



AT THE  
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# OLLI TIMES

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## OLLI'S ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN IS NOW UNDERWAY!

*By Carol Coman*

**Are you learning? ... having fun? ... making new and enjoying old friends? Hey! OLLI is here for you. Giving to OLLI helps make these things happen effectively and efficiently — and your gifts earn recognition in our publications and catalogs.**

And there's no better way to support OLLI than a donation to our Annual Fund campaign, which began Nov. 1 and ends Jan. 15. Supporting the Annual Fund will help OLLI produce diverse programming that provides opportunities for lifelong learning, personal growth, travel, social life, and friendship. Besides friends, fun and learning, your OLLI membership also gives you free access to 30 SIGs, low-cost class participation, a UGA OLLI student ID, UGA library access to more than 4.6 million books and 700 databases, and a low-cost membership for exercising at UGA's opulent Ramsey Center. As Executive Director Tim Meehan points out elsewhere in this issue, your donations keep OLLI running.

Why does OLLI need to raise additional dollars through the Annual Fund? The Osher endowment, membership fees, and class fees cover only approximately 90 per cent of our operating budget. The remaining dollars have to be raised through your gifts. Our annual giving fund drive goal this year is \$23,000. With your help, we made our goal last year of \$20,000 and we hope to cover rising costs of nearly everything by having a more ambitious but realistic goal this year. Recurring donations are especially appreciated since they help us make plans for future events more confidently. Your donation can have a significant impact on program enhancement, including more evening and Saturday course options.

## EVERYBODY HAS A STORY TO TELL: WRITING MEMOIR SIG

*By Mary Mattson and Tracy Coley*



Photo: T. Coley

Our group of OLLI memoir writers gathers every third Thursday morning at St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church and the meeting begins with warm chats over hot coffee. Then the storytelling begins as our narratives based on a monthly writing prompt spill into the room: motorcycle pilgrimages, perilous farmwork in silos, ventures in business, life in towns and international cities, loves gained and lost, families in crisis. We write of bygone days and more recent times, learning from each other as we share experiences. Those unable to meet in person participate live via Zoom. Our philosophy is "Everybody has a story to tell."

Co-leader Tracy Coley facilitates the monthly meeting along with Mary Mattson, introducing a writing tip along with a writing prompt for the next month's session provided by group member Paul Lamprill. Writers may follow the prompt or write on an entirely different topic of their own. Members are welcome to participate in a session whether they read aloud or not.

Our group was formed by Roger Bailey in 2011 and was originally called "String of Pearls," based on a book of essays of the same name written by Mary Crowley.

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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Back in 2021, when I entered the Marine Corps Marathon for the first time, the event got moved to a virtual format because of COVID. As much as I enjoyed the training, I postponed my entry to the following year. Not having those crowds around — the other runners, the spectators, and the volunteers — made the event much less appealing.

Running the first mile of a marathon is not hard (most of the time). Everyone is fresh, determined, some even relaxed. There's a feeling of competitive camaraderie. Likewise, at the beginning of a person's participation in an organization, the enthusiasm is very much the same. In OLLI (to take a random example), the attitude is shown in typical questions: How many classes are you taking, where did you go with your favorite SIG this week?

But as time goes on, the rubber begins to hit the road. A marathon is an achievement because it is not easy, it takes work, effort, training, energy, and some fuel. The organization, like the runner, needs fuel to keep on going. For the runner, there are tables where volunteers are doling out cups of water and sports drinks in all sorts of vivid colors. The appreciative runners drink and rush on, while the volunteers continue to give out drinks for

the next few hours.

Like a marathon, the organization cannot function without the donations of the volunteers and members. Every little contribution to the race makes a difference, whether (to stretch the metaphor) you can give out a few drinks at one drink station, or go from station to station giving out more and more. Without the volunteers, the whole enterprise would be a lot less wonderful.



**Tim Meehan**

One vital way you can help OLLI is to contribute to our Annual Fund this year. Remember that whether you contribute in a small or large way, it is only together that we can make a difference. Thank you to those who have already given, and I hope that the other articles in this edition of the *OLLI Times* show you the different ways in which you can enhance your contribution.

By the time you are reading this, I will have run the Marine Corps Marathon for the second time — appreciating every volunteer on the course and those who contribute so much to OLLI, whether through time, talent or treasure.

## MEMOIR WRITERS

*Continued from page 1*

According to founding member and current SIG member Tom Kenyon, the initial group consisted of himself, Roger, and 4-5 ladies, including Barbara Sims. They changed the name to "Writing Memoir" in about 2012 when they had problems recruiting male members. The group then expanded to about 15-20 people with an equally proportionate number of men and women.

Today we have about 80 members with monthly meetings averaging 15-20 readings per session, which is the perfect size to allow time for people to read their work.

Our goals vary based on interest. Some members, like former group leader Linda Jenkins, poet Alice Mohor, Glenn Ames, and Frederick Spencer, have published memoirs. Others are working on a memoir for future publication. Some are simply authoring stories for pleasure and personal reflection and feedback.

Each spring we present a public reading of our stories at Athens Regional Library, an event first organized by SIG member Connie Crawley in 2018. Many members read from their stories published in our annual *Anthology*, a collection of the group's best memoir stories, often with photos, published with the assistance of an outside editor.

Co-leader Mary Mattson began an instrumental initiative this year to assist writers through quarterly workshops held after a regular meeting. These informal sessions are packed with exercises to stimulate good writing and highlight techniques that may add greater reader interest to members' stories.

We'd love for you to join our Writing Memoir SIG and tell your story, whether you are a novice writer or have been writing a while. After all, everybody has a story to tell!

# INTRODUCING: OLLI TEXT MESSAGING

By Greg Mitsoff

In January OLLI@UGA will start using text messaging to help keep members informed about important events and time-sensitive updates. Text messages, or texts, will be used for a limited number of topics, and they won't duplicate email content.

Because many of us already receive more text messages than we care to read, OLLI will use the capability sparingly, with a focus on three OLLI activities: announcing the opening of class registration; notifying members of registration deadlines for social events, trips, and Lunch & Learns; and alerting members of class cancellations or building/parking closures.

Not only will texts be limited to a few key topics, the content will be short. The type of texting service we'll use, known as Short Message Service (SMS), allows a maximum of 160 characters, which equates to 25-30 words at most. And you'll see nothing other than words—no pictures or other media files. Texts will be one-way only: from the OLLI staff to OLLI members. Members will be welcome to call the OLLI@UGA office with questions about particular messages.



Members won't need an app or new account, but they will need to have their mobile phone numbers registered in their OLLI@UGA profile to receive messages. Those members who haven't registered their mobile phone numbers with OLLI will receive instructions on how to do so. Members who don't want to receive texts will have the opportunity to opt out. In December Executive Director Tim Meehan will send an email that provides details on the text messaging rollout plan, including instructions on receiving texts, as well as opting out.

Text messaging will complement OLLI@UGA's traditional suite of internal communications platforms (including email, the OLLI@UGA website, the OLLI COMM online social network, and the *OLLI Times* newsletter) with a new capability that enables the staff to promptly, concisely, and infrequently inform members of high-priority issues pertaining to classes, social events, and trips. Try it. You'll like it.

## DAY TRIP TO THE CARTER LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

By Malcolm Richardson

The passing of former President Jimmy Carter last Dec. 29 brought renewed attention to the many accomplishments of "America's greatest ex-president." OLLI members will have an opportunity to renew acquaintance with his remarkable accomplishments and learn about additional ones when visiting the Carter Presidential Library and Museum as part of a day trip to Atlanta on Jan. 22. Susan Carley will coordinate the OLLI visit.

While the idea of a "presidential library" may seem a little chilly at first, the Carter Library is far from a stately mausoleum. Adjacent to the still-vital Carter Center (not open to the general public), the Carter Library is vibrant and alive. It's a state-of-the-art museum, complete with interactive digital exhibits tracing the life and work of Carter from his childhood in rural Plains, GA, to the work he and Rosalynn Carter did around the world to promote peace and health in tangible ways, and well into this decade, too. You can experience "A Day in the Life of the President," step into a replica of the Oval



Office or take a virtual trip with the Carters to fight disease and promote democracy around the world. Visitors will see the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to President

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Parisian Café Class  
(J. Shaikun)



Splashdown SIG  
(G. Whiting)



The Divided States of America Class  
(J. Shaikun)



Tour of T.R.R. Cobb House  
(T. Nestor)



Beans Trip  
(J. Shaikun)



Advisory Council  
(J. Shaikun)

# OLLI SPONSOR: BOOM Athens Magazine

By Martha McFerron

OLLI sponsor *Boom Athens* magazine is a resource for “Boomers” 50-plus. The lifestyle publication, launched in July 2016, is circulated quarterly and is free. *Boom* magazine’s mission is “to create a community of readers by sharing truths of the Boomer experience, then and now.” Betsy Bean is the publisher/sales director.

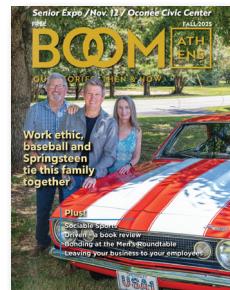
The *Boom* website, [www.boomathens.com](http://www.boomathens.com), features a “Calendar for Grown-Ups” designed around activities of interest for those who are 50 and over. Subscribing to “The Weekly” from *Boom Athens* makes the free digital edition of the magazine available before it hits the newsstands, plus local news items (reported by the Red & Black) and alerts for upcoming events. The print edition is available free at more than 35 locations across Athens, Bogart, Greensboro, Hull, Jefferson, Watkinsville, Winder and Winterville, not to mention on the display stand near the OLLI offices at River’s Crossing.

The cover story of the fall 2025 edition of the magazine, titled “Across the Generations: Baseball, Springsteen & Work” focuses on the parents of Athens author Will Leitch. Other feature articles deal with “Sociable Sports” (pétanque and bocce), and “Men on a Mission to Build Friendships” (the OLLI SIG known as the Men’s Round-table). Other articles include a book review of Tom Johnson’s *Driven*, and an article on options for Employee-Owners preparing to leave the workforce and their



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business. There are also sections called “FYI: Need to Know” and “Fun to Do,” where short articles can be found on Medicare, aging and disability, and volunteer opportunities. The “Healthy Us” section provides recent health news from respected sources on flossing, social connections, foot warmth related to sleep, and brain health. Each issue also contains an essay and recipe by noted Athens chef Tim Dondero (Swedish apple pie is his topic for the fall edition).



The annual Boom Bash Senior Expo, presented by *Boom Athens* and the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA), provides information on caregiving, estate planning, elder law, health and wellness, housing options, and leisure activities. The event also includes “Ask a Geriatrician,” door prizes, fall risk, fitness assessments, and health screenings.

*Boom Athens* targets a generation that has experienced a volume of changes. It shares wisdom gained through life experiences and is an outlet for those of us who have lived and learned along the way.

## Thank you OLLI partner and sponsors for your continued support.

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## CARTER LIBRARY

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Carter in 2002. The museum also features a reproduction of the cabin used for Camp David meetings that led to the still-standing 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty. Explore artifacts from the 1976 campaign trail, Carter's Navy service, and key moments of his administration.

OLLI members will also enjoy the beautifully landscaped 30-plus acre park with two small lakes, a Japanese garden, and a spectacular view of the Atlanta skyline. The garden includes 40 varieties of roses (in season), sculptures, and waterfalls tucked between the lakes in a serene Japanese Garden.

The bus will leave Athens and arrive at the Carter Library mid-morning on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026. Lunch will be at the Carter Center restaurant. The group will depart mid-afternoon in order to be back in Athens before 5 p.m. Registration is through the OLLI travel page ([olli.uga.edu/olli\\_travel\\_study/carter-library](http://olli.uga.edu/olli_travel_study/carter-library)) and is open through Jan. 1.



## ANNUAL FUND

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Annual Fund donors can make a one-time direct gift, pledge periodic payments throughout the year, or arrange for smaller recurring monthly payments through the UGA giving platform. There's a very easy way to give. Go to [olli.uga.edu/giving](http://olli.uga.edu/giving). Good ol' checks dropped off at the main office or through traditional mail are just as welcome. Also, please see if your employer or former employer can match funds — you'd be surprised how many can.

Oh yes, you, your friends, and loved ones can get some recognition if you'd like: for a \$150 donation, a class can be sponsored in the donor's name or in the name of someone of their choosing. For a \$250 donation, a Lunch & Learn can be sponsored in a similar way. Donate now or — so you won't forget — add a donation date to your calendar.

All gifts to OLLI@UGA (a member-led, fully self-funded part of the Mary Francis Early College of Education) are greatly appreciated. Give now at [olli.uga.edu/giving](http://olli.uga.edu/giving).



## REGISTER FOR LUNCH & LEARN



### Weather and Climate Research - The "So What's?"

Presented by  
James Marshall Shepherd

December 2, 11:30-1:30



### THANK YOU TO OUR

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