



NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE MEMBERS AND STAFF TO THE MEMBERSHIP

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March-April 2018

OLLI "GREAT GIVE" SCHOLARSHIP DRIVE SLATED FOR MARCH

Each year, OLLI at FSU awards scholarships to FSU students who have been nominated by their professors, and whose studies are particularly relevant to OLLI members. This program, called **The**

Great Give, is a 36-hour period from 9:00 a.m. March 22 until 9:00 p.m. March 23, for OLLI members--YOU--to give to OLLI's Scholarship Fund. Last year, while the goal was set at \$2,500, OLLI raised over \$3,000. This year OLLI

has upped the ante – the goal is \$3,000. "Let's see what kind of record we can set," coordinator Nancy O'Farrell said.

"We love our FSU students. This is a great way to say thanks to the University for its continuing support for our OLLI at FSU program. **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!** And more information will be forthcoming as the date approaches," she added,

Want to talk about a gift to OLLI? Call Nancy O'Farrell at 850-509-3475, or email nancyofarrell047@gmail.com.

SPRING DEDMAN DINNER ON TAP FOR MARCH 29

The Spring Semester dinner at the Dedman School of Hospitality will be held on March 29. The dinner features senior FSU students from the Hospitality School who plan the theme, decor, signature cocktails, wine and dinner. The theme for this dinner is Night in the Mediterranean.

This date corrects the date noted in the course and activity catalog. Registration deadline is March 28, and may be accomplished by going to the FSULDS.everbrite.com site. Click "Dinners Available"; select Ashby Little Dinner Series Spring 2018; click

"Tickets"; scroll to "Friday, March 29-- OLLI Group"; in the drop box select "Seats"; then click "Check Out," fill in your information; and click "Pay Now" to submit your order. Please make your reservation ASAP, as non-OLLI members

have asked to attend and are being waitlisted.

For further information, contact Joanne Taylor, staylorjoanne@gmail.com

ANNUAL SPRING PICNIC SET FOR APRIL 6

The annual Spring Picnic will be held on Friday, April 6, at noon at the FSU Reservation. The incoming OLLI President will be installed, and the OLLI scholarship winners will be announced and will talk to the attendees. OLLI will provide the meat, paper goods and drinks. You are invited to bring your favorite dish

to share. The Reservation has picnic tables and bench seating, but you may bring chairs and blankets. The cost is \$5 for members who are bringing a side dish to share; \$10 for guests or members who choose not to bring a side dish. You may sign up on the OLLI website under courses and activities-Social Events-Spring picnic at the FSU Rez.

BOOK CLUB TO DISCUSS NOVEL ON FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

The Book Club will meet on April 11 to discuss Vanessa Diffenbaugh's first novel The Language of Flowers. While the plot focuses on finding love, adoption, emancipation, homelessness, single motherhood and attachment disorder, a primary focus is on the foster care system. One reviewer described the novel as much less "grittier" than other discussions of the foster care system, which she partially attributes to Diffenbaugh's own adoption of children from that system. While the flowers within the novel largely function as symbols of emotional meaning for Victoria, the primary character, the novel

also includes a large amount of information about the biology of flowers. According to the reviewer, "This novel is both enchanting and cruel, full of beauty and anger. Diffenbaugh is a talented writer and a mesmerizing storyteller. She includes a flower dictionary in case we want to use the language ourselves."

Those on the email list for the Book Club have been sent book nomination documents for 2018-19. Please remember that the deadline for nominations is April 15. The election procedure will follow with an early May deadline.

TRAVEL CLUB HOLDS ICELAND PRESENTATION

The dazzling magical northern lights of Iceland, together with its geothermal fields, geysers, icebergs and volcanoes, was the subject of a presentation to a packed session in anticipation of OLLI's trip to Iceland slated for December of this year.

The seven-day journey begins December 5 and runs to December 11. The group will fly direct from Orlando to Reykjavik, Iceland's capital city.

The tour is being put together by Collette. Jack Brinson, Collette's representative, presented a slide show highlighting the sights those who will visit the northern clime will see. "The slide show was spectacular. We can only imagine what it will be when we arrive and actually see these awesome sights," Harriet Waas, co-chair of the Travel Club said. The presentation was held at the Northside Library on February 23.



Collette representative Jack Brinson presents a slide show to a packed house of what to expect when the OLLI group arrives in Iceland for a seven-day journey in December of this year.

TRAVEL CLUB LEADS "ARMCHAIR" TOUR OF CUBA

The Travel Club lead an "armchair" tour of Cuba on March 9 at the Northeast Library. The meeting was led by OLLI Director Debra

Herman, and Club Co-Chair Harriet Waas, who presented a PowerPoint presentation of their trip to Cuba last April.

The attendees who did not take part in the trip learned about the sites of Central Cuba and Havana. Debra and Harriet talked about their experiences, and Arleen Pabon, who presented lectures throughout the trip to Cuba, shared her insights as well. "This was a wonderful way to relive the trip and share our experiences," Herman said. "This is the second

armchair program we have had, and these are a great way to relive our travels and inform OLLI members of how much fun travel can be," Waas said.

Both expressed hope that, with the success of these two armchair travels, and

with past trips to England and Italy, and a trip to Spain and Portugal coming up in May and June, there will be more armchair programs in the future.



Debra Herman (left) and Harriet Waas (right) share their experiences from the April 2016 trip to Cuba at the "Armchair" Travel Club meeting on March 9.

CULTURE & ARTS COMMITTEE PLANS A BUSY MARCH-APRIL

Reflecting on an exciting semester thus far of eclectic culture and arts activities so far with events from Ray Charles, to Gomez and Morticia Addams, to Berlioz, to blues played on a gas-can guitar, the committee has more outstanding events planned for

March and April, according to chair Jan Smith.

The open dress rehearsal of the Tallahassee Symphony is set for Saturday, March 24th at 10:00 a.m. in Ruby Diamond Concert Hall. This is a free, non-

ticketed event. If you have signed up to go, you can bring a friend. This is a great way to see how Maestro Darko Butorac and the orchestra put the final touches on their performance, especially if you don't have tickets to the performance. So, even if you haven't signed up through OLLI, you can still go on your own.

Space is still available in these April Culture and Arts Activities: FSU Flying High Circus (April 7th); "Art of Architects" at LeMoyne – an OLLI

exclusive with Arleen Pabon (April 9th); the FSU University Singers Reunion Concert (April 14th) and "Singin' in the Rain" at Theatre Tallahassee (April 22nd – only ONE seat left.). You don't want to miss the thrill of the high-wire, the artful and creative dog house designs, the magic of voices raised in song, or dancing with an umbrella in the rain. Registration information is on the OLLI website. Don't wait until the deadline. Sign in to the OLLI website to register today.

WALKING CLUB SETS APRIL SCHEDULE; NOTES

NEW CHAIR AND BIRTHDAYS

Club member Carol Henderson graciously hosts the club members for walks in the beautiful Luna Manor neighborhood, followed by coffee, conversation, and an informal book exchange at her home (affectionately known as the Clubhouse). The next Luna Manor gathering will take place on Friday, April 13, at 9 a.m. See further information in the Walking Club e-mail for the week of April 9. In addition, some of the Walking Club members will be competing in the annual Rose City Walk, to be held on April 21 in Thomasville.

The Walking Club is also pleased to announce that in April, Sue Wattenberg will become the new chairperson. Sue can be reached at wattenbergs@comcast.net. The club also welcomed several new members since the start of the year.

The club also celebrated the March birthday of Barry Foster and the April birthdays of Jean Coyne and Marty Quinn on Friday March 16, with a walk in Tom Brown Park followed by brunch at the Egg Café.

OLLITIMES PROFILES...

OLLI Director Debra Herman



Six years ago, when Debra Herman was hired as executive director, OLLI was a small and relatively unknown program in our community. Because of Debra's vision, leadership, management and support, the program has doubled to over 1200 members and is now providing nearly 50 academic classes, plus numerous activities and clubs each semester. Partnerships

Debra has developed with three senior living communities, state agencies in Wakulla and Leon County, and local nonprofits, churches and colleges have dramatically changed OLLI. It is no longer just a 26-year-old program located on the FSU campus. Now, it is a resource for residents of our entire aging

community who love to learn, make new friends and expand their horizons.

Since Debra has been director, FSU's lifelong learning program has been able to attain the high standards set by the Osher Foundation, and has received more than \$2 million in endowed funds from the Foundation. This funding is very important to the sustainability of OLLI because the program is supported, but not funded, by FSU. Debra has also supported the membership's initiative to raise funds for scholarships for FSU students.

Under Debra's direction, OLLI at FSU has become known as one of the premier organizations among the nation's 120 OLLIs.

Debra is dedicated to lifelong learning both professionally and personally. Not only is she an extraordinarily accomplished director of OLLI, she herself is an exemplar of lifelong learning. Having earned her bachelor's degree in 1976, now, more than 40 years later she is newly enrolled in FSU's MBA program.

In addition to her contributions to OLLI, Debra is also a strong community contributor. Debra says that her dedication to

volunteerism and community collaboration, as well as lifelong learning, stem from her mother, who worked full time, despite health issues, and also devoted herself through volunteer work to making her community the best place to live for everyone.

She was the first woman postal carrier in the state of New Jersey, forging her way in a traditionally man's world. She began her college career at age 69 and won her BFA with honors ten years later at age 79. She was an artist who designed and built the family's furniture. Among many examples of her community service, she taught art lessons and volunteered in area hospitals.

Debra earned a B.A. in Specific Learning Disabilities at the University of South Florida in 1976. She earned an M.S. in Journalism at Florida A&M University in 1998.

During her master's program at Florida A&M University, Debra demonstrated her generosity of spirit as well as her dedication to diversity, inclusivity and continuing education. Learning about plans for an African-American museum in Tallahassee at the historic John Gilmore Riley House, Debra reached out to founder Althemese Barnes.

As Barnes reports, "In 1996, as I labored and pondered how to establish the first community-based African-American museum in Tallahassee at the historic John Gilmore Riley House, without an exhibit, zero dollars in the bank, a staff of one (myself), I received a call one day from a FAMU student. She had read and heard about this potential museum in downtown Tallahassee and was calling to offer her help in some way. The student was Debra Start Herman, a journalism major at FAMU.

"Being that FAMU was a predominantly black university and that this student was reaching out to a black-owned and -operated museum, my thought was that the caller was black. Surprised was I when she made a visit to the Riley House to meet with me. Debra (white) and I (black) had the best conversation about the Riley House and what she could contribute to help in its emergence.

"Her question was, 'Is there a topic that you would like researched or written up that I can help with?' Needless to say, I was overjoyed to get some assistance, at no cost, to conduct research on a visionary project to document the history of Negro education in Leon County from 1868 to 1968, the period immediately after slavery, and creation of the public school system to the actual date of school desegregation in Leon County.

"To follow was two years of research including oral history interviews, drives throughout the county to locate the sites where 52 one-room schoolhouses once existed to provide an education for newly freed slaves and their descendants, many weekends sitting together to develop the content and *finally*--in 2001-- printing and releasing our book, *African-American Education in Leon County, Florida: Emancipation Through Desegregation 1863-1968.*"

Debra's professional positions over the past 20 years have mainly been in the non-profit service sector and helping professions, and clearly demonstrate her dedication to improving the lives of her clients and the organizations she has led.

Debra was administrative director of the Tallahassee Symphony Youth Orchestra from

1999-2004. In this position she was responsible for planning, supervising and administering all operations of three existing youth orchestras while adding a fourth orchestra focused on mentoring disadvantaged children. Her responsibilities included acquiring financial and other resources to maintain the organization, which served hundreds of students throughout Tallahassee.

The orchestra she created was tailored to help create equal opportunity and inclusivity for disadvantaged grade school students and supported their participation in music education, including supplying students with instruments, transportation and clothing. For this program Debra also developed a mentorship program pairing FSU music students with elementary school students.

From 2006 through 2011, Debra was regional director of Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida. In this role she was responsible for all aspects of directing and supervising staff in regional offices for an eight-county area. She provided leadership to the Board of Directors for effective planning of special events. She implemented a strategic plan, policies, and procedures and was responsible for the planning, implementation and management of all programs, services, events, and public relations. She was also responsible for grant writing, as well as soliciting contributions.

Debra brought in over \$2 million in federal, state and local grants; initiated new educational programs for clients; initiated a web-referral system for major fundraisers, developed a stable staff and community relationships, and maintained extensive media coverage, among many other responsibilities.

With her dedication to community development and using existing resources, she was able to establish an office in each of the eight counties the organization served. Having a staffed local office eased the burden of travel on recipients of the charity. She also was able to provide free counseling programs for those under stress. With this kind of direction and collaboration with local communities, Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida was able to maximize its efforts to support its clients.

Since Debra became director of OLLI at FSU, she has guided the membership in reaching out into the community in areas as varied as working with Choose Tallahassee and the Senior Center to participating in research through a number of colleges at FSU. From sponsoring book drives for local schools to matching senior citizens with senior pets, OLLI works to support the community.

Under Debra's leadership OLLI at FSU has become a well-known and respected part of FSU and Tallahassee as well as a resource for the area's senior citizens. When drivers see "I ♥ OLLI" bumper stickers on cars on Tallahassee roads, they no longer wonder, "What's an OLLI?" They've heard about the organization and they admire it.

Debra's leadership has been lauded both within FSU and throughout the community. Tim Chapin, dean of the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, sings Debra's praises. "Deb has been a visionary leader for OLLI, advancing the organization's educational and community missions with love, care and effectiveness. I have been so impressed by her ability to connect with community members, students and faculty

and get them excited about lifelong learning. Deb's personality and drive have expanded OLLI's reach and brought FSU's commitment to lifelong learning to students on campus, at Westminster Oaks, and in a number of community centers throughout the region."

Community leader and OLLI member Marjorie Turnbull notes that "Debra has built OLLI into a thriving program. The variety and range of offerings attract more and more members each year. Debra constantly looks for and implements new and innovative ways to engage retirees. In addition, she is active in other community initiatives such as Choose Tallahassee, which is working to make Tallahassee a retirement destination for Boomers. OLLI is often cited as one of the primary reasons retirees choose to move to Tallahassee."

Debra's efforts go far beyond OLLI.

Throughout her life, she has provided leadership to a wide variety of community organizations. Most recently, she has focused her abilities on the Tallahassee-Killearn Kiwanis Club and Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

Debra has been an active member of the Board of Directors for the Tallahassee-Killearn Kiwanis for the past three years, providing guidance and contributing to decisions on financial and volunteer matters,

as well as assisting with the planning and execution of club operations.

She takes a lead role in the club's projects as the organization strives to improve the lives of children in the Tallahassee community one child at a time.

Debra also serves as chairman of the organization's "Panty Fund." This program raises money from members to purchase intimate apparel for women at the Refuge House--a program that serves people affected by domestic violence and sexual assault across the eight counties of the Big Bend. Many clients arrive at the Refuge House with only the clothes they are wearing. Through the "Panty Fund" women are furnished new intimate apparel.

Debra has been a member of Good Shepherd Catholic Church since 1996. She is very active with the spiritual, social and ministry life of the parish. Teaching Faith Formation classes to eight graders for over 18 years, serving on the parish Pastoral Council and being a ringer with the Bell Choir are among the ministries she has or continues to participate in.

In her role as director of OLLI at FSU, Debra has served on the Executive Board and Action Committee of Choose Tallahassee, an organization that aims to attract retirees to the Tallahassee area. She also served on the Senior Center's L3X Planning Committee and works consistently to support the Senior Center's education program.

(Ed. Special thanks to Past Presidents Fran Conaway, Nancy O'Farrell and Susan Yelton for preparing this article on Debra Herman.)

...FROM THE PEPPER INSTITUTE



By Anne Barrett

Director, Pepper Institute on Aging and
Public Policy

The Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy -- with support from the Claude Pepper Center, the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, and Osher Lifelong Learning at FSU -- began sponsoring weekly "Aging Today" segments on 88.9, WFSU-FM NPR. Airing each Tuesday at 3:04pm, the one-minute segments highlight critical aging-related trends, issues, and policies, with an emphasis on social science research. In case you missed our inaugural Aging Today's minute, here it is:

(Ed. This is the first of periodic articles focusing on research being conducted by the Pepper Institute. This will allow researchers to inform OLLI members of projects that are of special interest to seniors.)

"How has life expectancy changed over time?"

People in the U.S., and most other nations, are living longer than before. Americans born at the turn of the 20th century could expect to live only until their mid-forties. Those born today can expect to live nearly 80 years. The first, and steepest, upswing in life expectancy resulted from a drop in the risk of dying from infectious diseases, especially in early life. This decline in risk stemmed from better housing and nutrition and greater access to clean water. More recent extensions in life expectancy were driven by a drop in deaths in adulthood. This decline came from greater education, improved air quality, fewer workplace deaths, and lifestyle changes (like reduced smoking) – along with medical advances. We may think of medical advances as the main explanation for our longer lives – but they play a smaller role -- over time and across the life course -- than do improved social and economic conditions.

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

REPRINTED FROM EMORY UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

COGNITIVE DECLINE AND NORMAL AGING: THE MYTH OF DECLINE

A commonly held misconception is that aging results in an inevitable loss of all cognitive abilities and that nothing can be done to halt this decline. Research, however, does not support these claims. While certain areas of thinking do show a normal decline as we age, others remain stable. Moreover, interventions may actually slow some of the changes that do occur.

- **Intelligence:** “Crystallized” intelligence, i.e., knowledge or experience accumulated over time, actually remains stable with age. On the other hand, “fluid” intelligence or abilities not based on experience or education tend to decline.
- **Memory:** Remote memory or recall of past events that have been stored over many years remains relatively preserved in old age. Recent memory or the formation of new memories, however, is more vulnerable to aging.
- **Attention:** Simple or focused attention such as the ability to attend to a television program tends to be preserved in older age. Difficulties may be encountered, however, when divided attention is required such as trying to pay attention to

the television and simultaneously talk on the telephone.

- **Language:** Verbal abilities including vocabulary are preserved as we age. Common changes have to do with word retrieval or the process of getting words out. It takes longer and is more difficult to find the words one wants when engaged in conversation or trying to recall names of people and objects. The information is not lost but it is more difficult to retrieve.
- **Reasoning and Problem Solving:** Traditional ways of approaching solutions are maintained in older persons. Problems that have not been encountered during your life may take extra time to figure out.
- **Speed of Processing:** Aging does affect the speed with which cognitive and motor processes are performed. This does not mean that the activities cannot be performed, but rather that they take longer!

Factors Affecting Cognitive Aging

All of the above abilities can be affected by factors that change the efficiency with which older adults process information. These include:

- Medications which may produce side effects such as drowsiness and mental
- Sensory changes which can interfere with the processing of information (e.g., loss of hearing which can affect whether or not someone's name is heard when introduced);
- Health related changes such as arthritis and pain which can affect cognitive areas such as concentration and processing speed; and
- Changes in mood such as depression and anxiety which can alter one's motivation to learn new information and to apply active strategies.

Compensating For or Slowing Down Age Related Changes

A previous view was that as we age, brain cells inevitably die off and are not replaced. This concept led to the belief that nothing could be done to alter the inevitable. But we

know that certain fats such as olive oil may be neuroprotective. Other compensating factors are:

- **Keeping Mentally Stimulated:** Studies have found that engaging in challenging cognitive tasks can protect against age-related declines in thinking and the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. It is important to keep oneself stimulated through activities such as playing bridge, reading, and attending adult education courses.
- **Using Active Strategies:** There is evidence that some of the difficulties in storing new memories are due to the fact

dullness;

now know that certain interventions can sharpen cognitive processes. These include:

- **Reducing Stress:** Researchers have found that high stress levels impair learning and memory in both animals and humans. Strategies to reduce stress such as exercise may be beneficial, and
- **Maintaining Good Health:** Regular visits to the doctor are critical to make sure that medical conditions which can themselves impair thinking are under good control. In addition, possible interactions among medications should be evaluated by letting your physician know all of the medications you are taking, even if not prescribed by that particular doctor. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables containing antioxidants such as blueberries, strawberries, and broccoli as well as that older persons do not spontaneously use strategies to encode this information. When they do, age differences are weakened. In addition, older adults demonstrate good recognition of new information when they are helped with cues to jog their memory. Strategies that can be helpful to facilitate memory include following a routine (e.g., always putting one's keys in the same place), using external techniques (e.g., a calendar, a pill box), and taking more time to actively process new information (e.g., when introduced).

For publication in the OLLI times send your information to George and
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The Osher Lifelong Learning
Institute at
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