the time. Teaching is really no different than talking with your friends over coffee. So why not volunteer?

I’ll be the first to admit that the thought is scary. Stepping outside our comfort zone always is. But our members are so receptive to the learning experience, and so appreciative of the opportunity, that they will welcome you with open arms and make you feel like your time at the podium was nothing more stressful than that morning coffee klatch with friends. Because that’s who they are: your friends. Teaching at OLLI really is something you can do.

So I ask you: Do you have a hobby you love and love to talk about? How about professional experience? Or maybe just like to talk? If you do, why not put that talent to work and volunteer to be an OLLI instructor? I think you’ll find the experience to be a challenge that will enrich both your life and the lives of your friends. Let’s talk.

And with that, I’ll bid you adieu. Till next time …

John Mason
VP of Curriculum, OLLI at UAH Board of Directors
Fall 2022 is underway, but there is still time to register for courses that have not yet begun. Tuition is $20 plus the per-course fee. You can register for courses at Osher.uah.edu/OLLIRegistration.

**CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH**
10/10 – 11/14 • M • 8:30 – 10:00 am • 6 sessions • Live Virtual • T. Prescott • $35

Develop oral communication and pronunciation fluency of French with dialogues on specific topics and basic phrases and expressions. Conversations will be based on daily life issues using the news, magazines, arts, etc. as source material. Members will have the opportunity to present topics for discussion each session. This course will be recorded.

**UNDERSTANDING THE LAW**
10/11 – 11/1 • Tu • 8:30 – 10:00 am • 4 sessions • Live Virtual • T. Prescott • $25

This course reviews the key elements of the law as they pertain to attendees. Topics to be covered will be determined jointly during the first session. Instructor will provide an overview of the areas of the law identified by class members and the course will feature interactive discussion to address specific questions and applications of the law. This course will be recorded.

**CREATIVE FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY**
10/11 – 11/1 • Tu • 8:30 – 10:00 am • 4 sessions • In Person • P. Flowers • $35

Learn how to create beautiful images of flowers. This course will guide you thru all the necessary steps including equipment, lighting, composition and technique including post-production. All cameras from cell phones and up are welcome. (DSLR/mirrorless cameras can produce better results.)

**BREATH-CENTERED YOGA**
10/18 – 11/8 • Tu • 5:15 – 6:15 pm • 4 sessions • In Person • R. Frank • $25

Explore a breath-centered yoga practice that is appropriate for beginners and experienced practitioners, tailored to everyone’s unique body. Work on uniting your breath with movement in an adaptable environment. Each session explores a different theme that helps connect mind and body. All props are provided, but members are encouraged to bring their own yoga mat, blanket or towel, and wear comfortable clothing.

**Save 20%**
*When you register for 4 or more term courses at once.*
It is hard to believe that our fall semester is already three weeks old. Nearly 300 OLLI members have taken part in over 50 courses. September also featured two bonuses and a few special events and tours.

October is even busier, with more bonuses and special events. Our Member Interest Groups are also active, with tai chi, bridge, mah-jongg and dining-out groups meeting regularly. It has been great seeing so much activity and fellowship in our classrooms.

Speaking of special events, I want to highlight one special presentation in October.

Over the past few months, there has been a great deal of discussion on Individual Retirement Accounts and required minimum distributions. Janet Reville wrote a great article for The Insider on that subject last month.

With that in mind, there will be a special presentation on Friday, Oct. 21, at 11 a.m. by Jessica Smith of Longview Financial Advisors called “When Cash Isn’t King” that addresses many of these issues.

Jessica states that cash might be king in the business and investment world, but not in the charitable world. So, if you are thinking of making contributions from your IRA, to perhaps the OLLI Support Fund, then Jessica will be here to discuss more tax-efficient ways to give. This will be a presentation you will not want to miss. To register for the presentation, go to tinyurl.com/cash-not-king.

Although we are right in the middle of our fall semester, spring is right around the corner. We have already started receiving course proposals from instructors, and special events and bonuses are being planned as you read this.

The spring semester runs from Jan. 30 to May 5. Our open house will be right after the new year on Jan. 6, so you can look for the course guide sometime in December.

And finally, our newly launched “Refer a Friend” membership program has been a great success. August and September saw over 30 new members join based on the referral of current OLLI members, proving that our best marketing tool remains ourselves. So, with that in mind, keep spreading the word on our OLLI program and encourage your friends and family to join.

Members who refer new members get the opportunity for a drawing to win free tuition and a free course.

Clay Williams
OLLI at UAH Program Manager

FREE UKRAINE-RUSSIA LECTURE

You can invite friends, including those who are not OLLI members, to a free lecture on Oct. 28 that will offer insights into two nations that are now at war.

“Ukraine & Russia: Nationalism, Empire & War” will be presented as an OLLI bonus by Molly Wilkinson Johnson, associate professor of history at UAH.

The event will begin at 11 a.m. in Wilson Hall and on Zoom. Sign-up is required at tinyurl.com/OLLI-ukraine-russia.

The lecture will discuss the complex history between Ukraine and Russia from the 19th century to now. It will explore the geopolitical and cultural goals of the Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet Russian empires, as well as the emergence of Ukrainian nationalism and the development of the Ukrainian nation-state.
October already! I mean, seriously, where has this year gone?

The trip to Alaska in August was wonderful, and you will get highlights and traveler comments until the end of the year. I highly suggest a trip to the 49th state at least once!

And — yes, Bill and I did make the entire trip with only one carry-on and a backpack! It can be done! We did mail a small package home, mostly of printed materials for a great niece and nephew who were excited we were going and loved seeing our daily photos of the Alaska adventure.

Bill and I, along with John Mason, flew into Fairbanks on Aug. 9, and let me tell you, it was one long day! I found it odd to leave a restaurant at 10 p.m. wearing my sunglasses — 20 hours of sunshine a day was just amazing.

The next day we walked around the lovely town of Fairbanks. Aug. 11 found nine of us traveling with Chris Stuhlinger as our trusty guide to the Arctic Circle up the Dalton Highway. Yes, that highway! Chris informed us along the way it is considered the most dangerous highway in the world.

Now, we all agreed, especially those of us in the back of the van, that “highway” is a very loose term for a largely gravel road that rode like a giant washboard. But what a glorious day it was! We laughed and saw so much of the Alaska that lots of people do not see.

It is built alongside the Alaska Pipeline, which we saw many times on one side of the road or another. We met two young couples traveling the world and, yes, curious me — I had to speak to both couples. I even ended up introducing them to each other. Can you believe that? Those who know me — yes, you can! It was 13 hours of pure fun, and I appreciate Chris for arranging such a day.

The next day, 13 of us, again led by Chris, drove to North Pole, Alaska. I even sat on Santa’s lap and whispered in his ear. I understand Patrice Stewart was told by Santa, when she asked for a new phone, to buy one using Steve’s credit card and tell him it was from Santa. We saw some reindeer and had another of our famous photo ops. We met later with Michelle Bartlett from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Sally Smith, who became our tour leader, for kickoff dinner and were officially on tour.

Saturday saw us eating breakfast next door at Salty’s — OK, breakfast was good, but the Bloody Marys were the best menu items (John, Cliff Lanham, Bill and I had already scouted this place for dinner and refreshment). We left for the Morris Thompson Center and heard from Bill Holman, introducing us to the areas of Alaska we would see. Dermot Cole gave a brief history of Fairbanks. We then had lunch at a musk-ox farm and had a nice tour.

On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at the Tanana Valley Farmers’ Market and several of us dropped a bit of change for Alaska-made artwork and crafts. We then ate dinner at Creamer’s Field Wildlife Refuge with the sandhill cranes. You will see a recurring theme of eating — a lot! If you left hungry, it was your fault.

Sunday after a free morning, we went to Pioneer Park for a train ride on a vintage steam engine around the park. The afternoon adventure — after a wonderful lunch — was a Riverboat Discovery ride down the Chena River with a stop at a fishing village. Then one of the highlights of everyone’s trip was the home-hosted dinners. Our hosts were entertaining, and we enjoyed getting to know them. We told them if they come to Alabama to come see us.

Monday saw us at the University of Alaska Fairbanks hearing from Tom Buntzen on the history of mining in Alaska. Chancellor Dan White gave a hearty welcome. We also were able to squeeze in a talk by Walkie Charles, a native Yupik. He teaches native languages at the university. He had a most moving talk about his culture.

We were off to visit the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline, and Sally knew much valuable information. She served as a state legislator for this area and is a former mayor of Juneau. She was one of many we met who had moved to Alaska in the 1970s and made it home.

Some of the travelers even donned swimsuits and took a long, relaxing dip in Chena Hot Springs, after which we had appletinis in the very chilly Chena Ice Museum. For a mere $600 per night, you can spend the night. We had no takers in our group, but that appletini was a one and done — I don’t think I could have walked a straight line if I had had two. But what a nice experience to then take the ice glass outside and break it on the pavement!

(continued on the next page)
Next month you will hear about Nenana, Denali and Talkeetna.

Comments submitted by our travelers at my request included:

Carolyn Zeliff (who learned about trip through her friend Jane McBride):
Favorite memories are of the wonderful people on the trip, the incredible vistas, the animals and sea life.
My favorite lecture was by Walkie Charles, who is Yupik. He spoke on the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus about the important developments taking place to maintain for future generations of Alaskans the precious heritage of their native language and cultures.
He also spoke from personal experience about not knowing who he was as a young man and how this not knowing led to the suicide of his younger brother. It was deeply moving. If I were 20 years younger, I would come back and take his classes.

Marsha Langlois:
This is so much harder than I thought it would be because I loved everything. Alaska makes me wish that I was younger and could move there for a while. There is so much that I would love to spend more time learning about.
If you look at my photos, then the flowers and plants would win because there are more pictures of those than anything else.
I have come away with an admiration for all the people that we encountered there. Everyone seems to be immensely proud of their state and the way that their native peoples’ heritage is being incorporated. I think that the “lower 48” could learn a lot. People that we encountered who were not officially part of our Alaskan adventure were willing to talk to strangers and share stories.
The scenery is incredible. John and I realized during the last couple of days that the scenery becomes a backdrop and you start to take it for granted, and we were not there that long. Everywhere you look is a photo waiting to be taken, and this is their everyday normal view.
I think that maybe my favorite thing was the information provided by the speakers on various topics and having Sally Smith and Bill Holman accompany us with their vast knowledge of the state and its history. This information has left me wanting to know more and to go back again.

John Langlois:
Probably my favorite experience on the Alaska trip was the presentation by Walkie Charles.
It framed our understanding in the context of the indigenous experience and offered insights into Alaska’s future.

Christine and Bill Johnson:
I guess what I would mostly say about the trip for us was how in addition to the absolute stunning nature and grandeur, etc., etc., what impressed us the most were the people. The native Alaskans, as well as all the hotel workers, the restaurant workers, the presenters for our trip, all had such a passion and love for Alaska! We were treated so kindly by everyone.
I loved the balance that they had in utilizing the natural resources but finding a balance between that and exploitation.

These are just a few of the comments I have received, and I will print more in the next two months. This should entice you to travel with OLLI friends and invite other friends and even family members to join OLLI and travel.

The upcoming trips are:
• Philadelphia Art Trip — May 21-26, 2023
• Canadian Maritimes — Aug. 17-29, 2023

Please see the weekly eNews or go by the volunteer office for more information.

All who wander are not lost.

Betty Koval
Travel Committee Chair

Santa Claus got a private message from Betty Koval when she and husband Bill visited North Pole, Alaska, with friends from OLLI at UAH.
SOAKING IN ALASKA’S SCENES AND CULTURE

Some of the 25 Alaska travelers from OLLI at UAH swam in Chena Hot Springs, and a sea otter in Resurrection Bay showed them how to relax. They saw a fishing village during a riverboat cruise and captured scenery from a train between Anchorage and Seward. They admired wildflowers and wildlife. Walkie Charles, director of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, was a popular speaker. They visited the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and mingled with Smokey Bear at Portage Glacier. The trip was Aug. 12-23.

(Photos shot or provided by Chris Johnson, Marsha Langlois, Linda Myers, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)
In Fairbanks, the travelers celebrated completion of their tour with a cake showing them together at Denali National Park. Earlier, they assembled at Pioneer Park in Fairbanks for a railroad briefing and a ride on a coal-fired train. An Indian village was a stop during their Chena River cruise, and they also cruised Resurrection Bay at Seward. Drinks were served in glasses made of ice in Chena Ice Museum. They found souvenirs and food delicacies in Talkeetna and other towns. At a musk-ox farm, the animals’ fine but expensive wool was for sale.

(Photos shot or provided by Bonnie Jane Peterson, Patrice Stewart, Steve Stewart and Chris Stuhlinger)
MAJESTY: ALASKA MOUNTAINS AND SKIES

A view of Denali, the highest mountain peak in North America, was elusive because of the clouds, but Til Stuhlinger made its photo at top left from an airplane southeast of Denali. A railroad steward shared the next Denali photo on the left side, which is from the northeast, and Chris Stuhlinger captured an Anchorage sunset. The photos on the right side came from (top to bottom) Chris Johnson, Bonnie Jane Peterson (Denali National Park) and John Langlois (Exit Glacier). The OLLI Insider will publish more Alaska photos in November and December.
It's so nice to see so many returning and new OLLI members taking part in classes and activities. There is so much to enjoy.

Be sure to come to the very interesting bonus sessions scheduled on certain Fridays and partake in the yummy snacks in the lounge before the sessions and afterward with other OLLI members.

Coffee is available in the lounge before and during classes, and you can bring a lunch to tide you over between classes, too.

There is a book/magazine exchange area in the lounge and a lost-and-found area, too. Remember that we have an extensive DVD collection in the OLLI office, where you are welcome to check out a DVD of interest.

Please take advantage of what is available at OLLI and enjoy your membership.

*Leah Black*
*Member Services Committee Chair*

Enjoy chatting and meeting new people. The chance to socialize and make new friends is a bonus, too.

The OLLI volunteer office (Room 151 in Wilson Hall) and the OLLI lounge (Room 152D) provide opportunities to socialize as well as free DVD loans and coffee.

*(Photos by Steve Stewart)*

Congratulations to Karin Confer for winning our first “Refer A Friend” drawing! Karin wins a gift certificate granting free semester tuition and a free course. The winner was drawn by Clay Williams, OLLI Program Manager, and Jill Stewart, OLLI President (pictured). Want to be next month’s winner? Any OLLI member who refers a friend to become a member will have their name entered into our monthly drawing.
I have just returned from a wonderful trip to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

On Mackinac Island, we were called “Fudgies” because it seems everyone went there to buy fudge. We visited the Grand Hotel, where the movie “Somewhere in Time” was filmed. After taking a thousand pictures and watching the movie on the bus, I have to admit being a groupie. I even bought a music box playing the movie’s theme.

Back in the real world: OLLI classes for the fall term are underway, and the Social Committee is pleased to announce that the free Early Bird breakfasts have resumed in the lounge in Wilson Hall at 7:45 on Wednesdays until the end of the term.

Come early, meet your friends, and enjoy a bite to eat before your classes begin. We can always use help providing light snacks for the breakfasts.

January seems far into the future, but begin planning an entry for the Souper Bowl contest. Make your favorite soup, and provide the recipe. We will serve the soup, and judges will pick a winner. Sounds like “souper” fun.

Marilynn Szecholda
Social Committee Chair

Grab breakfast at 7:45 or later on Wednesday mornings during the fall semester in the OLLI lounge, Room 152D of Wilson Hall.
Vickie Goodness plays a critical role for OLLI each term, but oddly enough most OLLI members have never seen her.

Despite spending most of her time on the road, each term Vickie organizes all the information that goes into the OLLI course guide. Scan the current course guide, and you quickly see how much work that involves.

“Vickie provides an invaluable service to OLLI when she undergoes the first steps of analyzing the 50-plus course proposals that are submitted each term and places them in a schedule that satisfies the instructors’ wishes and also keeps the schedule balanced,” said Clay Williams, OLLI program manager. “It saves me an enormous amount of time. We simply couldn’t put out the fall and spring course guides without her help.”

Vickie, an OLLI member who does the work as a volunteer, is the subject of this month’s Insider member profile.

Vickie grew up in the very frozen North, Maine. Her father was an accountant and her mother a secretary and caretaker for several relatives. Vickie was the oldest of four children. She kept herself busy playing the flute and piccolo in the school band and orchestra; folk dancing; camping and sailing with the Girl Scouts; camping with family throughout the U.S. and Canada; and working as a candy-striper at the local hospital.

She began her academic career at the University of Maine, where the first month she met her husband of 41 years, Stephen Letourneau. College didn’t stop in Maine. Over the years, she studied primarily nursing at Maine’s St. Mary’s School of Nursing, Iowa’s Kirkwood Community College, and Alabama’s Athens State University.

For several years she worked as a nurse, specializing in geriatric and psychiatric care. But a back injury ended that. Because of her husband’s job as a nuclear engineer, Vickie found herself often on the move and taking what work she could find: “We moved 15 times in 15 years,” said Vickie. “I worked often as a temporary employee due to these frequent cross-country moves.”

Vickie and Steve eventually landed in Huntsville in 1991. “I returned to school and then got a job at Wyle Labs as a technical editor in their testing lab and later as a senior accounting specialist in their finance department.”

Vickie retired in 2014, although she continues to be a distributor for a German medical device that increases blood circulation. “I share this device with others so they can continue to be as active as they want to be,” said Vickie. “This device is why I can still be active mentally and physically.”

Vickie heard about OLLI through WLRH public radio and thought it an excellent way to stay active: “I watched my elderly patients and relatives isolate themselves mentally and physically and then fade away due to lack of socialization and stimulation. I did not want this for me, or my friends’ and family’s futures.

“OLLI has given me an opportunity to serve the older population in our community. I frequently tell people locally and people we meet traveling about OLLI. It’s a great option for retirees.”

And about the course guide? “Even though I’m gone so much, I still get to be involved with OLLI by using my computer skills. It feels like I’m solving a puzzle while I’m using all of the parameters that must be followed. It’s fun!”

Now about that travel! Vickie and Steve sold their home in 2020 and bought a Tiffin Phaeton recreational vehicle. Here is their travel history, which always includes their Pembroke Welsh Corgis:

2021: Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

(continued on the next page)
2022: Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, Maine, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Right now, they are on a trip to New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Niagara Falls in Ontario.

2023: They plan to first go to Baja California in Mexico for two weeks of whale watching and then from there to California and Nevada. In July, it’s on to Idaho to begin a two-month tour of Western Canada and Alaska. Then in the fall they plan to follow the Mississippi River from Bemidji, Minnesota, to New Orleans. After that … ? Whew!

Thanks, Vickie, for all you do for OLLI.

And we hope to see you sometime.

By Glen Adams

Vickie and Steve visited Montreal (top left) in 2022, Mount Rushmore (bottom left) in 2021, and Montmorency Falls, Quebec, in 2022. In Perce, Quebec, also in 2022, Vickie sat with LuLu the Maine lobster, who was their mascot for a tour of the Eastern Maritime Provinces, and 6-month-old Corgi puppy Elwyn.
October 2022: Some horse sense about the Korean War

In March 1952, during the crux of the Korean Conflict, the 1st Marine Division redeployed from east-central to western Korea, to join U.S. I Corps. They were assigned a 35-mile sector to defend on the main line of resistance (MLR — defined as the line or zone of contact with the enemy; it is also referred to as the front or front lines) known as the Jamestown Line.

This sector, consisting of three outposts named for cities in Nevada — Carson, Reno and Vegas — was defended by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, reportedly named by Lt. Col. Tony Caputa because “it’s a gamble if we can hold them.” Lt. Col. Jonas M. Platt commanded 1st Battalion, while Col. Lew Walt (who would go on to become the assistant commander of the Marine Corps from 1968 to 1971) commanded the 5th Marine Regiment.

The Marines at Reno, in the center and the most vulnerable of the three, built no bunkers, relying exclusively on fighting holes in the trenches and, as a last resort, a cave. Outpost Reno had limited fields of fire in the direction of Hill 67, which was held by the People’s Volunteer Army of North Korea (PVA). Hill 67 was also called Arrowhead Hill. Outpost Caron, on the left, provided fire support in this area. As a result, the approach that seemed to pose the greatest danger to Reno’s defenders followed a ridge extending generally southward from Hill 150.

To the right of Reno loomed Outpost Vegas, located on the highest of three hills, which afforded the best fields of observation. Although the fields of fire on Vegas were less than ideal, handicapped in places by a steeply pitched slope too irregular for grazing fire, weapons there could support Reno with long-range fire.

By day, Vegas proved a magnet for sniper fire and harassment by mortars and artillery, forcing the Marines to remain under cover. But because recent history along all of the MLRs had been mostly static, United Nations intelligence didn’t expect any attacks in March 1953.

They were wrong.

At 7:10 on the night of March 26, PVA soldiers from the 358th Regiment, 120th Division attacked outposts Carson, Reno and Vegas.

After five hours of fierce combat, the PVA attack had been partially successful. They had captured two outposts (Vegas and Reno), and Marine attempts to send reinforcements to those outposts had been thwarted. Carson was still controlled by the Marines. For four days from the end of March 26 to the end of March 30, PVA formations continued to attack and counterattack in an effort to take the outpost.

The attacks eventually halted on March 30 because the PVA, estimated to have lost more than 4,000 men, simply could not afford to lose any more. By 11 a.m. on March 30, as Marine artillery attacked PVA positions, the attacks finally stopped. The battle for Outpost Vegas was over.

The Marine resistance was legendary. But one of the reasons they were able to hold on in the face of overwhelming odds is the rest of this story.

Meet Sgt. Reckless, a chestnut-colored Mongolian mare with a blaze and three white stockings. She was sold to the Marines by her owner, a young Korean stable boy called Kim Huk-moon, in October 1952 for $250 so that he could buy a leg prosthesis for his sister, who had stepped on a land mine. She (the horse, not the sister!) was small, standing only 14 hands (56 inches) tall and weighing 900 pounds.

Reckless was bought by members of the United States Marine Corps and trained to be a pack horse to carry the 24-pound rounds for the Recoilless Rifle Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

The Marines, especially Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Latham, taught Reckless battlefield survival skills such as how not to become entangled in barbed wire and to lie down when under fire. She learned to run for a bunker upon hearing the cry “Incoming!” The platoon called it her “hoof training” and “hoof camp.” She quickly became part of the unit and was allowed to roam freely through camp, entering the Marines’ tents, where she would sleep on cold nights, and was known for her willingness to eat nearly anything, including scrambled eggs, beer, Coca-Cola and, once, about $30 worth of poker chips.
Reckless’ baptism under fire came at a place called Hedley’s Crotch, near the villages of Changdan and Kwakchan. Though loaded down with six recoilless rifle shells, she initially “went straight up” and all four feet left the ground the first time the recoilless rifle was fired. When she landed, she started shaking, but Pfc. Monroe Coleman, her handler, calmed her down. The second time the gun fired, she merely snorted, and by the end of the mission that day, she appeared calm and was even seen trying to eat a discarded helmet liner.

When learning a new delivery route, Reckless would only need someone to lead her a few times. Afterward she would make the trips on her own.

Her most significant accomplishment came during the Battle of Panmunjom-Vegas (also known as the Battle of Outpost Vegas/Vegas Hill) over the period March 26-28, 1953, when she made 51 solo trips in a single day, carrying a total of 386 recoilless rounds (over 9,000 pounds, with four to eight 24-pound shells on each trip) and covering over 35 miles that day. The whole Battle of Vegas lasted three days. She was wounded twice during the battle: once when she was hit by shrapnel over the left eye and another time on her left flank. For her accomplishments during the Battle of Vegas Hill, Reckless was promoted to corporal.

You might wonder why this was so remarkable. Well, during that period, the Marines were under constant heavy attack and didn’t have any men available to lead Reckless back and forth. She made these 51 trips by herself, often carrying wounded men down to the aid station, then being loaded with ammunition before returning to Outpost Vegas.

For her bravery, Randolph M. Pate, then the commander of the 1st Marine Division, gave Reckless a battlefield promotion from corporal to sergeant in a formal ceremony, complete with reviewing stand, on April 10, 1954, several months after the war ended. She was also given a red and gold blanket with insignia. Reckless was promoted again, to staff sergeant (E-6), on Aug. 31, 1959, at Camp Pendleton, California. This promotion was also awarded by Pate, then the commandant of the Marine Corps. Pate personally presided over the ceremony, and Reckless was honored with a 19-gun salute and a 1,700-man parade of Marines from her wartime unit. She was an early example of an animal holding official rank in a branch of the United States military.

For her exemplary service to the Marine Corps, Reckless was awarded two Purple Hearts (for the wounds received during the Battle of Vegas), a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation with bronze star, the National Defense Service Medal, a Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Korea Medal, a Navy Unit Commendation, and a Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation. She would wear these awards on her horse blanket, plus the French Fourragere that the 5th Marines had earned in World War I.

Reckless was well cared for and treated as a VIP during her time at Camp Pendleton. She produced four foals there: colts Fearless (1957), Dauntless (1959) and Chesty (1964) and her last foal, a filly born circa 1965-1966, who died a month after birth and was unnamed.

Reckless developed arthritis in her back as she aged and injured herself on May 13, 1968, by falling into a barbed wire fence. She died under sedation while her wounds were being treated. At the time of her death, she was estimated to be 19 or 20 years old. A plaque and photo commemorate her at the Camp Pendleton stables.

We have often heard the tales of surrounded soldiers being saved by the timely arrival of the cavalry. For the Marines at outpost Vega, Sgt. Reckless was that cavalry. *Semper Fi, Sergeant!* 

*By John Mason*
UAH representatives at Alabama OLLI Day, held Aug. 22 at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, included (from left) Isabel Abiseid, Jill Stewart, Clay Williams, Jennifer Humiston, Janet Reville, Nancy Darnall, Bob Darnall, Brenda Eubanks and Harriett Somerville. The speaker was Sean Dietrich (top right photo), an author best known as Sean of the South. Participants came from UAH, UA in Tuscaloosa, and Auburn University — the three participants in the OLLI Shares program that allows members at each university to attend some online courses offered by the others.

(Photos by Clay Williams)

DINING OUT MIG MEETS AT J. ALEXANDER’S

The Dining Out member interest group met for a meal and socializing at J. Alexander’s in Madison on Sept. 15.

(Photos provided by Sandra Dabrowski)
Leah Snowman (left) and Jacinda Swinehart from Fantasy Playhouse Children’s Theater & Academy led OLLI “Senior Stars” through vocal exercises, singing, dance exercises and dramatic readings — a preview of opportunities that Fantasy Playhouse will offer. It happened during a bonus session Sept. 16.

(Photos by Steve Stewart)
The return of students to the UAH campus and the easing of COVID precautions have made it harder to find parking. OLLI members can park in the lots marked here. North is on the left.

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**2023 OLLI PHOTO CONTEST**

- The topic for this year is “Light and Shadow.”
- Photos must be taken from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.
- The photographer must be a current OLLI member.
- Gentle photo editing is permitted, but keep the original photo.
- Submit the named photo in a standard digital .jpg format — at least a 2MP final pixel size is recommended.
- Photographers may submit photos anytime until the April 1, 2023, deadline.
- Submit photos to OLLIPhotoContest@uah.edu.