Greetings from the NRC

March 2024

Much of what delights us in Osher Institutes is in learning about varied cultures. Our motto, “Stay Curious” certainly applies to cultural exploration. And the culture of Ireland is historically rich and fascinating to many of us, especially in the month of March. The Irish immigrant experience remains familiar to nearly 35 million Americans who identify with Irish heritage. The Emerald Isle’s population is just under seven million people. So, arguably, we might celebrate Irish heritage more here in the states on St. Patrick’s Day than they do in Ireland. While originally a day of religious services and feasts to honor patron Saint Patrick, the day has evolved into quite a secular celebration.

Here in Chicago, that includes dyeing the Chicago River green. It started in 1962 when city pollution-control workers realized that the green vegetable dye used to trace illegal contaminants might promote added jubilation for the holiday. This was an idea the powerful Irish politicians of the “green machine” loved. In the 21st century, the green river lasts just about a day – not the week of earlier times for
environmental reasons. But long after we Irish recall that St. Patrick used the three leafed shamrock to explain the trinity, the wishes of luck and the parties continue.

Along with planning for your own St. Patrick’s Day fun, we hope you’ll enjoy this month’s newsletter including contributions from Osher Institutes in Michigan, two in California, and an invitation from our colleagues in Kentucky for an upcoming annual event that could include you.

In the meantime, the Osher NRC leaves you with this traditional Irish blessing: Wherever you go and whatever you do, may the luck of the Irish be there with you,

Steven Patrick Thaxton (really!)

Osher NRC
National Resource Center for Osher Institutes

OLLI AT UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
2024 Southern Regional Conference for Learning in Retirement
Conference Dates: July 22 – 24, 2024

The OLLI at UK is excited to host the 2024 Southern Regional Conference for Learning in Retirement (SRCLR) in beautiful Lexington, Kentucky! For nearly 20 years, the SRCLR has been an incredible professional development opportunity for staff and volunteer leaders in the field of lifelong learning. This conference is one of the few networking and idea-sharing opportunities for the lifelong learning field and draws more than 200 participants from around the country annually.

Conference breakout sessions and roundtable discussions address best practices in curriculum development, member relations, marketing and communication, fundraising, volunteer management, travel, technology, and more.

Early registration fee is $230 until April 30, 2024. Fee increases to $260 on May 1, 2024.

**Conference Information**

**Conference Registration**

**Hotel Registration**

For questions or further information, contact:
OLLI AT UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

The January Thaw

Thankfully OLLI at Western Michigan University (WMU) members did not have to contend with too cold temperatures and snow this year during their January Thaw event. This rite of winter passage is a great way for OLLI members to catch up with old friends, meet instructors from their excellent array of winter and spring courses, and to give back to the community. Only trudging through a rainy day, over 120 OLLI volunteers and members brought sunny and warm energy to the January Thaw event.

Prior to the start of the event, and to close it out, OLLI members had the chance to get up close and personal with many of the current semester’s OLLI instructors to learn first-hand about their courses and meet both those new and returning. As in previous years, members supported one of OLLI’s community partners, the Kalamazoo Literacy Council. OLLI members donated items to support the Council’s ongoing and important work. Additionally, OLLI held its yearly book swap. Members were able to peruse hundreds of titles and take one or more that they wanted to read. It was a fantastic way to contribute to sustainability and the edification of the mind for these lifelong learners.

This was the first time the OLLI Senior Readers Theatre performed at the January Thaw event. Their reading was a well-received adaptation of “Twilight Postal Zone,” a self-published book by Susan Wurster, adapted by OLLI member Kelly O’Leary. The audience was engaged and entertained with the voice actors’ work.

There was even some good-natured competition this year. Participants who referred the most new members to join OLLI over the winter were entered into a chance to win the Grand Prize of dinner and theater tickets. Three runner ups will receive a free course of their choice.

OLLI at WMU director Toni Woolfork-Barnes was especially pleased with the turnout, saying, “We are making strides in returning to pre-pandemic participation in our events. And that is a wonderful way to celebrate January!”

Submitted by: Toni Woolfork-Barnes, Director, OLLI at Western Michigan University
March Osher NRC Webinar

Mark your calendar for the next Osher NRC webinar of 2024 on March 20th beginning at 2pm Eastern/1pm Central/noon Mountain/11am Pacific/10am in Alaska and 9am in Hawaii. This webinar is open to all staff, volunteer leaders and members within the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Network. [Register for the webinar.]

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Member Benchmarking Data
The National Resource Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (NRC) has conducted a variety of surveys of both Osher Institutes and their membership to create benchmarks of demographic and operational data. In this webinar, NRC staff will review the data and offer insights on the research findings including membership trends, Institute operations and programs, finances, volunteer committee structures, and more.

Presenters
Kevin Connaughton
Manager of Adult Learning, Osher NRC

Kari Fagin
Associate Director, Osher NRC

Stacey Rivera
Manager of Operations, Osher NRC

Steve Thaxton
Executive Director, Osher NRC
If you have interest in being a presenter or have ideas for future webinars, please contact Kevin Connaughton (kevin.connaughton@northwestern.edu).

Osher Institute at California State University Channel Islands
A Tour of Three Arab Kingdoms

Course Length: One session plus a complementary in-person tour to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman

Course Instructor: Dr. William Garlington has a B.A. and M.A. in History from UCLA, and a Ph.D. in Asian Studies and Sociology from the Australian National University. He has taught at all academic levels on three continents and carried out sociological/anthropological fieldwork in India. His main academic interests are the Sociology of Religion and the History of Ideas.

Course Delivery: Online

Course description: Participants will get a glimpse into the rich history of these Arab states, which were controlled and shaped at times by a cast of rulers including sultans, emirs, religious sects, various European states, Ottomans, and Persians. World War I and the demand for oil transformed the Middle East and made this region of vital global importance. Seminar participants will learn that the official language is Arabic, but the English language can dominate in business. There are
large numbers of migrants living and working there on a long-term basis; most are from various countries in Asia and are supporting their families back home. The seminar will highlight photos of the sites to be visited on the upcoming tour. Some of the highlights include the Sheikh Zayid Grand Mosque, the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, a Falcon Safari, the Museum of the Future, cultural and historic sites, and architecturally distinctive structures such as the Burj Khalifa, the Burj al Arab, and the Palm Jumeirah.

Of note: This free Zoom seminar was attended by 150 OLLI members and guests on January 11th, 2024. The seminar complemented an international tour that some OLLI members took to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman in February 2024. A recording is available to all on the [OLLI at CSUCI YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/OLLIatCSUCI).

WOO-HOOS FROM THE 2023 Osher Institutes National Conference

**OLLI at University of California, Los Angeles has a Graduation Ceremony 61 Years Later**

![Image of Mort Miller, Bonnie Miller, Dr. Stephen Mucher]

What is a Woo-Hoo? A Woo-Hoo is one of those wonderful, amazing, out of the box experiences at an OLLI. All Osher Institutes have the opportunity to submit and showcase their Woo-Hoo for peer Institutes at the Osher National Conferences. The Woo-Hoos are shared during general sessions at the conference, and attendees vote on their favorites. The following is one of the top six winners from the 2023 Osher Institutes National Conference held in San Diego last October.

**OLLI at University of California, Los Angeles Has a Graduation Ceremony 61 years later**

The OLLI team at UCLA heard proud Bruin alumna Bonnie Miller lament during the UCLA Commencement season that she missed out on graduating with her peers in 1962 due to pressing job obligations. So, they found appropriate regalia and hosted
a small ceremony during their annual Spring Fling event last year. Bonnie is now properly graduated – sixty-one years later!

CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK

Job Board

Program Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
California State University, Chico

OLLI Program Manager
University of Minnesota

Director, OLLI
Brandeis University

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

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