



Where Curiosity Never Retires



OLLI NEWS — May 27, 2022

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Letter From the Chair: Changing of the Guard



June is a time of transition for OLLI at AU. For the past year, I have had the honor and privilege of serving as Board Chair. It has been an enormously rewarding experience to work with other members of the Board, with Executive Director Tony Long, Deputy Executive Director Mary Fran Miklitsch and the rest of our talented staff, the committee chairs, and other volunteers. But it is now time to step down. Next week, Vice Chair Dave Hensler takes over as Chair. Dave brings extensive experience as

a leader and a strong commitment to OLLI's success. Currently a Senior Counsel at Hogan Lovells US LLP, he is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Duke Ellington Fund and is a Trustee and the Treasurer of the Foundation of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Dave is also the outside General Counsel, on a pro bono basis, for the largest Native American scholarship fund. He played a pivotal role in getting a substantial increase in our annual payment from the AU Endowment and in improving the investment return on OLLI's investment account. And, as Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, he led in developing new initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and enrollment and establishing a permanent digital library. Clearly, we will be in good hands with Dave.

June is also when we welcome new members to the Board and bid farewell to those departing. We welcome newly elected Linda Miller and Penny Hansen. Penny was elected for a full term after serving out the term of a Board member who departed early. Joining Linda and Penny are John Aldock and Mark Nadel, both of whom have been re-elected for second terms. Linda is a past Board member and Chair who is returning to active service. Both Penny and Mark are popular Study Group Leaders, and Mark coordinates our highly successful Friday Lecture Series. Along with Dave, John played a key role in discussions with the University to increase the Endowment distribution. All bring a wealth of skills, experience, and devotion to OLLI.

But June is also a time of departure. We bid a fond, but sad, farewell to Myra Barron, who steps down after two terms on the Board, including one year as Chair. Myra has also been a mainstay in our successful effort to strengthen and deepen our relationship with AU. There hasn't been an OLLI Board meeting in the past seven years where Myra wasn't present. We will miss her wise counsel and steady hand.

Going forward, this is an exciting time for OLLI at AU. We have weathered the pandemic and have come out stronger than ever. While the great majority of OLLIs have struggled mightily, losing about a third of their members on average, we are part of a very small group that maintained or even increased enrollment. From the outset, we never flinched, making the right decisions quickly and early on. It was a true team effort: the Board, the staff, our Study Group Leaders, other volunteers, and you. Particularly you. You stayed the course, even when we moved to remote learning where few of us had any experience and a far cry from the close-knit community we signed up for. Our loyal donor community also responded strongly, with 24 percent – an all-time high (versus 14 percent for OLLIs nationally) – contributing to our Friends of OLLI Fund and breaking all previous fundraising efforts.

We are not the same OLLI as two years ago. Zoom has changed us forever. And we are using it to make us stronger. Space limitations for popular classes or lectures are largely a thing of the past. Miss a class or want to check another class? Watch the recording. Want to view an OLLI classic from the past? Check our Permanent Digital Library. Want to schedule a Friday lecturer from outside the Washington area? We can do that. Finally, have mobility issues and find it difficult to get to the building? Participate from home.

Meanwhile, and perhaps most exciting, we are on track to return to robust in-person programming, the glue that pulls us together as a community and which has sustained us over the years. We are not fully back but are making great progress. Just last week, some 70 of us gathered in-person for an SGL appreciation luncheon. It was our largest in-person gathering in more than two years. Such

energy and such fun were had just being together. One member said it was like having a triple espresso after two years of no coffee. Keep your cups handy. There is more coming.

Looking ahead, this coming fall will mark our 40th anniversary. Plans are underway for a proper celebration. And we will have much to celebrate. We have come a long way since that first semester when we offered 12 courses to some 80 members. We are also well positioned to achieve even more thanks to our extraordinary members and leadership team.

Be well, be safe, and, to the maximum extent possible, be in-person. See you in class.

Over to you, Dave.

John Barger
Board Chair

Summer Registration Is Open!

June Minis—there are still open classes!

(June 6–July 1)

June Minis meet once a week for four weeks either online, in-person, or in a hybrid format. Members can now register for up to four courses for \$100. The lottery was held on Monday, May 23, but there are still open study groups. The last day for course changes and refunds is Friday, June 10. [Register](#) before the deadline, Friday, June 10.

July Shorts

(July 11–15)

July Shorts meet 2-5 times during the one week, either online, in-person, or in a hybrid format. Members can register for three courses for \$75. **The July Shorts lottery will be held on Monday, June 27.** Assignment letters will be emailed the following day. The last day for course changes and refunds is Friday, July 8. [Register](#) before Lottery Day, Monday, June 27.

Memorial Day Office Hours

We wish all our members and readers a very happy Memorial Day! The OLLI office will close at 12:00 PM today and will reopen on Tuesday, May 31.

SGL Appreciation Luncheon





Last week we held our first SGL Appreciation Luncheon since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Marianne Soponis, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, did a fantastic job organizing and hosting this event for our very deserving Study Group Leaders. For some of our newer SGLs, this was their first time in the Spring Valley Building! It was a treat to see new faces and reconnect with some of our seasoned SGLs, some of whom we hadn't seen in over two years. We also got to hear from our Board Chair, John Barger, and our Executive Director, Tony Long, who both expressed our infinite gratitude for the hard work our SGLs do, especially through the ups and downs of the pandemic. We thank our SGLs for their generosity of time, talent, and passion—they are the heart of our OLLI at AU community.

Reminder: AU Mask Policy Update

American University has revised their mask policy. As of May 23, 2022, masks are optional when present on campus. In accordance with AU policy, **masks will be optional** for OLLI's June Minis and July Shorts. Members attending a class in-person will still be required to fill out a Covid-19 vaccine/booster attestation form, which will be sent out closer to the start of the summer sessions.

Upcoming Event: Bloomsday Celebration

Thursday, June 16

6:00-9:00 PM

Busboys and Poets (450 K ST NW)

In-Person Tickets \$10, Online Tickets \$5

OLLI members are welcome to attend the Bloomsday Celebration of the 100-year anniversary of James Joyce's *Ulysses* on Thursday, June 16, from 6:00-9:00 PM. This reading of *Ulysses* highlights is a hybrid event: in-person at the 450 K Street NW location of Busboys and Poets (tickets \$10 with cash bar and food) and virtually over Zoom (tickets \$5). **Tickets can be purchased [here](#).**

The following OLLI members are readers at this event:

Dan Coyle

Marilyn Wong Gleysteen

Dorothy Haase

Eleanor Heginbotham

Walter Kamiat

Bob Kolodney

Richard Palmer

Mary Poole

Susan Willens

The program is introduced by H.E Daniel Mulhall and the Ambassador of Ireland to the United States and features Robert Aubry Davis of PBS. The script has segments from the beginning, the *Cyclops* chapter, and the end of *Ulysses*. It is an ultra-abridged version of the novel that features passages appreciated by experienced Joyce readers and a pleasant introduction to the novel for neophytes. View the event website at [here](#). Please address any questions to the event organizer, Bob Kolodney at bobkolive@gmail.com.

American University News & Events

AU Museum

Summer Schedule

Closed: May 23-June 10

Open: June 11-August 7

Friday-Sunday only, 11AM-4PM

Reservations are not required for your visit. Admission is always free. Regarding groups and any questions about your visit, email museum@american.edu. Access the museum [online](#).

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MISSION

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University is an association of, by, and for the people in the Washington, DC area who wish to continue to study and learn.

OLLI at AU is dedicated to the proposition that learning is a lifelong process and that *curiosity never retires*.

Website www.lli-dc.org | Phone 202-895-4860 | E-mail lli@american.edu

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