



AT THE
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Cher Snyder



Cher Snyder

We live in uncertain, yet – in many ways - exciting times, too. The disruption of routines and schedules brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has given us all a unique opportunity to re-invent our lives. As lifelong learners, we've discovered novel ways of relating to one another, experiencing new things, and meeting the challenges of each day with renewed purpose.

It's especially exciting to be part of OLLI's leadership team this year. Thank you for electing Dawn Torcivia, President-Elect; Linda DiPietro, Secretary; Greg Mitsoff, Treasurer; and Board Members Laura Carter and Freda Giles, who join ongoing Board Members Jim Alberts, Bill Barstow, Susan Dougherty, Victor Gagliano, Sherry Malone, Roy Martin, Penny Oldfather and Bob Yorczyk.

The 2020-21 Board hit the ground running by participating in Board Orientation sessions the first week of July. During a special Board meeting held July 10, Long Range Strategic Plan Committee chair Susan Dougherty and committee members Larry Dendy, Barbara Lewis, John Songster, and Madeline VanDyck presented the plan they so masterfully crafted for OLLI's future. We look forward to presenting the plan to you following its formal adoption by the Board.

We're delighted that so many of you participated in the classes and film festival offered via ZOOM this summer! Fall classes begin August 18. Our fall lineup includes more than 160 classes, and registration opened on July 31. In the meantime, a number of SIGs are continuing to meet online. Remember that all it takes to start a new SIG is 10 to 12 members who share a particular interest not replicated in other SIGs, and the approval of the SIG by our Executive Director. We invite you to start or join the conversation!

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THE CORONAVIRUS WON'T STOP OLLI

By Larry Dendy

While other OLLIs and lifelong learning programs around the country have suspended operations because of the pandemic, OLLI@UGA is moving ahead with a fall semester featuring a new class scheduling format and initiatives to enhance membership services and fund raising.

"We're being nimble, creative and proactive as we adjust to meet the challenges of the corona crisis," says President Cher Snyder. "Thanks to the leadership of Executive Director Tim Meehan and the hard work of our staff, the strong support of the Board of Directors, and the tremendous efforts of many dedicated volunteers, OLLI@UGA is in a strong position to continue providing our members with the programs and activities they expect."

Fall semester will begin Aug. 18 with about 160 classes, an intentional reduction from the more than 250 classes in recent semesters. Cher explains that recruiting fewer classes takes pressure off the Curriculum Committee and simplifies production of the curriculum catalog. It should also help allay concerns of some members who say they are overwhelmed by the large number of class choices, she says.

Fall classes will be presented via Zoom as the Board of Directors has decided to forego holding in-person classes in the River's

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STILL TIME TO RENEW!

A new OLLI year has started.

Easily participate in online classes. Stay connected with OLLI friends.

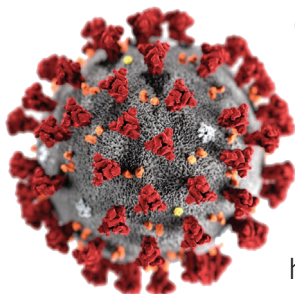
Sign in to the Members area on the OLLI@UGA website and select "Registration."

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN *continued from page 1*

Last year's leadership team worked diligently to help OLLI navigate the uncharted waters of COVID-19, and we give special thanks to our past President, Chris Jones, past Secretary, Ann Shumpert, past Treasurer, Mamie Mierzwak, and past Board members Richard Bouldin and Barbara Timmons for their extraordinary guidance and support. Finally, we applaud Dean Denise Spangler from UGA's Mary Frances Early College of Education for her ongoing encouragement, and are ever grateful to our Executive Director, Tim Meehan, and staff members Shelly Magruder, Amanda Nix, Ryan Robinson, and Rita Healan for keeping OLLI@UGA operations humming from their respective home bases.

THE CORONAVIRUS WON'T STOP OLLI

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Crossing building. Most OLLI members have adapted to the Zoom format, Cher says, and some even prefer it to classroom presentations. She notes that the OLLI office has an easily understood video that explains how to use Zoom, and staff members are happy to provide guidance.

The formal printed curriculum catalog that members are accustomed to receiving has been dropped, and both the catalog and class registration are entirely online. Registration for a class will remain open until a few days before the class is held, eliminating the rush to sign up early for a class and ensuring enrollment for everyone who wants to take a class.

The success of OLLI's first full curriculum of classes this summer has led to a new scheduling format that divides fall and spring semesters into two sessions each with about an equal number of classes per session. The new format makes scheduling of classes more manageable for the staff and gives members more flexibility in choosing classes, Cher says.

Another full program of classes will be held next summer. This year's summer curriculum was quickly arranged after more than half the classes scheduled in spring semester were either cancelled or transitioned to Zoom. The 28 classes offered this summer drew a total of 744 enrollments with an average attendance of 22 per class.

"We were extremely pleased by the turnout for the summer classes," Cher says. "About 80 percent of members whose spring classes were cancelled donated their class fees back to OLLI, and this, along with fees for the summer classes, enabled OLLI not to end the year in a deficit. This was a life-saver and we're so grateful to our members for their support,"

However, the financial future is by no means certain and for this

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE NEWS

by Lois Alworth

The Hospitality Committee continues to help the Membership Committee in their outreach activities. If interested, please join us by contacting Jeanne Davis-Blair at davisblair2@gmail.com.

reason the Board of Directors voted to raise the class fee from \$10 to \$12. It's the first increase in five years and still keeps OLLI@UGA's class fees lower than many other OLLIs around the country.

"The decision to increase fees was motivated by the duty of care the Board of Directors owes to provide our members with the ongoing level of service, support and engagement they expect," Tim wrote in a message announcing the fee hike. But even with the increase, he wrote, "current projections indicate we could end the 2020-21 fiscal year with a deficit. The Board of Directors envisions vigorous fund-raising activities this year to keep OLLI operating in the black and looks forward to (members') ongoing ideas and support."

Stepped-up fund raising is among a number of recommendations in a three-year plan submitted to the Board of Directors by the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee. The committee, chaired by Board member Susan Dougherty, spent three months gathering data, interviewing OLLI leaders, and reviewing past long-range plans for OLLI@UGA and other OLLIs.

The Board of Directors approved the plan in July and Cher says work will begin soon on ways to implement some recommendations. Details of the plan will be unveiled later but she says that in addition to finances, the plan addresses such matters as communications, membership services, internal management, volunteerism and community outreach.

NEW SYSTEM FOR SUBMITTING PHOTOS

Dear OLLI members: Please use OLLIUGAphotos@gmail.com to submit OLLI activity or event-related photos for use in various communications. Include the name of the event/class/SIG/photographer, provide in the largest file size you have (at least 1MB), and identify participants if possible. Thanks!



Tim Meehan

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“People, who need people, are the luckiest people in the world.”

(From the song, *People*; Jule Styne, composer, Bob Merrill, lyrics)

So sang Barbara Streisand in *Funny Girl*. I find that lyric running through my head as we look at where we are now. When we were staring down where we were in February we would never have guessed that we would end up where we are now. It has been a wild ride and we must applaud all of the volunteers who have gotten us here, and those who have been able to donate to us whether through class fees or additional funds. We are grateful to you all!

Digital Learning is something most of us had not tried much of before this pandemic hit, and the idea of being stuck in front of our computers or devices for hours on end was something we associated with younger generations. One of the things that we hear from our members about coming onto Zoom is that they didn't come to OLLI to spend all day on their computers, they came to meet people.

My response to this is that the people on line in our classes are your OLLI friends, the people that you came to meet, and unlike in class, you don't have to stare at the back of people's heads. We know that at this time of social distancing, our friends and the people we need become more important to us than ever, especially in these uncertain times. Not only do you get to meet them, but also their pets (or in my case, children).

Staff and members are here to help you get online and to help you familiarize yourself with the technology. We do understand some members have security concerns with Zoom, but our technical support at UGA says that it is secure enough for our needs.

I know that it is old hat to say that we are all in this together, but we are here to keep you learning and socialized, exploring new worlds and topics from the comfort of your couch, or your porch (if your internet stretches that far).

NEW ONLINE CALENDAR INCLUDES EVERYTHING OLLI

Keep track of all classes, events, SIGs, and meetings.

Sign in to the Members page on the OLLI@UGA website and select “Calendar”.



SHARED INTEREST GROUPS ARE MEETING

By Terry Kaley

Several OLLI Shared Interest Groups (SIGs) are meeting via Zoom and offer opportunities to learn and socialize. The list includes Aging and Longevity, All Things Chautauqua, Board Games, Book Discussion, DNA for Genealogy, Enjoy Opera in Athens, Picture This, Poetry Writing, Solo Seniors, Wisemen, and Writing Memoir. SIGs are free and easy to join. Sign in to the Members page on the OLLI@UGA website and select “OLLI Communications”.





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