Greetings from the Osher NRC  
October 2023

Growing up in Minnesota and raising kids between Minnesota and Maine, we always had high hopes for Halloween. More often than not, we wore parkas and snow boots under our costumes. Nonetheless, we had plenty of fun during the “scary season.” Not only did tricks and treats delight us, but the camaraderie of parties, walking the neighborhood together and the annual ritual of watching our favorite movie *Hocus Pokus* guaranteed good times no matter the weather. As I look back, togetherness was the true pleasure of this so called, “holiday.” It was the joy of sharing surprises and the sense of belonging in making fun with others that mattered.

All Osher Institutes can relate to this sentiment. The fall season at OLLIs is dominated by new and surprising ways to gather with our communities of friends – both longtime and new ones. This month’s newsletter offers good examples of the ways Institutes are making learning fun, and celebrating from OLLIs in Alabama, Illinois, Iowa and my old stomping grounds of Maine. We hope you find a few new ways to conjure up the fun in your future events, curriculum, and commemorations, too.

The Osher NRC team wishes you a fun October and Happy Halloween,
OLLI at Bradley University’s Seventh Annual Trivia Night was a rousing success, with 18 teams, 144 participants, and a double tiebreaker ending! Trivia Night is OLLI’s signature event, held each summer to help kick off the new fundraising year. The Institute’s robust fundraising efforts (last year 49% of membership donated to OLLI) make an immediate difference in defraying costs that aren’t covered by the affordable program fees or the interest earned from the Osher Foundation endowment.

The theme this year was Classic TV, and the 18 teams were neck-and-neck for most of the night. But two teams – *I Love Lydia* and *The Dashers* – were tied after the final round AND after the tiebreaker. To determine the winner, judges asked the teams one final question: *How many episodes were there of The Brady Bunch?* In the end, *I Love Lydia* was closest to the actual number (117), and *Lydia* members
(who were dressed as a television test pattern) were awarded medals and $10 gift cards to Starbucks. The team OLLI, P.I. – a takeoff on the classic show Magnum, P.I. - won prizes for Favorite Costume, and the team Gilligan’s Island, Too won prizes for the Best Decorated Table.

OLLI member hosts Greg Batton and Yvonne Greer were delightful in their Star Trek costumes. The Osher Institute at Bradley University is proud that the event raised almost $10,000 – enough to fully cover the costs of designing, printing, and mailing the Winter 2024 brochure.

Submitted by: Catherine Lawless, Director, OLLI at Bradley University

OLLI AT UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

Celebrating 30 Years of Lifelong Learning and Alabama OLLI Day!

OLLI at the University of Alabama in Huntsville celebrated thirty years of lifelong learning with a special event on August 3rd. Members enjoyed a full day’s worth of activities including a luncheon with special guest speaker Homer Hickam, a former NASA engineer and noted author whose books include his memoir Rocket Boys, which was the basis for the 1999 film October Sky. Hickam entertained the crowd with stories of his life and mentioned how important it is for people to stay active as they grow older and to try to “do good.” After his presentation, he held a book signing and met with attendees.

The event also celebrated the annual Alabama OLLI Day when all three Osher Institutes in the state (UAH, Auburn and the University of Alabama) come together
to celebrate their work. During COVID, the three schools created an Alabama Share program where each Institute shared several online offerings to increase everyone’s educational opportunities. When Governor Kay Ivey heard of this collaboration, she declared August 20, 2020, as OLLI Day in Alabama. The University of Alabama hosted the annual event last year and Auburn University will host it next year.

Attendees at the event were also treated to a rocket demonstration from the UAH Propulsion Research Center, and, later that night, members gathered at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center for a biergarten event to continue the celebration.

This kickoff celebration launches a year’s worth of events to celebrate the occasion. Other upcoming events include an open lecture on the James Webb Telescope and an "Inside OLLI” event to give a behind the scenes look at what OLLI is all about.

Submitted by: Clay Williams, Program Manager, OLLI at University of Alabama in Huntsville

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THE OLLI INSIDER

INNOVATIVE COURSES AND CONTENT DELIVERY

Curriculum Corner

Osher Institute at Drake University

True Crime: A summary of the Des Moines Police Department Investigation into the 1992 Murders at the Drake Diner

Course Length: One Session (two hours)
Course Instructors: Laddie Jobe, Jim Trotter, Bob Ervin, Ralph Roth, Steve Foritano, Moderator: Marshall Grabau (OLLI member)
Course Delivery: Hybrid
It’s been more than 30 years, but events are still fresh in the minds of many. Two well-loved employees were killed during a robbery witnessed by an overflow crowd at the iconic Drake Diner. Events were over in an instant. Witnesses were everywhere, but just what had they seen? Descriptions of the killer varied widely. People were in an uproar. How could this happen in Des Moines? The crime received regional and national news coverage. Will the crime be solved? Will the killer be brought to justice? There was one vital clue—the handgun used in the crime—a gun so rare that only 500 had been manufactured. The investigation brought together law enforcement personnel from across the metro area as well as the State of Iowa. Eventually law enforcement agencies from across the nation became involved. Join us as we recount the story as told by the retired DMPD investigators and Polk County attorney who collectively worked together to solve the crime and ultimately convict the perpetrator.

**Of Note:** This special lecture included guest speakers (retired DMPD investigators and Polk County attorney) that were involved in the investigation of this tragedy. The speakers were Laddie Jobe, a retired Lieutenant; Bob Ervin, a retired Sergeant; Ralph Roth, a retired Detective; and Jim Trotter, a retired police officer of the Des Moines Police Department. Steve Foritano was the attorney who prosecuted the case.

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**QUICK TIPS FOR HELPING OPERATE AN OSHER INSTITUTE**

**Quick Tip - Teachable Moments**

Training and development for instructors might be far from quick, but it should be a quick decision to focus on it at your Osher Institute. This is particularly important for those OLLIs utilizing volunteer instructors – some who don’t have extensive teaching experience – and can be enriching even for career educators. Teacher training efforts show deserved respect for the skills of teaching, and they can serve to update pedagogical technique and technology expertise. Consider turning teacher training into an annual “Teacher Forum” in the format of a multi-part course at no charge. Like OLLI at the University of Southern Maine, the course might aim for both experienced instructors and those considering teaching a class. The course can bring groups together to encourage lively discussion and reflective growth. Sessions might be presented alternating between online and in-person. A Teacher Forum builds a supportive cohort and promotes a healthy culture of continual improvement and collaboration. If facilitated with ample positive affirmation, it can show appreciation for
the considerable efforts provided to a local Osher Institute by its instructors.

CAREER OPENINGS IN THE OLLI NETWORK

Job Board

Financial Coordinator and Program Assistant, OLLI
University of Southern Mississippi

Research Assistant II (OLLI)
University of Rhode Island

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

National Resource Center for Osher Institutes, Northwestern University
Wieboldt Hall, Sixth Floor, 339 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611