

Osher Lifelong
Learning Institute at
UCSC
April 2017

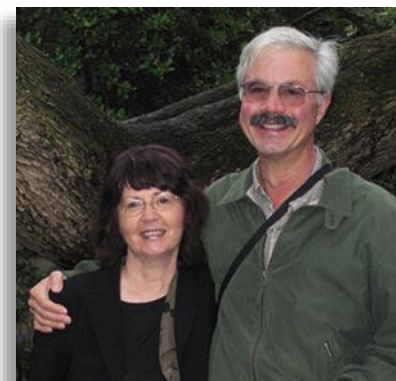


OLLI E/BULLETIN

Upcoming Speakers, Election,
Year-end Party,
ASB, Diversity Initiatives,
Interest Group News

Lee and Lincoln Taiz, April 23 OLLI Speakers Colleges Nine & Ten Multipurpose Room

The reproduction cycle between male and female animals was understood and used in their domestication in the Neolithic period. In stark contrast, plants were considered asexual and the concept wasn't discovered until the late 17th century. Even after its delayed discovery, the sexual "theory" continued to be hotly debated and lampooned for another 150 years. In their new book, *Flora Unveiled: The Discovery and Denial of Sex in Plants*, Lee and Lincoln Taiz document the existence of an ancient gender bias that plants are inherently female, and show how this bias both delayed the discovery of, and provoked opposition to, the idea that pollination is a sexual act that is required for production of the seed."



Lincoln Taiz is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology, at UCSC. He has published over a hundred and fifty research papers on a broad range of topics in plant physiology, and is the co-author of the standard textbook in the field, *Plant Physiology and Development*, currently in its sixth edition.

Lee Taiz, a research biologist specializing in electron microscopy, co-authored numerous papers on plant biology and on the history of science while on the staff of the Cell and Molecular Biology Department. Her paintings, primarily on botanical subjects, have been exhibited widely, and appear in books, periodicals, and exhibition catalogs.

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A publication of Osher Lifelong
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(OLLI), a UCSC Friends Group.

Fred DeJarlais, Editor

Election of Officers at the May General Meeting

We have an election of officers at the May General Election. I want to encourage all members to propose candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. If you have any recommendations for candidates please let me know at the phone number or email address below. Here is an opportunity to participate in the direction and growth of our OLLI. Your OLLI board will review the names and put forth a candidate listing for each office during the business part of the May General Meeting for a vote by those attending.

Dennis Morris, OLLI President

Save
the
Date!

End of Year
OLLI Party
June 4

Invite coming
soon

For more information:
New, easier to
remember URL:
olli.ucsc.edu

See also contacts else-
where in this issue



Alternative Spring Break brings students, OLLI members together

By Mark Gordon

Eight OLLI members, (Mary Male, Kate Riley, Ron and Cindy Sekkel, Pat McVeigh, Mark and Barbara Gordon and Margie Lafia) joined 23 students in two extraordinary days of Alternative Spring Break (ASB) activities in Watsonville on Sunday March 26 and Wednesday March 29. It was an intense week filled with powerful learning and a ton of joyful work with our partners, the ASB students of Colleges Nine and Ten.



UCSC Students & OLLI

The ASB is a student-led five-day service learning course around the lives of farmworkers in Watsonville. The Student Coordinators, Ashley Perez and Melissa Rivera, organized the program. Abbey Asher, the Service Learning Coordinator of Colleges Nine and Ten supported them and participated all week with us. OLLI ASB members signed up to join the students on two of the days, Sunday, March 26 and Wednesday, the 29th.

On Sunday, we travelled in three vans to Watsonville. We visited the homes of farmworkers, all of them far too small for the number of residents. Many needed serious repair, while a few others were modern and well appointed. We saw the “shed,” located in one cluster of homes, where donated items needed by families are stored and distributed all year long. There is always need, and the community is organized to help. Our diaper fund contributions, over \$1300 in total, were greatly appreciated.

[Dr. Ann Lopez](#), Executive Director of the Center for Farmworker Families gave a presentation on the difficult status of farmworkers in Watsonville.

Later Sunday afternoon we drove to Pinto Lake Park where, under a pavilion, OLLI members and students sorted and organized our contributions of clothing, books and household products for the free Flea Market. Farmworker family members then walked among the tables choosing items they needed. At the same time the children played in the park: Piñatas were raised and kids took turns with the stick until the candy poured down and they all piled together in a heap of laughter and squeals to collect the goodies. At the end of the day, families left with bags full of things they need.

On Wednesday, March 29, the second day of our OLLI participation, we created a block-long mural. OLLI members, ASB students, Watsonville High School students and community members joined in the effort that was organized brilliantly by Watsonville muralist Paul de Worken. We were each given brushes, paint and latex gloves and given a sector of the wall to paint. A design

had been sketched on the wall, but we were given free rein to adorn it any way we wanted. I became an expert in painting the black background next to the more colorful parts of the design. View the result next time you are in Watsonville. It’s along an alley that runs west of Rodriguez Street between 5th and 6th Streets. It was deeply satisfying and enormous fun to paint with the ASB students. We learned a lot about each other as we transformed the blank wall into a work of art. The Mayor of Watsonville, Oscar Rios and Councilman Felipe Hernandez spent part of the day with us. A taco stand even offered free lunches to painters. It was a true community celebration.

The ASB curriculum was about farmworkers. Who are they? What is the nature of the economic system they find themselves trapped in? Each of us is indebted to these skilled workers for much of the food we daily consume. What we discovered is that these workers, many undocumented, have few rights. In Ann Lopez’ presentation and through the farmworker families we met, we learned that farmworkers mostly live in overpriced sub-standard housing. We learned that there is an agricultural exemption from OSHA rules and other regulations that protect workers in other industries. The wages are extremely low and the rents high. She explained how NAFTA, ironically has led directly to the flood of Mexican undocumented farm-



Painting the mural

workers in California. We also learned about the fear that farmworker families live with. Undocumented people can be caught and deported with little recourse. If parents are deported, their American born children are most often split up in foster care. When you see the love these people have for their children, the thought is horrifying.

We learned so much more than can be described in this article. Here are my big takeaways: farmworkers right here in Santa Cruz live and work in difficult conditions. Low wages, no OSHA protections, and fear of families being broken apart by sudden deportations of parents are just some of the issues. And we learned how much fun it is to work side by side with a bunch of bright caring students. A lot to think about.

After the mural was complete on Wednesday afternoon, we were invited to the home of a farmworker and mother of 4 who somehow had prepared a delicious dinner for us all in her tiny kitchen. We all chipped in to cover her expenses. Students and OLLI members sat throughout the house eating food and sharing stories. We also heard our hostess' story about her life and her work in the fields. After dinner, we had a sad departure. We loved sharing the ASB with the students and knew we would miss them. We are hoping we can keep in touch and are looking forward to a final ASB meeting with them on April 22 on campus.

My hope is this is just the beginning of OLLI/student collaborations. Stay tuned.



Flea market at ASB

Nancy Thomas, a member of the OLLI board for many years passed away last month after a three year battle with ovarian cancer.

Her family, friends and neighbors will be honoring her with a Celebration of Life gathering at the Aptos Village County Park on May 13, 2017, 1-3pm.

Diversity in OLLI

A few months ago at a general meeting, Dennis Morris mentioned that the board was looking into how to expand diversity of our membership. I took notice. I have been looking for service work and offered to help. Using his powers of persuasion, Dennis recruited me to do publicity and yes, I could also help with expanding OLLI diversity.

When I first heard about OLLI, I was excited to meet a group of seniors who, like me, enjoy learning. I am relatively new to the area and looking to meet people. I have enjoyed attending OLLI lectures, courses and interest groups. After a while though, I began to sense something was missing.

Before coming to Santa Cruz, I lived and worked in Silicon Valley, a rich multicultural community. At my children's high school, their classmates spoke over a dozen different languages at home. Many of my colleagues, friends, and neighbors came from other cultures and ethnic groups. I love learning how these immigrants think and hearing stories about their lives before they came here. Sometimes they would ask me questions about our culture or government. These questions often lead to rich conversations and learning.

To me, OLLI is about learning. We take courses, listen to lectures, and join interest groups. We share our viewpoints. Despite this we spend a lot of our time in OLLI in very similar cultural and socioeconomic groupings. I wonder whether a broader range of perspectives and life experiences would provide a richer learning experience for OLLI members.

Over the years, I have learned that service is one way to reach out to other communities. We have been hearing about OLLI participation in the Alternative Spring Break in which OLLI members joined UCSC students in a service learning project around farm worker families and food justice issues in Watsonville.

This month the board heard a presentation from the Puente Project at Cabrillo College. Puente has a strong record of helping at risk Latino students be successful at Cabrillo College and beyond. Serving as a Puente mentor for the past three years has provided me a rich opportunity to spend quality time with young Latino students and see the huge gaps that exist between their worlds and mine. Building bridges across these gaps is both a challenge and a rewarding learning experience.

If you would like to see an expansion of diversity in OLLI membership, please let the board know your ideas on how to make this happen.

Richard Bruce, Publicity Chair

Interest Group News

Recent Interest Group Events

Explores: Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, San Jose

By Peter Nurkse

I was expecting the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose to be a bit hokey, amateur. But it is quite elaborate and professional. Includes many different aspects of life in ancient Egypt, food drink and clothes and cosmetics and toys and games and childbirth, as well as neighboring regions, like Assyria and Bab-



ylon.

A few points I noticed:

.. Egyptians had a practical relation with their gods. After death, the gods might come to you and give you tedious tasks, like irrigating fields or moving sand around. So, you had figures in your coffin, called ushabti, which would appear to do those tasks for you, and leave you free to enjoy the afterlife.



.. women had rights, could own and inherit and will property on their own. A woman could even become pharaoh, like Hatshepsut, who had a monumental funeral palace for herself, and who imported goods from distant Africa.

.. the exhibits include various replicas, like the Rosetta Stone, only one original exists. But the replicas are unusually high quality, from workshops at the British Museum or the Louvre. Many exhibits of everyday objects (not replicas) are even poignant, like a pair of 3500-year-old children's sandals, same design as sandals today. You can imag-

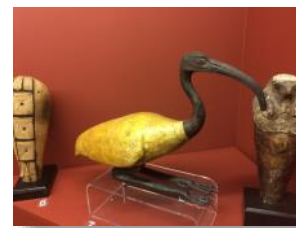
ine the child wearing those sandals.

One test of any museum is - do school children enjoy it. There were a couple of classes in the museum, and they had a fine time there. Seems the most popular exhibits with children are death, they were eager to hear about mummies and coffins and funeral ornaments. Death might not be something to hide from children.

There is a lot about death in what we know about ancient Egypt, just because tombs could survive thousands of years. Homes and everyday objects not likely to survive. However, the museum does have a lot about life in Egypt, as well as death in Egypt. Probably well worth a couple of hours visit at least.

The heart scarab was placed over your heart as a protection, so that when the gods judged your soul, your own heart would not incriminate you by telling everything it knew. The gods would only hear the best about you, filtered by the scarab.

Again, these Egyptians had a very practical view of the gods.



Art & Architecture: San Jose Art Museum & Japanese-American Museum, San Jose

Leader: Lois Widom



The JAMSF museum exhibit captures the mass removal and incarceration of some 120,000 people of Japanese descent, two-thirds of whom were citizens of the United States.



The group was enthralled by the spaces and boundaries depicted in the sculptures of artist Diana Al-Hadid.



Exploring Santa Cruz Group

Editor's Note: The Exploring Santa Cruz group's leader, Peter Nurkse, created this unique virtual tour of East Cliff Drive. The following remarks and photos are his and you're encouraged to take the same trip along this historic drive—just click on the link.



The Exploring Santa Cruz group had a very successful virtual tour of East Cliff Drive, and all other members are invited to take the same tour:

bit.ly/olli_east_cliff

Of course, the key to interest groups is socialization, so important for health and longevity. But an excursion along East Cliff could be rather impracticable, because it does go on for miles and miles. And there are abrupt changes of direction, many chances to get lost (including the leader). And bits fall into the ocean, and often there is no sidewalk, so you have to get by on the shoulder as best you can. So a virtual tour may be quite appropriate.



Digital Photography Group at Año Nuevo



Upcoming Exploring Santa Cruz Event

Sumner Rhododendron Garden

Co-leader: Kathryn Nance

Having taken Peter Nurkse's armchair walk along East Cliff for March I hope the group is eager for a bit more exertion in April. The Sumner Rhododendron Garden was developed by Maurie and Fran Sumner over 40 years. They collected Rhododendrons from all over the world, propagated and planted all that you will see. Some are huge trees by now and should be in good bloom for our visit.

The Sumner Rhododendron Garden is only available to groups on Sundays, so we will be visiting on April 9, a Sunday.

Contact Kathryn Nance at momokat13@gmail.com for details.

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(says the New York Times!)

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"... Santa Cruzans ranked first in the nation on one question that is a powerful predictor of overall well-being: 76 percent said they "learn or do something interesting everyday."

[Just like OLLI members!]

<http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/2017/03/08/california-today?nlid=593958>

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Outreach to Dominican Oaks

Through the efforts of your editor and the great cooperation and coordination provided by Margie Paylow, the Activities Manager at the Dominican Oaks Retirement Home, a van was provided to transport several OLLI members to and from our March General Meeting. Currently, 12 residents of the facility are OLLI members. Planning for this initiative started several months ago and, if interest remains high at Dominican Oaks, we intend to reach out to other similar facilities to improve access to our meetings for those with transportation difficulties.

Another remarkably active OLLI member, Miriam Ellis, generously demonstrates her encyclopedic knowledge of opera periodically to Dominican Oaks residents. Her next presentation will be on April 26 at 2:00 PM.



Opera anyone?

All Together Now: Sing with the San Francisco Opera Chorus

Date: Tuesday, April 4th

Time: 7-9pm

Location: Education Studio, Wilsey Center for Opera, 4th floor of the War Memorial Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave, San Francisco, CA 94102

Description: In this interactive workshop, the San Francisco Opera Chorus and Chorus Director Ian Robertson will demonstrate how many different voices can unite as one dramatic force. Join in a rehearsal of the upcoming repertoire of Verdi's *La Traviata* and talk to Chorus members about their essential role in opera performances. Plus everyone will learn how a chorus operates firsthand when we sing all together under the baton of Maestro Robertson! No prior experience necessary to participate.

Website: <https://sfopera.com/alltogethernow>

Drinks & Drama: A Taste of *Don Giovanni*

Date: Saturday, June 3rd

Time: 2:30-4pm

Location: The Sea Star Bar, 2289 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94107

Description: Enjoy a taste of *Don Giovanni* during this event diving into the characters of Mozart's iconic opera! Savor a flight of six cocktails, each created by expert mixologists to pair with a main character from the opera. Opera buffs from the San Francisco Opera Archives will be our guides. They'll share recordings, film and photos from the 39 productions of *Don Giovanni* over San Francisco Opera's history to help you get to know the characters. A special live performance is included! You must be 21 years of age or older to attend.

Website: <https://sfopera.com/drinksanddrama>

Questions, concerns, suggestions?

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