Greetings from the NRC  
February 2021

As has been the recurring theme throughout the past year, this month’s newsletter features articles that show the remarkable flexibility and adaptation of Osher Institutes as we all face the pandemic. Yes, social distancing is certainly harder for our communities which are largely based on social learning interaction. But it turns out we’ve found ways to remain socially engaged by creatively using technology. Our “new way” includes a heavy reliance on video conferencing platforms. This month, OLLIs throughout the country show us the way: Indiana State University members learn from and listen to outstanding musicians as part of their curriculum; San Francisco State University members celebrate and recruit new members creatively using member-made videos; and, virtual travels and tours are still a staple at many Osher programs who have found innovative new ways to see the world.

As vaccines begin to roll out and some OLLIs becoming part of their University’s immunization programs, hopes for returning to in-person learning are rising. Osher leaders throughout the country are carefully considering how to make the return transitions while holding onto the benefits of our newfound technology lessons. We now have first-hand knowledge of the advantages of online/distance learning in keeping our older members engaged, along with attracting younger members with the familiar tools and added conveniences they want. While these might be small silver linings, let’s take every one of them we can find!

Sending all best wishes for health and continued engagement,
OLLI at San Francisco State University knew they wanted to create a new promotional video, but like many, were struggling to figure out how to do so amid a national pandemic. It was a challenging prospect as they couldn’t exactly shoot B-roll of people sitting in classes or gathered together. Osher Institute Director, Kathy Bruin, thought about how to create something that would be lively, compelling, friendly, timeless, and unique. “I did NOT want to use Zoom panels!” Instead, she came up with a concept and specifically sought a spot that would
ultimately say San Francisco. Next steps included hiring a videographer, and figuring out how it all could be done. A lot of careful consideration went into the decisions on music, words, and finally, edits.

The result was these two excellent videos highlighting what OLLI at San Francisco State University is all about. The Institute is now focused on distribution including posting the videos to the homepage of their website, as well as sharing in recent newsletters and on their Facebook page. OLLI at SF State is also aiming to share the videos during new information sessions (called OLLI 101). They also plan to collaborate with the SFSU Retirement Association and the College of Liberal and Creative Arts so that the videos can be shared on their websites and in their newsletters.

30 Second Video
15 Second Video

OLLI at San Francisco State University

OLLI AT INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY
A Virtual Tour of the Orchestra

OLLI at Indiana State University (ISU) picked up an old idea when the pandemic hit. In years past, they had worked with the ISU music faculty to spotlight instruments. The Institute arranged three stand-alone programs over a three-year period and then stopped with declining faculty interest. In 2020 knowing almost everything for fall would
have to be virtual, the OLLI wanted to continue to work with many community partners and help support them during this time, so virtual tours were created.

The tours created with the Terre Haute Symphony hearken back to the idea of spotlighting an instrument. In September, the OLLI offered the first tour of the orchestra featuring the clarinet. Tours feature one musician talking about the history, variations (different kinds), problems, cost, and most generally answering questions about their instrument. The tour “finales” are the musician’s performing several pieces that spotlight what their instrument can do. The first musician was Samantha Johnson-Hems, Executive Director and Principal Clarinet for Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra. In October, they offered two virtual tours featuring brass instruments: trumpet and trombone. The audience grew and featured musicians were often available. Participants experienced the violin, cello, and percussion in late 2020. 2021 kicks off learning about the oboe, viola, and double bass.

Members have enjoyed the music and learning but they say the best part is getting to know the musicians they have seen in concert for years. Many of these performers do not live in Terre Haute and it is only by offering this tour online that members get to know these amazing musicians. A mutual benefit to OLLI and the Terre Haute Symphony is the cross promotion to both programs and maintaining the all-important sense of community. All funds collected to attend the tour are given to the musician to help support them during this difficult time.

While not the same as attending a concert in person, OLLI at ISU has found that when they innovate, sometimes the solution is not new but a past idea harmoniously reimagined.

Submitted by: Michelle Bennett, Program Administrator, OLLI at Indiana State University

A New Kind of Travel During the Pandemic
In this pandemic world, travel plans have been put on hold. Not just for the Institutes that host travel programs, but most individuals have kept their travel to a minimum. For many OLLI members this has been difficult; they miss seeing new sites, experiencing new things, and learning the history of new places. Prior to the pandemic, many Institutes were hosting day-trips, overnight excursions, or even traveling abroad. Through creative thinking, some OLLLIs have found ways to offer “trips” while remaining in the comfort and safety of home. While there are many examples of virtual travel through the OLLI network, here are a few examples.

OLLI at University of Nevada, Las Vegas and OLLI at University of South Dakota offered a virtual tour of the SPAM Museum. The SPAM museum is not related to the annoying emails everyone gets, but a museum dedicated to the brand of canned meat products. The virtual tour was filled with information and sights of SPAM (but not smells). As UNLV OLLI member, Mary Rector, wrote after her visit “Over 9 billion cans of SPAM products have been sold. Don’t Knock it til you’ve Fried it! Have a Spamtastic day!”

OLLI at Bradley University members will be touring the Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska on February 8th. This trip will include a guided virtual tour, titled “Listening to the Ice” by a park ranger, as well as the sights and sounds of the park. As described in the OLLI at Bradley University’s newsletter: “The park is referenced as a “window to past ice ages” and “a place where the ice age still lingers. Visitors come to the park to be
reminded of the Earth's most recent glaciation, the Wisconsin glaciation period when
the Cordilleran ice sheet rested thousands of feet thick atop the Kenai Peninsula.”

Finally, OLLI at Rochester Institute of Technology includes an “Armchair Travel” section
in their newsletter. A place where members share photos of their travel experiences.
This is coupled with a class where members present their travel experiences. This past
summer, members Bob Vukosic and Nancy Loughlin shared their experiences in class
called Egypt: Land of the Pharaohs while members Elise de Papp and Kim Haynes
facilitated a class called Great Tours: France Through the Ages, utilizing The Great
Courses video tour material. This sharing of travel experiences, while not quite as good
as going there, brings the travel home to the members.

AN ADVICE COLUMN FOR OSHER INSTITUTE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Dear Olli

Dear Olli,
I am a member on our planning committee
looking for ideas to celebrate Black History
Month, what are other OLLIs doing to highlight
this important subject?
~Osher Volunteer

Dear Osher Volunteer,
As the events of 2020 have shown us,
education and celebration of the diverse nature
of our society is important; not only for the
awareness of the unique attributes of each
culture, but to better understand each other as a
whole. Many OLLIs are adding programming for
Black History Month. Of course, the most common are classes or lectures related to
Black history and culture. These classes/lectures run the range of subject specific (such
as: Songs of Freedom: A history of African American Music or Criminal Justice and the
Black Community) to more general. Other Osher Institutes are having book club or
movie club discussions, or, reading and watching materials related to Black history.
Perhaps the most unique are virtual tours of museums that are offering exhibits related
to Black history (check your local museums, many art museums are showcasing black
artists this month, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African American
History and Culture). Finally, your newsletter is a great place to start. You could
highlight items of Black history, notable people, or come up with your own idea. To sum
up, there are numerous ways you can integrate Black History Month into your culture.
The only thing I would add, the education and celebration of cultures goes beyond one
month a year. Diversity and inclusion should be an everyday mindset that can be part of who you are as an Institute.
~Olli

Have a question for Olli? Please send it in care of Kevin Connaughton (kevin.connaughton@northwestern.edu).

QUICK TIPS FOR HELPING OPERATE AN OSLER INSTITUTE

Quick Tip - Increasing Productivity

With increased work demands, it can be a struggle to make the most of each work day. VitalSmarts recently released a book, *How to Be More Productive in 2021* and the fourth tip resonates in these hectic times.

"Work in modes for greater focus and efficiency."
"There are three key modes you need to work in throughout the day.
  1. Define work - process your email inbox and other new inputs.
  2. Defined work - work from calendars or lists.
  3. Surprises - work that shows up unplanned.

Set aside time each day to do all three. You are already working in these modes, but you're likely doing them all at once, which is incredibly inefficient. When you spend 45-minutes only processing your inbox, you get through more items which populates your calendar and lists, which allows you to do more of the right stuff throughout the day."

CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK

Job Board

OLLI Program Coordinator
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Is there a staff opening at your Osher Institute? Please send it to us at oshernrc@northwestern.edu