

With Talks, Trips and more, OLLI Celebrates Suffrage Centenary

As the nation celebrates next August the centennial of the Constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote, OLLI will mark the anniversary with several educational activities.

Many OLLI members today recognize the historical significance of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and appreciate the dedicated work and sacrifices that led to its enactment. For instance, Virginia O'Leary, Chair of the OLLI Social Science Curriculum Committee, commended "our many committed foremothers" who fought for the right to vote. O'Leary also noted the continuing struggle of women "to be recognized as full participants in a society."

Yet women's struggle for political equality is far from over. According to OLLI member Katherine Kidd, some of the oppositional patterns to women's suffrage that were forged in the anti-suffrage movement still persist today. Kate is also the Chair of OLLI's University Day program which will offer a spring all-day gathering of speakers and panels on various aspects of women's suffrage.

Barbara Lane, OLLI President, proudly related that her granddaughter, Ariana, will turn eighteen almost one hundred years to the day the 19th Amendment became law on August 26, 1920. Lane said Ariana will then join the fifth generation of voting women in her family.

Suffragettes in the Northeast

American women in the early 1800s were subject to comprehensive legal and social restrictions. By 1807 all American women were denied even limited suffrage. They were allowed to mix with men in public, but only under narrowly prescribed circumstances. Statutes and common law also prohibited married women from inheriting property, from signing contracts, and from serving on juries. In employment, women had access to very few jobs and even then were paid about half of what men received for the same work. In politics, women were often forbidden even to speak in public.

Public opinion began to change during the 1840s, notably in western Massachusetts and upstate New York. Susan B. Anthony, a famous "suffragette," was born in North Adams. Farther west, some Quaker groups near the Erie Canal began holding mixed meetings of men and women, with each sex able to cast votes. Upstate New

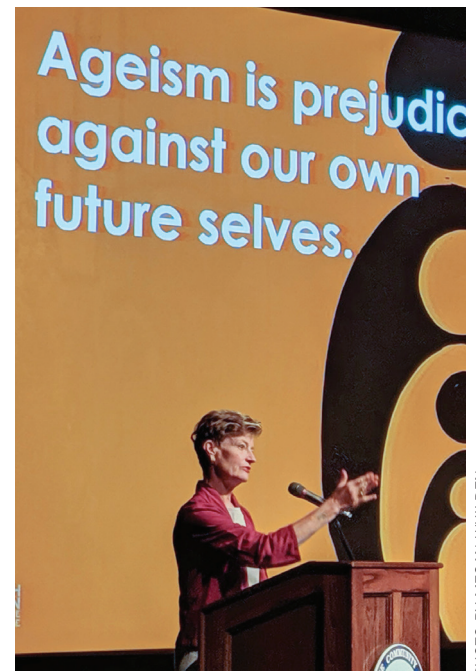


Suffragette leaders Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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Living Longer, Living Better

University Day August 2019



Keynote speaker Ashton Applewhite

Learning about the aging process and overcoming negativity about growing older produced the best-attended University Day ever on new ways to grow older.

Living Longer, Living Better: Changing the Culture of Aging was the theme of University Day, this past August. Event chair Katherine Kidd and her committee organized this day of learning about ways to enhance our aging process and reject negativity about getting older.

Keynote speaker and author Ashton Applewhite set the tone with a proclamation against ageism with fresh observations that take many common notions of aging and stand them on their head.

"We're all Aging, Let's End Ageism"

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President's Letter

I'm writing this on a beautiful Berkshire autumn day. But by the time you read my letter our mild and colorful fall will be gone and our 25th anniversary year will nearly be behind us. I thought I'd start this new year by sharing thoughts I've heard expressed in discussions with OLLI members as we've looked to OLLI's future:

First and foremost, we are a life-long learning institute. Let's continue to develop cutting-edge programming like the symposia on Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work that Art Sherman and Kate Kidd have been developing. The world is changing faster than ever before. What better way to stay informed and remain a part of these advances than to learn from and with your fellow OLLI members?

OLLI members want to give back. We want to harness our educational backgrounds and career and life experiences to benefit the community at large. Whether it's working on a Habitat for Humanity site, volunteering at a local food pantry, or providing homework help at the Boys & Girls Club, let's find ways to get involved. In collaboration with United Way, AARP and other organizations, OLLI hosted a volunteer fair Nov. 15 where over 200 attendees met with representatives of 30 non profit organizations. So, don't just stand there. Volunteer.

We need to recommit ourselves to our mentoring program so every BCC student who could benefit from a relationship with an OLLI mentor has been paired with a mentor. I attended a Mentoring for Success program luncheon this past May, and was happily surprised to learn that relationships formed mean a great deal to mentees and their mentors.

Let's explore expanding our program beyond Berkshire County. By bringing lifelong learning classes to neighboring communities we can grow our membership base and help ensure our financial stability.

Our single greatest asset is our membership. Let's find ways to better identify and tap into the talents and life/work experiences of OLLI members. If Berkshire OLLI is to remain the vibrant organization it is, we need to encourage members to participate on committees, teach classes, form shared interest groups, and help organize special events.



OLLI mentor John Dickson with his mentee Jimmy Jay Chassi, now studying at the University of Southern California



OLLI mentor Linda Sambel with her BCC mentee Dana Willette, a military veteran returning to school

These are just some of the ideas we've discussed. I know there are more ideas. Don't be shy about letting me know what you think. I look forward to hearing from you. Our OLLI is, and always should be a work in progress. Let's keep working and learning together.

— Barbara Lane

PHOTOS BY MEGAN WHILDEN

OLLI's Newest SIG will Focus on Foreign Films

A new Shared Interest Group (SIG) has been created for OLLI members interested in foreign "genre" films such as works by directors of Italy's Neorealism, France's New Wave and Britain's Angry Young Men.

Co-chaired by Christopher Guidette and Alexander Nardacci, the new SIG will meet periodically to view and discuss films that launched new perspectives on the lively arts. *Rome the Open City*, *The Bicycle Thief*, *La Strada*, *The 400 Blows* and *Wild Rice*, are examples of some of the movies to be included. However, film selection will be up to the members of the group and will also include works of German, Japanese, Eastern European, Spanish and Latin American directors.

Films will have English subtitles and will be shown on a large screen in a meeting room soon to be selected.

If you're interested, email Chris Guidette at clguidette@yahoo.com or Alex Nardacci at nardacci@aol.com.

— Chris Guidette



Controversial, Abstract, and Insightful Ideas for Our All-Consuming Curiosity

As our 25th Anniversary comes to a close, 2019 appears to have been a watershed year for OLLI in many ways.

Our membership reached an all-time high, breaking the 1,200 mark and is holding at that level.

What's more, demand for OLLI courses exceeded expectations to such an extent that a second summer term was added to the four semesters we already offer. The new summer term was very well subscribed.

Course participation grew but OLLI's curriculum planners would not shy away from the controversial, the abstract and the deeply insightful, demonstrating our instructors' readiness to satisfy our all-consuming curiosity at a high intellectual level.

Topics included the controversial and searching reflections of Hannah Arendt, the meaning of 'meaning' and truth, and the anti-democratic and unconstitutional acts of Presidents John Adams, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt. You'll see

that bold trend continues as you flip through our course catalogue for the upcoming winter term.

This issue of *OLLI Update* spotlights some of the exciting OLLI events you can anticipate.

In 2020 OLLI will celebrate the centennial of the Constitutional amendment which gives women the right to vote.

In his article on the Suffrage Movement, **Peter Bluhm** examines the remarkable struggle for political equality and OLLI's full-day program on this topic.

In a well-attended "University Day" program earlier in 2019, OLLI confronted the campaign against the stigma of growing old with a bold statement against "ageism." In her coverage of that event, Assistant Editor **Joanna Fribush** writes about changing the culture of aging in her article "Living Longer, Living Better."



OLLI president, **Barbara Lane** appeals to our sense of volunteerism in her "President's Letter." Lane urges members to get involved in a variety of OLLI programs. "If OLLI at BCC is to remain the vibrant organization it is, we need to encourage members to participate on committees, teach classes, form shared interest groups and help

organize special events," she writes.

Also learn about a new Shared Interest Group (SIG) on post-war foreign films, take a brief look at new winter courses and get acquainted with our new OLLI Administrative Assistant, **Andy Ottoson**, in this edition.

And let us hear from you—your comments, story ideas and suggestions. Email me at clguidette@yahoo.com.

Happy New Year! — **Chris Guidette**

PHOTO BY SUSAN GELLER

Celebrating OLLI's 25th Anniversary



OLLI members and guests enjoy the appetizer buffet at our gala celebration

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate OLLI at BCC's 25th anniversary on September 12 at the Proprietor's Lodge overlooking Lake Pontoosuc in Pittsfield. We enjoyed great jazz music by Williams College students, a delicious dinner, and inspiration from OLLI Board President Barbara Lane, Berkshire Community College (BCC) President Ellen Kennedy and former BCC President Barbara Viniar. Barbara Lane and Barbara Viniar also co-chaired the 25th Anniversary Committee. All told there were five present and former OLLI Presidents in attendance, and three BCC Presidents.

BCC President Kennedy said, "It has been an honor for Berkshire Community College to support and collaborate with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute from its beginning as the Berkshire Institute of Lifelong Learning (BILL). Watching the program grow, evolve, and blossom has been inspiring, not just for me, but for the college community and the greater Berkshires community."

In addition, the festive event featured a sing-along of OLLI songs led by Mara Winn and a surprise birthday cake prepared by Arline Breskin for former OLLI President Art Sherman on the occasion of his 91st birthday.

The event raised over \$12,000 to support OLLI's educational programs throughout the Berkshires, thanks to attendees and the many businesses and individuals who purchased tribute ads in the keepsake program book. The program book also featured official commendations from Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, the State Senate

(continued on last page)

PHOTO BY SUSAN GELLER

Talks, Trips, Suffrage Centenary

continued from page 1)

York also produced many other leaders of the suffrage movement, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton (Johnstown), Jane Hunt (Waterloo) and Martha Coffin Wright (Aurora).

In 1848, these women and others organized a conference in Seneca Falls, near Cayuga Lake. The last day of the conference saw a suffrage resolution introduced. Some participants, including Lucretia Mott, thought suffrage one step too far; but an impassioned speech by Frederick Douglass turned the assembly's view, and the resolution was passed.

The Seneca Falls Convention also created a "Declaration of Sentiments" signed by 100 of the delegates. Modeled on our Declaration of Independence, it proclaimed history had been marked by "repeated injuries and usurpation on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her." Like the original American declaration, the new document contained grievances, this time aimed at American men, rather than at the British King George.

The Seneca Falls Convention is often cited as an important beginning for the women's suffrage movement. But the road ahead was long. It took 72 more years until the 19th Amendment was adopted. Taking a still longer view, both the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and the adoption of the 19th Amendment in 1920 can be seen as mileposts in a longer story, still being written, of profound evolution in the social relations between American men and women.

Upcoming OLLI Activities

Over the next year, OLLI and other nearby groups will offer numerous activities related to women's suffrage, including an:

- OLLI course this winter on the Equal Rights Amendment, with Deborah Caine as curator;
- OLLI University Day April 6, 2020 at BCC's main campus on "The Right to Vote: The Fight for Women's Suffrage 1848-1920;"
- OLLI course next spring on women's suffrage; and an
- OLLI trip in 2020 to the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in North Adams.

In addition, the Berkshire Museum is exhibiting portraits and early photographs of most of the principal women who championed women's suffrage. The exhibit, "How Women Shaped History," runs through May 25.

— Peter Bluhm

WINTER 2020 Class Schedule

CLASSES: Tuesday, January 14 – Friday, Feb 27

LR = Limited Registration

TUESDAYS in Great Barrington

T101 *Tuesdays at the Movies: Romantic Comedies*

T102 *The Lais of Marie de France: Werewolves, Hot Tubs, and Courtly Love in 12th-Century England*

T103 *Today's Headlines*

T104 *Finding Your Photographic Vision (LR)*

T105 *Eating Between the Lines: Poems About Food (LR)*

T106 **JUST ADDED:** *Introduction to Lovingkindness Meditation (LR)* (2nd session)

WEDNESDAYS in Pittsfield & Williamstown

W101 *Reading Short Stories Aloud: Open Endings*

W102 *Wallace Stevens: The Poetics of the Imagination*

W103 *Mythology in the Original Latin: Ovid and Virgil*

W104 *Introduction to Lovingkindness Meditation (LR)*

FULL: see second class section on Tuesdays T106

W105 *How is Music Conceived and Created?*

THURSDAYS at the Berkshire Museum

R101 *The Splendor of Schubert*

R102 *1862: Transforming the Union*

R103 *The Equal Rights Amendment: History, Prospects, Scope*

FRIDAYS in Pittsfield

F101 *Freight is Great: The Supply Chains that Deliver the Goods to You*

F102 *Advances in Medicine*

F103 *Science Conversations*

Register safely and securely online anytime at www.berkshireolli.org, mail in the registration form, or give the OLLI Office a call at **413.236.2190** to register by phone with a credit card. Please note that BCC and the OLLI Office will be closed from December 21 through January 1, so no phone registrations may be taken during that time.

OLLI UPDATE

Editor: Christopher Guidette

Feature Writer: Joanna Fribush

Contributing Writers: Peter Bluhm, Barbara Lane, Megan Whilden

Copy Editor: Sandi Rubin

Designer: Jane McWhorter



A panel discussion on the importance of social engagement at the “Living Longer, Living Better: Changing the Culture of Aging” University Day. Panelists included, from left to right, Carole Siegel, Sam Bittman, Erica Girgenti, Will Singleton, and Steve Thaxton

she said, likening the term “ageism” to racism, sexism and other prejudicial isms. She stressed that we must reject negative stereotypes of aging, which pit us against ourselves: “Aging is living, not a problem or a disease.” Applewhite cited statistics showing that many common assumptions on aging are not true. Most elders won’t get dementia, are not unhappy, and do not live in nursing homes. We should make friends of all ages and join forces to dismantle ageism. It’s time for a “Radical Age Movement” to make the world a better place to be “Age Proud.”

Applewhite’s book *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism* focuses on

positive aspects of aging and encourages readers to form a powerful movement, like those which challenge racism and sexism, to react against discrimination and stereotyping on the basis of age.

OLLI supports and encourages anti-ageism through its many courses, programs, trips and social gatherings. Twenty-five local “Creative Elders” were recognized with pictures and bios exhibited in the entrance to the Boland Theatre. This exhibit was on view at the Statehouse in Boston, arranged by Mass. State Sen. Adam Hinds, and will be at Williamstown’s Milne Library in January.

Following Applewhite’s keynote

remarks, members attended one of two concurrent morning sessions and Civic Engagement and Aging in Place.

The “Civic Engagement” panel of experts was moderated by Hinds. Each of the four panelists stressed the need for older adults to take action in their communities and statewide. Representatives from AARP and Age-Friendly Berkshires spoke about their efforts to improve all aspects of living conditions for older adults in Berkshire County. Howard Shapiro, co-founder of “Villages of the Berkshires” part of nation-wide “Villages” program, spoke on their goal to provide services for people living at home. Some 90-percent of older adults prefer staying in their homes, as opposed to living in institutions. “Villages” provides broad support for the those who prefer to age at home, including daily call-in services, social activities, personal and home tasks and transportation.

The University Day on aging also included workshops on health care and social engagement. Applewhite addressed health care stating it is incorrect to assume, as many physicians do, that older people benefit less from medical treatment than younger ones. “If your doctor says to you ‘at your age what do you expect?’ it’s time to find a new doctor.”

— Joanna Fribush

Calling OLLI Chefs

Last Chance to Purchase Berkshire OLLI Cookbook

If you’ve been yearning to try something new in the kitchen, you might bake a gluten-free Irish soda bread or whip up a batch of ‘kitchen sink cookies.’ The OLLI 25th Anniversary Cookbook will show you how.

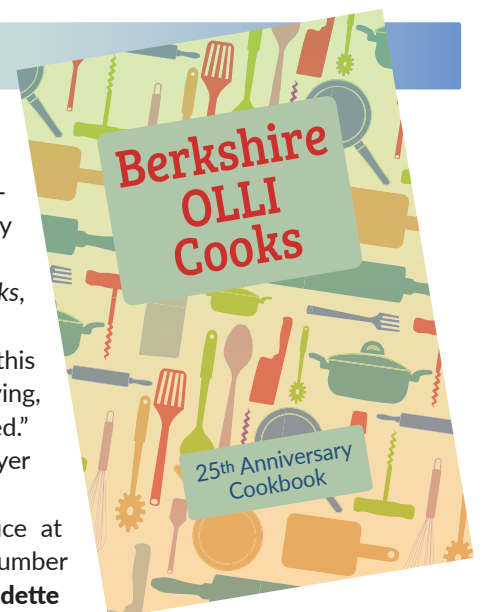
Recipes for these and other culinary adventures are featured in *Berkshire OLLI Cooks*, which is full of recipes offered by food enthusiasts among our members.

Carolyn Fabricant, editor of the first-ever OLLI cookbook, asks readers to “think of this book as an invitation to a buffet party with samples to excite your palate, satisfy a craving, or simply provide that deep feeling of contentment one gets from good food well-prepared.”

So, if you are entertaining, consider treating your guests to Carol Sabot’s desert of Meyer Lemon Polenta Budino, a savory, unusual pudding served with a scoop of vanilla gelato.

To purchase a copy of the OLLI 25th Anniversary Cookbook, call the OLLI office at (413) 236-2190 or log on to www.BerkshireOLLI.org for information. Only a limited number are available.

— Chris Guidette



Thank You to Our Generous Donors

OLLI depends on the generosity of members like you to support our dynamic education programs. Inserted in this newsletter is a donation envelope—please give generously this year to support the classes, trips, talks, shared interest groups and other events that bring joy to so many. You may also donate online at berkshireolli.org/donate or call and donate by phone: 413-236-2190.

OLLI's affordable membership and registration fees cover only half of our expenses. Your generosity makes the difference. Thank you to the individuals and businesses who supported OLLI over the past year from July 1, 2018 through September 31, 2019. We are grateful to each of you.

PH.D.

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 honor of Megan Whilden

**GIFTS MADE IN HONOR
 OF OTHERS**

Craig Vickers, in memory of
 Larry Robbins

Meet Andy Ottoson

An OLLI Profile

That friendly, engaging voice you've been hearing whenever you call the OLLI office is probably that of Andy Ottoson, our new administrative assistant.

The tall and youthful-looking 38-year-old took over his new responsibilities as assistant to Executive Director Megan Whilden on August 5, succeeding Norah Beauregard who has joined BCC's marketing team.

Besides assisting Whilden in day-to-day management of OLLI operations, Ottoson handles bookings and logistics for OLLI's many courses and special events. A graduate of Webster University in St. Louis, Mo., Ottoson also assists with the production of many of OLLI's publications, including the OLLI quarterly course catalogue. He is a native of Prior Lake, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis.

"We are so fortunate to have him," said OLLI President Barbara Lane. "He has big shoes to fill (with Beauregard's departure) and he is doing it nicely," said Lane. Whilden agrees. "From the start he has been a terrific fit with OLLI and

BCC," Whilden said.

Ottoson's professional background is the world of theater and non-profits. He produced, directed and stage-managed theater in New York City and across the country.

From theater Ottoson moved into the non-profit field, working 12 years at NADAP—a social services agency focusing on treatment and employment services for individuals with substance use disorders.

After a long stint in New York, Ottoson moved to the Berkshires with his husband, Branden Huldeen. Together they purchased a home in Pittsfield that was built in 1896. "I continue to love it out here. There's nothing like the Berkshires," he said in a recent interview.

Working at OLLI has given him insights into the world of retirees, Ottoson said. "I see that retirement can be a time of



awakening. And I've learned about the vitality of our members. I've really enjoyed learning how much there is to look forward to as you get older. Retirement is not necessarily a time of just puttering around," he said.

Ottoson says he's enjoying settling into his new position and in the long run may explore returning to arts management. He

is also exploring pursuing his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree through BCC's affiliation with The University of Massachusetts.

For now, though, Ottoson's focus remains fixed on helping keep OLLI operations running smoothly and he is pleased to be part of this organization.

— Chris Guidette



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and House of Representatives. State Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, who represents most of Pittsfield, where OLLI is headquartered, made the presentations.

Bernard Osher, for whom OLLI is named, also sent a letter of congratulations. "The development of your institute over the past two and a half decades has engaged the energy and talents of countless devoted and generous people, from dedicated members and volunteers to outstanding program staff and administrators. The progress of your dynamic program has been simply remarkable since the Osher Foundation made its first grant in March 2007. . . We salute your extraordinary success and collective achievements as you come together in celebration of your common purpose: to explore new ideas, to share wisdom and insights, and to form new and lasting friendships."
 — Megan Whilden



OLLI Art Show Committee Chair Chelly Sterman and Social Science Curriculum Chair Virginia O'Leary, both OLLI board members, with Performing Arts Initiative Co-chair Barbara Waldinger



Sue and Howard Arkans. Howard is a former OLLI at BCC President and longtime OLLI instructor

PHOTOS BY SUSAN GELLER