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OLLI E-News

The electronic newsletter for members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University



ISSUE DATE: Friday, July 13, 2007 [Click to read about this newsletter](#)

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ALERT

> **BOARD MEETING:** 10:00 Fri, Jul 20, Tallwood. Agenda will be emailed to the membership prior to the meeting. All members welcome; public comments solicited before adjournment.

ARTICLES AND NOTICES

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IN MEMORIAM

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OFFSITE CLASS LOCATIONS

TA-3 replacement locations for next two weeks



By [Ann Hartmann](#), Tallwood Site Administrator/OLLI Registrar

HERE ARE THE OFFSITE CLASS LOCATIONS for the last two weeks of the summer term. These locations are on the Mason Campus:

DATE	COURSE	LOCATION
Tue 7/17/2007	#25: War of the Triple Alliance	Robinson Hall B
Wed 7/18/2007	#41: James Joyce's The Dead	Krug Hall
Thu 7/19/2007	#59: Maverick Autobiographies	Robinson Hall B
Tue 7/24/2007	#29: Older and Better	Krug Hall
Wed 7/25/2007	#43: Yeats' "The Wild Swans at Coole"	Krug Hall
Thu 7/26/2007	#61: Viruses, Birds and Us	Robinson Hall B

All other courses will remain at Tallwood or Reston respectively.

Registered members of each class will receive either an email or phone call with directions and parking information prior to the class. This information will also be available in the office.

If you have not received an email or phone call by the day before your class, please call the office between 9 and noon.

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NEW CLASS AT LOUDOUN

Intelligent, Conscious Machines: What Are They and Why Should Anybody Care?

Tue, Jul 24, 10:00–11:30

Instructor: James Wentworth

This lecture will briefly recap the June 21st lecture, i.e.:

- > The role of consciousness
- > Why would we want intelligent, conscious machines
- > How would they affect our everyday lives

... and substantially expand:

- > Applications of conscious machines
- > Progress to date
- > Conscious machine ethics

This will give us time to look more carefully at philosophical implications and how society may be changed by these things. The session will be an active class discussion.

This class is open to all OLLI and OLLI-Loudoun members. There are three ways to register:

1. Call OLLI-Tallwood at 703-503-3384
2. Email us at olli@gmu.edu
3. Register in person with May Rosendahl at the OLLI-Loudoun office or at Tallwood between 9:00 and noon.



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OVERVIEW OF NEW REGISTRATION SYSTEM

From the executive director



By [Dick Chobot](#), Executive Director

THIS IS THE FIRST OF FOUR ARTICLES on the new online registration system that will be available to OLLI members this fall. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of how the system was developed. Subsequent articles will cover: Features and Functionality of the Registration System; Changes in the Registration Process; and Paying by Credit Card. Registration for the fall begins on Wed, Aug 22.

The impetus for the upgrade was the age of the Microsoft Access application

then in use; the fact that breakdowns in table links were causing increased inefficiency; the fact that the database and application software were installed on only one computer; and the security need to back up the data and hold the back-up tape off-site.

An Advisory Committee was formed to work with me to develop a functional specification for the new software. The committee was chaired by Ben Gold and consisted of Pat Carroll, Pat Cosslett, Michael Coyne, Charles Duggan, and Rod Zumbro. A proposal was solicited from Ken McLean, the designer of the Arlington LRI online registration system. The proposal was approved by the OLLI Board. The cost for the system is \$20,000, of which \$13,000+ will be paid by funds from the Friends of OLLI and \$6,000+ will be covered from 2007 budgeted funds. IF OLLI at American University agrees to acquire the software also – as that institute did our original Access database application – the cost to us will be reduced by \$5,000.

Following a functional specification approved by the committee, the OLLI member database was first ported to a third-party Internet Service Provider. This had the immediate effect of making that database available to all staff with the installed interface and increasing data security by having the data stored and backed up off-site.

Mr. McLean then redesigned the tables in the database to address certain documented shortcomings of the Access application. A new interface also was created that allowed Ann and other staff to use the new database during summer registration for data entry and letter/class-list generation. This use served as a test of the database and resulted in some modifications and the development of additional needed queries.



Online registration system home page at www.olliatgmu.edu

During this time, Mr. McLean also was designing the Web interface that will allow OLLI members to perform a number of online functions, including registration, updating of personal information, and course drop/add. If you want to see the site (image above), go to www.olliatgmu.org. Next week, we will tell you how to get a User Account, which you need to fully use the site's features. For now, you might want to click on "View the Latest Course Information." This will take you to a display of summer 2007 course information in a new format that you will be able to use, in conjunction with the print and online catalog (which will still be published) as desired, in planning your future course selections before registering.

In addition, the administrative functions include the generation of confirmation letters and an OLLI Membership Directory and the tracking of class and term statistics. The system also will allow for the online payment of fees using PayPal/VeriSign. This is one of the most secure online environments currently in operation – an industry standard that features 128-bit encryption.

We offered credit card payment during summer registration, with staff doing the processing. This method of payment was well-received by many of those registering. We hope this will transfer to the fall registration. If a member is unwilling to use online payment, they will have to register manually for the time

being.

So where are we? We have a totally redesigned database and registration system. The software used to develop the system is industry standard, which should ease the challenge of system maintenance and upgrading. For the first time, members will be able to register and pay fees online. This will be both a convenience for the member and save staff hours that can be devoted to other tasks.

Next week's article will describe each feature and function of the registration system and will walk you through the steps in getting your new user account. To get a user account, you will have to be a current member.

The system will be demonstrated at Tallwood (TA-1) at noon on Tue, Jul 17, Wed, Jul 18 and Thu, Jul 19. A demonstration also will be scheduled in Reston if we can achieve a reliable wireless connection at the church site. Members are invited to attend one of the sessions.

Change is difficult ... we appreciate your patience as we move forward with the introduction of the new system and software.

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IDEAS FLOW ON SOCIALIZING AT OLLI

Highlights of this Monday's meeting



By Carol Henderson, Board member

ON A HOT AFTERNOON, some 22 members were full of thoughts on how to strengthen the social aspects of OLLI. The air-conditioning in TA-1 was working, but the ideas were so sizzling that the fans had to be turned on. Debbie Halverson, both as president and as the most recent chair of the membership committee, had called the meeting and chaired the 90-minute session.

Among the ideas sparked:

- > Form a singles club to help members meet and identify those folks with similar interests like travel, movies, dinner out, etc.
- > Use an OLLI bulletin board or find ways to link members with similar interests as in the first suggestion.
- > Form a supper club, a potluck club. Keep those restaurant lunches coming.
- > After meeting initially at Tallwood to determine interest in a particular area, consider continuing meetings in members' homes.
- > Have a "mixer" where members draw lots and are paired up for 5-10 minute conversations, then move on...perhaps interspersing these conversations with

refreshments.

- > Some special classes might take a clue from Readers' Theater and Singing for Fun classes and organize parties occasionally in members' homes, perhaps at end of term.

- > Encourage new members to sign up for small discussion classes, such as Literary Roundtable, that foster stories, interactions and friendships.

- > Find a way to inform members of other OLLI members who live near them.

- > Encourage groups from a morning class to form impromptu lunches to discuss the class topic, perhaps using liaisons to announce a leader and ask those interested to see him or her after class.

- > Try once-a-month Friday movies again on specific topics with discussion to follow.

- > Hold a pool party.

- > Start a ballroom dancing class or a folk dancing class.

- > Determine if OLLI's backyard would support croquet or bocce games.

- > Set up a mentor program where new members would each get a mentor.

This person would receive a call during the first term with follow-up should the new member desire it. Question "Do you want a mentor?" could be included on the registration form.

- > Make use of Tallwood on Friday afternoons and between terms when appropriate.

- > All new ventures should make use of our well-read *OLLI E-News* for publicity and the bulletin boards should become must-read sources of information.

Program Review Committee Chair Bruce Reinhart said he felt we were on to something and noted that his research with church congregations indicated that small groups within the membership help churches become more successful.

Debbie concluded the meeting with the request that the ideas continue coming; she said that they will be publicized and that volunteers would be asked to help implement suggestions.

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THE GOLDEN GAZETTE

A useful free resource



By Elizabeth Crawford, OLLI E-News staff writer

GOLDEN GAZETTE
A Monthly Newspaper for Senior Adults in the Fairfax Area
JULY 2007 Serving Seniors for 37 Years VOL. 31, NO. 1

Fan Care & Summer Cooling Assistance
Summer heat and humidity can be physically stressful and dangerous to the elderly. To help ensure their health and comfort, the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (FAAA) announces the 17th year of the Fan Care Program, an electric fan service and conditioner distribution program sponsored by Dominion Virginia Power in partnership with the Virginia Department for the Aging. This program runs from June 1 to September 30, 2007.

The AAA and FAAG have an air conditioners and makes them available, free of charge, to income-eligible seniors who have a working home situation that prevents them from their well being. The fans and air conditioners become the property of the individual. Arrangements can be made for a fan or an air conditioner to be delivered to those individuals who are unable to pick them up from our offices.

The Summer Cooling Assistance Program, funded by the Virginia Department of Social Services, assists income-eligible households with cooling equipment and services or payment of new electric bills. This program runs from June 1 to August 15, 2007. Funds for this program are very limited. Completed applications will be processed in the order received.

AUTOMOBILE REPAIR PARTS
to (lyn) fax, inspector
Customer Request Form

Before you authorize repairs to your vehicle, ask if there is a charge for written estimates. If you authorize the written estimate, ask if the facility charges by the hour or flat rate (if the job). Under Virginia law, the invoice may not exceed the written estimate by more than 10%, unless authorized by you. If you leave your car at an Early Bird service, request a written estimate for the estimate.

Automobile repair facilities must post a "Customer Rights" sign, displaying your consumer rights (see p. 6). Failure to post this sign is a violation of the Automobile Repair Facilities Act.

Repair estimates must separate the charges for parts and labor on an invoice. Do not accept an invoice that does not show these charges.

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE AN OLLI MEMBER who does not already have more than enough to read, but the *Golden Gazette* newspaper, published by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, deserves a browse. If you have ever glanced at the *Golden Gazette*, you may have seen a large section that covers activities at senior centers throughout the county, concluded that you are busy enough with all that OLLI offers, and stopped reading. A further look at the *Gazette*, however, reveals brief articles on pertinent topics.

The July 2007 issue, for example, includes tips on the rights of customers when dealing with Virginia auto repair facilities and suggestions to "grandchild-proof" your home. Additional articles to help readers avoid giving a chunk of their estates to Uncle Sam and to explain new Virginia safety laws do a good job of simplifying material that is generally complex. Readers will usually find a phone number to call for more information. Volunteer opportunities are listed, and even some of the age-related ads may be of use.

The *Golden Gazette* is free and may be found in libraries and supermarkets. To be added to the mailing list, you may call 703-324-5633 or email goldengazette@fairfaxcounty.gov (large-print and recorded formats also available). An abridged (ad-free) online version is also available at this [county Website page](#).

RELATED LINKS

SIMILAR USEFUL PRINT RESOURCES targeted for seniors include--

- > **Senior Beacon** -- free monthly newsletter, usually available at OLLI in the social room ([online information](#))

- > **AARP The Magazine** and **AARP Bulletin** (newspaper) -- published monthly, sent free to AARP members (online information: [The Magazine](#) and [Bulletin](#))

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GMU ANNOUNCES THE "ARTS AT MASON FESTIVAL"

Looking ahead to June 2008



By Eileen and Charles Duggan, OLLI members

SUMMER 2008 MAY SEEM A LONG WAY OFF, but plans are already underway at George Mason University for a three-week performing arts festival to be held from Jun 12, 2008, to Jun 29, 2008. The festival, to be known as the Arts at Mason Festival, will feature theater, music, dance, the visual arts, film and more.

This will be a true festival event and will use virtually all the arts facilities on the Mason campus. Multiple performances and events will be held simultaneously with weekend activities starting in the morning and ending late in the evening. A Festival Café will offer food and beverages in the lobby of the Center for the Performing Arts.

The Theater of the First Amendment (TFA), under the leadership of Mason's Center for the Arts, is organizing the program. Kevin Murray, TFA's managing director, indicated that Mason wishes to showcase the many talented artists and performers who make up the arts community in Fairfax County. "We view Fairfax as the capital center of Northern Virginia," Kevin said, "and as such, we need to celebrate our vibrant arts community."

While much of the Festival's emphasis will be on professional work, Kevin and Jim Maiwurm, the Festival Director, plan to include the faculty, the students and the community as well. Kevin and Jim have expressed the desire to involve OLLI members and indicated that there will be ample opportunity for OLLI participation in many of the arts projects. We will be reporting on these opportunities in the coming months, but now is a good time to mark the Festival on your 2008 calendar.

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IT'S NOT TOO LATE

Two months to get ready



By [Rod Zumbro](#), OLLI E-News editor



OLLI Senior Olympians, 2006 (see [article about them](#))

CALLING ALL OLLI SENIOR OLYMPIANS: The next Northern Virginia Senior Olympics is two months from now, Sat, Sep 15, through Thu, Sep 27. You have plenty of time to do some practicing and get ready for your events!

OLLI members have regularly had fun and won medals at the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. Competition among one's peers is exciting, and there are events at these Olympics for just about everyone -- some athletic, others non-athletic -- or you can go to cheer on your OLLI colleagues.

Here's a sampling (not a complete list) of events.

> Track & field	> Tennis (doubles, mixed doubles); Pickle-Ball
> Ten-pin bowling	> Backgammon; Chess;
> Basketball (3x3; free throw)	> Cribbage; Duplicate Bridge
> Swimming	> Golf; miniature golf
	> Eight-ball pool; table tennis

For complete information including rules, schedule, registration and event locations (there are several venues), see the [Northern Virginia Senior Olympics](#)

[Website.](#)

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COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS ABOUT OLLI?

HERE'S HOW to express your views--

> **Publicly** (if you would like your comments published in this newsletter):
 Email your "Letter to the Editor" or "Letter to Ms. Ollie Ettakit" to the [editor](#).
 Whenever an official response is clearly appropriate, the editor will obtain and publish the OLLI response in the same issue so members will have more complete information and a balanced picture of the matter.

> **Privately--**

- > Contact any [Board member](#) or the [Executive Director](#);
- > Send an email to the entire Board (email the [editor](#) or the [office](#) to have your message forwarded to all members of the Board);
- > Submit a suggestion [online](#) or in the box in the Tallwood social room or on one of the "parking lots for ideas" in classrooms; or
- > Contact the office by [email](#) or phone (703-503-3384).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A forum for members to voice their views on OLLI matters
 WE WILL PUBLISH your brief letters about OLLI and, if a response seems appropriate, we will include an OLLI response from the executive director or the applicable officer or committee chair in the same issue. Submit your letter via [email to the editor](#) or submit it as a "letter to the editor" via the [online suggestion box](#) or the suggestion box in the Tallwood Social Room. To be published in a given Friday's issue, the editor must receive the letter no later than 7:00 pm on Monday so that any applicable OLLI response can also be published. Letters can be published anonymously but you must include your name and email address or phone number so we can verify that you are an OLLI member.

Suggestion about landscaping budget

Being a serious gardener myself I feel I must comment on the large amount of monies spent to enrich the soon-to-be-obsolete Tallwood property. Far too

much money has been spent on high-quality plants; I think we have enough. From now on, we should just care for what we have and add a few annuals for summer maybe \$100 worth ... plus some fertilizer. I hope we can cut this part of the budget. We have to start cutting somewhere and this is as good a place as any. What is to happen to these plants when we move to a new location in a few years?

-- Mary Lou McMorrow, OLLI member

Response from President Debbie Halverson--

The writer's concern is well taken. I would expect that many members have looked at and admired the hard work and the investment that has gone into the OLLIwood gardens and then considered what would happen to all of this if and when we are moved out of the Tallwood space. First, let me point out that we are in the process of concluding negotiations with Mason on our affiliation agreement that includes renewing the current expiring lease. The renewal of that lease is for five years, suggesting that we will be here a while longer than we thought just a little while back, barring any unforeseen problems.

Also, the landscaping committee chair informs us that no new projects in this area are planned, but that maintenance costs will be necessary to keep our investment intact. She further reminds us that from the beginning of the overall landscaping project, she carefully selected those plants that would most likely be transportable or as she puts it "on wheels."

So for now, I think we can continue to breathe in the heady aroma of our gardens unperturbed about their foreseeable future.

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COMING EVENTS AT THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Upcoming arts and music events at Mason



By Jan Bohall, OLLI E-News staff writer

> **Preview of the 2007-2008 season:** For all the details about the upcoming Center for the Arts 2007-2008 season that starts in September 2007 and runs through June 2008, see the Center for the Arts [preview Web page](#).

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MASON HIGHLIGHTS

A brief listing of other Mason events

By Jan Bohall, OLLI E-News staff writer

> **Mason 101** – Learn about the history, organizational structure, and who does what at Mason. Free. Registration required. Call 703-993-1005 or email gmu101@gmu.edu. Wed, Jul 18, 1:00-4:00, Innovation Hall, Room 211.

> **Library Workshop** - "Introduction to Library Research" (the research process, the GMU library system, available electronic resources, and how to organize and evaluate information). Free. Johnson Center Library, Room 228, Thu, Jul 19, 3:00 to 4:30.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Non-class events at OLLI for the next two weeks

The following list covering the next two weeks is extracted for your convenience from the master calendar maintained by the office (see the [OLLI Staff Forecast of Non-Class Events](#) for more details and to view the actual OLLI online calendar). *Board, committee, resource-group and 'membership-type' meetings/events below are **highlighted in bold**. OLLI members are welcome at all Board, committee and resource-group meetings (except executive sessions).*

Friday Jul 13 10am Tallwood Book Club - Tallwood
 10am Recorder Group - TA-2
 Monday Jul 16 10am Bridge Club - TA-1
 Tuesday Jul 17 8:15am Reston Walking Group - Lake Anne Plaza
Friday Jul 20 10am Board of Directors meeting - TA-1
 10am Recorder Group - TA-2
 Tuesday Jul 24 8:15am Reston Walking Group - Lake Anne Plaza
 Friday Jul 27 Summer Semester Ends
 10am Classic Fiction Book Club - Reston Regional Library
 10am Recorder Group - TA-2
 10:30am Homer Book Club - Annex

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OBITUARY

Longtime OLLI member Muriel Davis Walters

MURIEL DAVIS WALTERS

MURIEL DAVIS WALTERS (age 81) -- Died Sun, Jul 8, 2007. She is survived by her son, Lawrence J. Walters, Jr.; daughter, Carole Grider; grandsons, Douglas L. Grider, Daniel L. Walters and Christopher A. Grider; her brothers, Glenn E. Davis and Charles V. Davis. She was predeceased by her husband, Lawrence J. Walters, Sr.

The family will receive friends on Sun, Jul 15, 2007 from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 in the DEMAINE FUNERAL HOME, 5308 Backlick Rd., Springfield, VA 22151.

A funeral service will be held on Mon, Jul 16, at 10:30 in the St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 5800 Backlick Rd., Springfield, VA 22150, with Rev. Michael H. Taylor, officiating. Burial will follow in the Quantico National Cemetery, Triangle, VA.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Muriel's name to the American Cancer Society, 124 Park St., SE, P.O. Box 699, Vienna, VA 22180.

Note: A card has been sent by the office on behalf of the membership. The family address is available in the OLLI office.



Rod Zumbro
Editor



Karen
Hamilton
Deputy Editor

About OLLI E-News. *OLLI E-News*, OLLI's weekly newsletter, is emailed to OLLI members with email addresses on Fridays. When classes are in session, printed copies of this newsletter are distributed in classrooms, primarily for members without email. We encourage OLLI members and staff employees to submit news items and write articles; deadline to the editor is 7:00 PM Wed (Mon for letters to the editor) for that week's issue. Comments, suggestions or complaints? Please contact the [OLLI E-News editor](#) or the Publications Committee chair, [Gordon Canyock](#).

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