Many of you (well, two or three) have asked about the heading for this column. A few of you may have guessed that it is a nod to my school, Georgia Tech. As a Rambling Wreck, I had little to cheer about football-wise this year. My son went to Clemson, so that didn't help much. I attended homecoming last fall and went to several presentations about the school and a tour of the campus. Things have changed a lot in the 50 years since I graduated, and I was very impressed with the physical plant and the things students are achieving. At the same time, I was glad I went there when I did and didn't have to be measured against these bright, young Yellow Jackets. They are not alone. Students at many schools, including Furman, are achieving wonderful things. They seem ready and able to tackle the immense problems previous generations, including ours, have left them, and, as a result, Buzz and I have hope for the future.

If you are reading a hard copy, remember, *Gray Matters* is on the OLLI website in full color. Just click on “Member Resources” and then “Gray Matters” to view this issue and past editions.

Thanks to Carole Eisen, Sue Renault, Judy Aten, and Nancy Kennedy for proofing this issue. Heidi Wright puts the issues on the website and arranges for the printing. The rest of the OLLI staff and Brad Bechtold also check the content. Thanks to all who contributed articles and photos. Thanks also to our *Gray Matters* fact checkers, Neara Nuff and Lila Kadogg.
As one of 18 OLLI Curriculum subcommittees, the Photography Subcommittee may be perhaps the largest with a dozen+ members at any given time. Our membership includes active OLLI instructors and skilled practitioners with an enduring love of photography. With the advent of smartphones, photography has evolved from one more hobby to a ubiquitous life skill. Our mission is to offer a broad range of photography-oriented courses to all OLLI members, including practical technique, appreciation of the art, and in-the-field application. Our classes are highly visual in nature, and are held in Herring Center classrooms and on location in the Upstate where excellent photo opportunities consistently reside! Our curriculum includes classes in technique, creative and artistic photography, and post-shoot image processing. One of the keys to our success is that we have fun and learn from each other. It is not unusual for an OLLI photographer to decide to journey out with her/his camera and contact others to join in on the adventure. We have formalized this approach to team photography with our Photography Special Interest Group (SIG) and have found that we learn the most when we are with others, challenging ourselves and others to make better and better images. Proof of the merits of our approach is the consistently high quality of the OLLI Photography Showcase artwork you can now enjoy on the wall of the Crabtree Room. While the majority of this work product is provided by our photography students, we invite all OLLI members and staff to submit pictures when requested. Finally, our hope is that you pick up your camera, possibly scan your owner’s manual, take an OLLI photography class or two, and join the growing number of OLLI photographers. And, oh yes, maybe become a member of the OLLI Photography SubCommittee!

To learn more about the Curriculum Committee contact Jim Smeaton at jimsmeaton@gmail.com or Sonya Hammond at ollisonya@gmail.com. For more about the Photography Subcommittee contact Greg at peters5369@gmail.com or Jeff at JGSarvis@gmail.com.

WHERE IN FURMAN ARE WE?

This one is pretty much a “gimmie.” It is something you see often if you come to the Herring Center. In fact, you walk right past it. Also, it has a twin. It changes regularly, depending on the time of year. If you really need it, the answer is below, and if you know “what” it is, you need to know “who” is involved.

Answer: One of the pair of urns at the entrance to the Herring Center. Kathy Dwyer has taken the responsibility for these urns and does a tremendous job making them look nice year around.
Tom Saccenti - FUPO’s Chief

What is FUPO? It’s “student” for Furman University Police Office, and Tom Saccenti is its Chief. He’s not what you’d expect as the head of a police department. There’s not a gray hair on his young head, but don’t let that fool you. He is a uniquely qualified Chief.

Tom joined the Pioneer, Ohio, police department at the tender age of 18. The small town had an equally small department, and officer Saccenti advanced from a patrolman to a detective when he was 20. Five years later, he was the municipal police chief. During that time, he helped out nearby Trine State College in Angola, Indiana, a few times. Not long after, Tom was approached by the Trine’s Dean of Students to see if he would be interested in establishing a campus police department for them. If he agreed to the job, Trine State would pay for his education. So, while developing and running Trine State’s police department, Tom earned his BA in criminal justice and BS in psychology.

Some time later, he was approached by Marietta College in Ohio, the first private college in that state to have its own police department. Their officers were not armed, and, after the situation at Virginia Tech, they wanted someone to take over as their police chief and help train and arm their officers. Tom got the department accredited and then approached the faculty with an arming policy. During his time at Marietta College, Tom earned a masters degree in criminology and a second one in higher education. By then, he had determined that he would never return to municipal police work.

Municipal police chiefs submit their proposals for consideration to a group of individuals with varying amounts of education, which often means the proposal is not scrutinized or considered as it should be. Politics can be the driving force behind decisions, not the department’s or community’s needs. Campus police chiefs, on the other hand, submit proposals to an educated group who are more likely to consider a proposal logically - doing what is best for the college and not themselves.

A youth pastor at his church, it is clear that Tom genuinely likes working with young people. He says that college comes at a critical time in their lives. These young people have a chance to explore a wide variety of opportunities in life, as well as gain an understanding of the value of a number of things, including what a police department can offer them. He considers the department’s mission as more than protection; he views it as a part of their education.

Colleges in small towns are great, but in time Marietta College’s town didn’t offer the amenities he wanted for his growing family. Tom began searching for the perfect place - a college with a good reputation, a student population of about 2,000, an established police department with about 20
officers, and a good endowment to ensure that none of his officers would be laid off if times got tight. When one of his buddies told him that Furman’s Chief was leaving after 36 years, Tom put in an application. He has been with Furman for 3 years now.

Have you noticed the new police cars patrolling the campus? Tom told us that it’s a tradition to change the paint on patrol cars when a new chief comes on board. It says, “Hey, there’s a new sheriff in town!” It’s hard to miss those police cars now, for they certainly stand out! Who was responsible for those spiffy designs? Furman art students! Tom approached the art department, asked for its input, chose the best one of the designs, and then added his own touch - words in the swish on the side that he felt described his police officers. If there was any doubt about his desire to work with college students, this project proves his devotion to the college and its students.

Furman’s police department consists of 25, whose duties include parking management, dispatch, and driving buses. Approximately 15 are commissioned officers, the only ones allowed to carry guns. Theirs is the first college police department in the state to put body cameras on its officers. It helps the officers if there is a complaint against one of them to show what really happened. Tom believes in change, and he has been very successful with those he has made.

Furman offered the “safe ride” program for students who needed a ride at night. Pretty soon the safe ride turned into a courtesy ride as students began asking to be taken to places on campus during the day. Tom decided a courtesy ride needed to be added. They recently acquired a trolley to give students rides around campus from 7 a.m. to noon and transport them downtown on weekends and back to campus safely at night.

The one duty his department carries out that Tom does not like is overseeing parking. He can tell when the officer in charge of parking patrol is gone for a few days, for students get a bit brazen and start parking where they shouldn’t when they realize no tickets are being handed out. Students mistakenly assume the tickets are “a grab for money.” Not a penny of those fines goes to the campus police. They have their own budget. It’s a distasteful job, but enforcing the rules is their job. They know there is never a good feeling about that ticket, and Tom’s officers work hard to build up good ties with Furman students. In fact, there’s a basket of lollipops on the counter near their office door - something sweet for a bad day.

Tom believes he and his officers are at their best when handling students in crisis. He truly cares about Furman’s students and takes part in what they call a “wellness check.” It is not unusual for Tom to get a call from a student’s friend or someone in a dorm or apartment telling him their friend or someone down the hall is crying or displaying signs of depression. Professors may call to report a student who has missed some classes and request a wellness check. Tom or an officer will check up on the student and provide what they need, and whether it’s a sympathetic chat, a referral to
student services, or a trip to the hospital, someone is there to see to their needs. If there is a serious crime on campus, Tom turns the issue over to the proper authorities either in Travelers Rest or Greenville County to ensure that things are handled properly and smoothly, and without any appearance of bias. Whenever an ambulance is needed, an officer in a patrol car will meet it at the main gate and guide it to the proper location to ensure that help arrives quickly. Tom adds that when people, including OLLI folks, have an emergency on campus, they are to call 911 and stay on the line.

Married for 13 years, Tom has five children, ages 1 month and 2, 4, 6, and 8 years old. Tom met his future wife through one of his good friends at church, who is now his brother-in-law. Tom offers a wide grin as he tells how his Hispanic wife adapted her cooking to his Italian upbringing by providing what must be a favorite dish: Mexican lasagna…spicy and great.

It seems Tom has found the perfect city for his family and the perfect place to use his talents. Judging from the smile on his face as he discusses his work and his pride in working for Furman, we think he has.

Assistant Chief David Enter
He Always Knew What He Wanted To Do

David was born in Georgetown, where his father worked for the International Paper Company. When David was a toddler, his father transferred to Sumter and later turned down another transfer to stay there, working in construction. In 1968 the family relocated to Greenville, where they settled for good. David says his humble background served him well. His parents instilled in David, his two sisters, and older brother the value of work: You went to work every day, and you used that work to take care of your family. It’s a value he treasures.

After graduating from high school, David was not interested in attending college; he wanted to be a policeman. Of course, someone as young as he was at the time might never get hired by a police department, but this sharp teenager had a plan. By enlisting in the Army for 3 years instead of the required 2 and asking to be trained to become a military police officer, he would gain the skills he needed. David signed on the dotted line, passed the required skills tests, and soon was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia, for military police training after basic at Fort Jackson.

David did his tour of duty in the Panama Canal Zone. His 2-1/2 years there were “great;” working in a beautiful locale with wonderful weather, assigned to a variety of assignments. When his time was up, he was still young to be looking for police work, but he had an advantage of having been an Army military police officer. The Greenville County Sheriff’s Office appreciated that, and David went to work as a Greenville County deputy. While he was employed there, David earned an associate’s degree in criminal justice and a bachelor’s degree in management. David started off as a patrol deputy. Eventually he became a patrol sergeant, then a patrol lieutenant, and then went off to Quantico and the FBI Academy. The little boy who was tongue tied and had speech therapy for 3 years became the official spokesperson for the Sheriff’s Office. He was then promoted to captain overseeing the patrol units and then transferred into the Detective Division, where he served as captain for 9 years. As he puts it, the phone was always ringing and he was always on call. It seemed about time to do something a bit less “busy” - retirement.
David tried the insurance business for a while but found it not to his liking. It just so happened that David’s house was across the street from Furman. He heard there was an opening there, and he took a stroll over to the campus. David started out as a regular patrol officer, enjoying meeting and working with the students, faculty, and staff. He was promoted to patrol supervisor at Furman, then promoted to department investigator, and then became second in command. He starts his days as he did when he started with the Sheriff’s Office, taking a drive around the campus to see what is going on.

David says Furman is like any small town. It has crimes. Petty theft is the most common type. Students think of Furman as a bubble with nothing ever happening here. They have a false sense of security, often leaving their car, dorm, or apartment doors unlocked, an open invitation to thievery. Some also have a bad habit of leaving valuables out in the open, resulting in crimes of opportunity. Bicycles are often targets. They are usually recovered on campus, where the student who “borrowed” it dumped it after reaching their campus destination, making it hard to catch the culprit. Other crimes happen too, but Furman is still a very safe place to be. A little precaution would prevent most incidents. He says the beautiful campus and great people make Furman a wonderful place to work.

David’s been in law enforcement for over 41 years now, and it’s getting close to retirement time again. He thoroughly enjoyed his work in the military and the Sheriff’s Office, as well as his time at Furman. David is married with two daughters and two grandchildren, and his wife will retire soon from Michelin. He loves boating, for he lived near the water as a boy, and his Dad took him fishing; they enjoyed the outdoors and just being on the water. He and his wife boat the local lakes or go to the coast and travel the inter-coastal waterway. Besides boating, David golfs, and bicycles. He has bicycled across the state several times but says those trips are generally over. Now he loves riding the Swamp Rabbit Trail to downtown Greenville. In addition, he also enjoys day hiking and declares he plans to join OLLI after his retirement to go hiking with us. Since Furman is “next door,” he can always go walking around the Furman campus if he gets bored, which is highly doubtful.

If reality followed the stereotypes, Tom would be the “New Boss” that comes in, makes a bunch of changes in a heavy-handed way, thinks the existing personnel are incompetent, and earns the dislike of the whole department. David would be the “Old Hand” who tries to correct the “New Boss” while undermining him. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tom has made changes, but he makes every effort to ensure that one is successful before instituting another. In his interview, we could tell he is proud of the department personnel, especially David, saying “We are really going to miss him when he retires.” David referenced the changes but indicated they had been good for the department and had nothing but praise for Tom’s abilities. It seems the Furman University Police Department is symbolized by a picture in David’s office. It shows a uniformed Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman in the snow, but instead of arresting a criminal he is holding a small fawn. Like him, FUPO is standing strong while protecting all of us in the Furman community.

OLLI MEMBERS AT BASKETBALL

Several OLLI @ Furman members attended a Furman basketball game in December. Purple, of course, was the color of the day, and each participant received a gift of a “Furman Basketball” tee shirt from Furman. The Paladins came through after a slow start to end with a convincing win over Liberty. All in all, it was a good evening.

GRAY MATTERS NEEDS HELP!

In an effort to continually improve Gray Matters, we are looking for more participation from the OLLI membership. We are especially interested in having columns in each issue about OLLI classes. If you would like to conduct interviews, write articles, or have another way you would like to contribute, get in touch with Gary Aten at the following: e-mail: gary.aten42@gmail.com or phone; 307-871-1050. Work will need to be done with Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. Of course, we always welcome articles, photos, and poems from the membership. Use the above contact information and get involved!

COCOA AND CAROLS WITH THE CHORALE

The Herring Chamber Ensemble of the Greenville Chorale presented a program of seasonal music in the Manly Lobby. The event, on December 14, was well attended, and there were plenty of snacks and warm drinks. OLLI members joined in and sang along with some of the selections.
A TENDER AGE

Bob Strother

I lie awake in the darkness remembering how my skin, now paper-thin and creped, once crackled under your touch. How we lay intertwined, sated and dozing; a pool of sweat collecting in your belly-button as the afternoon sun stole through the blinds and painted fiery streaks across our bed.

Time is a cunning thief, stretching out of sight only to reappear when we least expect it, looming large over our shoulders. Too late we realize that the privileges of youth are never surrendered; they’re simply taken from us. Then I feel your arm slide across my chest, feel the warmth of your breath on my neck, and I weep.

CRAYON BOX

Judith Zeimer

Cad me yuuuuuum red, ignition for the blue-black of unsighted seeing; then green punchy enough to bruise your eyelids. Yellow, another cad, boxes my eardrums while purple screams for more consideration.

LISTEN TO ME

Elizabeth B. Watson

There’s no need to yell. We’re in this together. Remember our agreement. Don’t walk away.

As hard as it is to hear there has to be changes; a new level of understanding between us.

Fair warning, I will run out of patience if you turn your back on me; I won’t follow.

If you have something to say be direct; face me. We can’t deny there’s a problem—Loss of hearing.
CELEBRATE SPRING — PUT SOME SPRING IN YOUR STEP!

Everyone knows a song about walking. Fats Domino’s *I’m Walking*, Blanchard and Morgan’s *Tennessee Bird Walk*, The Ventures’ *Walk, Don’t Run*, … the list goes on and on. Music inspires generations to snap their fingers, smile, get on their feet and join life. Furman’s campus is a great place to start.

The American Society of Landscape Architects named Furman University one of the 362 most beautiful places to walk in the U.S. The Furman Lake course is 1.5 miles long, which is about 3000 steps or about 30 minutes.

Why should OLLI members waste 30 minutes of time and energy walking around it or anywhere when they easily can drive around campus? A good question deserves a good answer.

The Arthritis Foundation reports the following research results:
Walking 30 minutes daily helps women reduce risk of stroke by 20% (Harvard School of Public Health, Boston) and reduce risk of hip fracture 40% (Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston). According to The University of Virginia Health System, Charlottesville, “….men between the ages of 71 and 93 who walked more than a ¼ mile per day had ½ the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, compared to those who walked less.” University of California, Long Beach research showed, “the more steps people took during the day, the better their moods were. Why? Walking releases natural painkilling endorphins into the body…” The Arthritis Foundation also writes, “The majority of joint cartilage has no direct blood supply….Impact that comes from movement or compression, such as walking “squishes” the cartilage, bringing oxygen and nutrients into the area. If you don’t walk, joints are deprived of life-giving fluid, which can speed deterioration.” Walking can improve oxygen flow, breathing rate, energy level, and ability to heal and sleep. And of course, walking burns calories. For the complete article: [http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/workouts/walking/wow-of-walking.php](http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/exercise/workouts/walking/wow-of-walking.php)

Still not convinced walking is a good idea? Howard LeWine, M.D. writes in the 5/28/14 *Harvard Health Blog*, “If you want to stay healthy and mobile well into old age, start walking today – even if you’ve already edged into “old age.” Here’s the link to his article: [http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/walking-exercise-helps-seniors-stay-mobile-independent-201405287173](http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/walking-exercise-helps-seniors-stay-mobile-independent-201405287173)
OLLI offers several fitness/exercise classes each semester. Local senior fitness programs are available including Greenville’s YMCA’s Silver Sneakers. Greenville’s Senior Action partners with Greenville Rec at the following locations: Brutontown Community Center (CC), Freetown CC, Mt Pleasant CC, Slater Hall CC, Sterling CC, and Westside Aquatic Complex.

Important Note: Before beginning ANY change to activity whether simple walking, attempting more strenuous exercise, or signing up for a structured program, everyone should discuss those plans with his/her physician for pre-approval and professional guidance.

Walking is free; it is not swallowed nor is it injected. However, it may be habit forming. Many consider that a good habit. Whether one wishes to walk for health and fitness, to walk for sightseeing the beauty of Greenville and Furman, or to walk sharing the day with a walking partner, it is a way to maintain physical health that supports mental sharpness. Walk with confidence toward extending independence. Find a good walking song (my favorite is Walking on Sunshine), get on your feet, and take the first step.

Furman University’s walking trails maps can be found on-line at http://www.furman.edu/SITES/LIVEWELL/GETMOVING/Pages/CampusWalkingRunningRoutes.aspx

Also, if you are interested in helping with a new project mapping special walking paths that begin and end with OLLI’s home base, the Herring Center, please contact me at roysonice@gmail.com. I hope this map will be completed and ready for distribution by September 2016.

Author’s Note: I do not wish to give anyone the impression that I am an expert or have a medical/healthcare background. I am simply a fellow senior citizen with a great sense of curiosity. I enjoy researching various subjects and writing about that research. The Synapse column is simply sharing what I find interesting. Patty Roy
Ellyn Bache and OLLI Onstage; Bringing an Original Musical to Life

Judy Aten

Ellyn Bache moved to Greenville from Wilmington, North Carolina. She was born and raised in Washington, DC, and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After her husband died, Ellyn “bounced around” for about 15 years before finally settling here. She had become a published novelist while raising her four children. One of her novels was made into a movie, Safe Passage, starring Susan Sarandon. She has written at least nine other novels that were published as well as some books for young adults. Although she is talented in putting words to the page, Ellyn admits that unfortunately her father’s skills as a gifted musician were not passed on to her. She attended many musical comedies and watched as her father played in the orchestra for those presentations.

While living in Wilmington, Ellyn joined a writers group, gaining insight into how to improve her stories from her fellow writers. One day, she admitted to one of the members of the group who had become a close friend that she secretly wanted to write a musical comedy but didn’t have the musical talent to pen one. That friend, Joyce Cooper, was a technical writer with a classical music background. She encouraged Ellyn to give it a try, so, as a running joke, Ellyn and Joyce would write a scene, and Joyce would take that scene home and write a song for it. Before long the joke became a serious project, and, 2 years later, they had completed Writers Bloc, a musical comedy. They took it to individuals at the University of North Carolina for critiquing, and, in 2003, their musical comedy Premiered as part of a local theater group's season, doing very well.

Ellyn joined OLLI about 6 years ago after she was persuaded to teach a class about getting published. She understands the changes people undergo when they retire and how many of them need to keep busy learning and meeting new people to be happy. After she discovered the variety of classes available through our program, instead of teaching classes, Ellyn began taking them.

When she took the Gilbert and Sullivan class, one of the speakers was Jim D’Amato, who talked about a local group that presented Gilbert and Sullivan works. Some time after the class had ended, Ellyn spotted Jim in the Herring Center and began conversing with him about music. Before long, they were sharing experiences, and when Jim learned she had co-written a musical, he expressed an interest in reading the play. Shortly afterward, Ellyn and Jim met with Bing Vick to discuss the pros and cons of having OLLI members appear in the play.

Which brings us to the present: OLLI Onstage, a new SIG, will present Writers Bloc this spring at the end of the academic year in the Furman Playhouse. The cast has been working hard on the play since the fall term and are having fun as they portray seven very different people whose foibles and eccentricities make for a series of touching and funny experiences. Ellyn is excited to see her creation brought to life again and hopes that OLLI members will enjoy it as much as she enjoyed creating it.
SIX-WORD STORIES

At the OLLI National Conference, an idea that has been around for a very long time surfaced again. In short, the idea is to create a story in just six words. The original idea is said to come from Ernest Hemingway’s title for his short story, “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” A few years ago Furman asked alumni to generate their six-word stories about their Furman experience. Nancy Kennedy came up with, “Too uptight to go fountain hopping.”

Now we are asking you to submit your six-word story about your OLLI experience. Submissions will be published in the next Gray Matters and judged by a panel of elite wordsmiths. The winner will be announced at the Spring Luncheon in May. Email your entries to gary.aten42@gmail.com.

CHAUTAUQUA AT THE HERRING CENTER

Brian Ellis is shown as Meriwether Lewis in a special Chautauqua presentation for OLLI @ Furman members on February 6. Ellis portrayed Lewis at the time of the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to St. Louis after its trip across the continent. There was a reception preceding the sold-out presentation.

OLLI MEMBERS VISIT WYFF DURING A FRIDAY BONUS EVENT
Class 2 of Senior Leaders Greenville, a program of OLLI@Furman, is under way and will graduate in May, 2016. Read on for an insider’s view of this exciting program from two graduates of Class 1.

Lea Rohrbaugh

I consider myself among the luckiest members of the OLLI community – and here’s why. In fall 2013, I received a brochure about a new program at OLLI called Senior Leaders Greenville. At the time, I had recently returned to Greenville after a long career in New York City. As a transplant and relative newcomer, I was eager to reacquaint myself with my hometown and put down roots again. Senior Leaders Greenville offered the perfect opportunity to learn, explore, and re-engage after so many years.

That Senior Leaders Greenville brochure offered a tantalizing challenge: “Just because you are retired does not mean you have to retire from life. What are you going to do next?” I was intrigued. I applied and, to my delight, was accepted for the program.

As promised, the first year of OLLI’s Senior Leaders Greenville program commenced with the hope of breaking new ground and building on OLLI’s record of strong engagement within the Greenville community. Our first class consisted of 28 diverse individuals who had not known each other before. It took a while to get to know each other but, by year’s end, we were networking, sharing information, and finding friendships within the group. This was one of the most rewarding aspects of the program – the chance to spend time with colleagues who share many of the same attitudes about giving back to the community in which we all live.

Our graduation was in November, 2014, with a ceremony held at the Hartness Pavilion on the Furman campus. Since that time, first-year graduates of the program have been actively engaged in community affairs. Some are working with Ten-at-the-Top on housing and human potential task forces. Others are expanding opportunities for seniors to mentor elementary school students. And, a team of first-year graduates is planning the curriculum and course content for the second-year class of Senior Leaders Greenville. When the second-year program concludes in May, there will be 60 graduates of the Senior Leaders program – a growing voice of commitment and advocacy for seniors in our community.

Susan Cyr

My initial experience with OLLI was as a member of the inaugural program of Senior Leaders Greenville (SLG) in 2014. The all-day sessions held each month gave me an in-depth look at the good, the bad, and the sometimes nonexistent array of services available for Greenville’s growing senior population. In addition to getting some Greenville history, we looked at healthcare (including nutrition and fitness), housing, transportation (or lack thereof), re-education, government, and technology. I had the great pleasure of experiencing all of this with a diverse group of 28 classmates, none of whom I had met previously, many of whom are now friends. (Continued on next page)
As a direct consequence of knowledge obtained during this program, I’m now serving as a new representative of the Appalachia Caucus of the South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature. Three fellow SLG graduates are also new representatives. Along with other representatives across the state, we are identifying issues, concerns, and possible solutions for problems facing South Carolina’s aging population and advocating for legislative priorities to address them.

SLG has inspired me to say ‘yes’ to more exciting opportunities for volunteerism to help make a positive difference in our community. I want to be sure that the needs of seniors will be considered in outcomes of the Upstate Transportation Coalition and the continuing good work of LiveWell Greenville. And in this important election year, it is crucial to help register all eligible voters and then get them to participate in the election process. SLG has inspired me to take a more active role in these and other areas.

If this sounds interesting to you, be on the lookout for an announcement of next year’s Senior Leaders Greenville program this spring. The program is open to senior adults (ages 55 and over) in the Greenville area – not just to OLLI members. To encourage a rich and diverse student body, scholarships are available. Information about how to apply to Senior Leaders Greenville will be announced and application information will be posted on the OLLI website later this spring.

As Senior Leaders Greenville continues to grow, our vision is to become a powerful voice of advocacy for the betterment of all seniors in our community, the Upstate, and beyond. Our inaugural class and the dynamic members of the second SLG class currently in session are off to a great start. We can’t wait for other passionate seniors to join us!

Lea and Susan are serving as Chair and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for SLG Class 2.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

Emily Herbac-Fluhrer and Richard Pouliot

It’s never too late to visit the Marvin Book Nook to read a magazine you’ve never heard of and learn something or read a poem or to borrow a book. It’s all there for you neatly arranged and very well maintained by Lynne Blitstein and Judy and Norm Brooks. Thank you Lynne, Judy, and Norm. And, we know you have stopped by the office at some time during the winter session or will during the spring. While you are there be sure to thank a volunteer and smile!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE!

The National Park Service, part of the Department of the Interior, is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. The service is responsible for 409 sites, including 59 national parks, employs about 22,000 people, and manages over 10 times that many volunteers. The national parks were visited by more than 290 million people in 2014. From Denali to the Everglades, from Acadia to Death Valley, from Volcanoes in Hawaii to Congaree here in South Carolina, they all are different, but nonetheless special.

Most of our fellow OLLI members have visited multiple national parks. When many of their trips are recalled, they bring back special memories of the visits. If you have a special memory about a national park, please share it with us. Email your story to be published in Gray Matters to gary.aten42@gmail.com.

WHO ARE WE? ONE MAN’S ANSWER.

Dennis Tavernetti

I was thinking the other day what term to use in succinctly describing our OLLI members to others. Using “OLLI member” seems rather formal and doesn’t describe within itself our main purpose, that of learning things we don’t already know or teaching things to others that we do know. Since all this takes place at our institution of “higher learning” of record, Furman University, it seemed appropriate to examine the nomenclature that they use to describe their students. It turns out that Furman has “undergrad” and “grad” students and no short moniker in use for us.

Rising to the challenge, in an epiphany of creativity, I decided that it should be “eldergrad.” So welcome to OLLI@Furman, and congratulations upon achieving the status of eldergrad!

CHILLY HIKING

Monday’s High Country Hikers were dressed to brave the cold weather on their hike to Daniel Ridge in Pisgah National Forest.

Photo: Greg Peters
TRIBUTES

Barbara Leimsieder                                                                                         Tributes Editor

Elsie Horton by Jean Churchill Kral
It is my privilege to write a tribute to an OLLI member of many years, Elsie Horton, who died January 29, 2016, at 102 years of age. She was loved by her classmates in her favorite Shakespeare and Aquacize classes. On her 100th birthday, she was celebrated with a party in the Manly Lobby of the Herring Center with singing, dancing, poetry, and refreshments. She was a great lady, and her wisdom and friendship will be missed by those who loved her.

Paul Tomkins by Dennis Tavernetti
Paul Tomkins, age 79, died on October 21, 2015, after a long period of declining health. He participated for many years with great enthusiasm and interest in the OLLI series on military blunders/snafus, due in part to his experiences of a few of the typical missteps while serving as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps in the 1950s. In addition, he took several OLLI photography classes, which he loved and put to good use in conjunction with his lifelong hobby of sailing.

Gilbert Sirois by Jann Howell
Gil Sirois died on January 25, 2016, at the age of 63. He was, in a word, a prince. He was such a warm and engaging man – people gravitated to his personality and his smile. Gil spent his professional life as an engineer, but, in his retirement, he worked his right brain through music. He was so excited about the guitar that he practiced an hour a day and soon surpassed everyone in the class. And yet he was humble and used his talent only to help others. We are all shocked and saddened by his sudden death but will hold his gentleness in our hearts.

The Tributes section recognizes departed OLLI classmates, teachers, and staff who have enriched the OLLI program. We invite you to submit your name and contact information along with a brief notice of up to 125 words to the Tributes editor, Barbara Leimseider (bleimsieder@gmail.com). Please emphasize the significance of the deceased to OLLI.

AGING IN COMMUNITY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)

Elaine Brummett

Our new SIG has over 40 members exploring housing options and sharing information. The main goal is to find OLLI members who are interested in living in a community with other OLLI members for socializing and mutual assistance. We are looking at patio homes within 2 miles of Furman and also writing to local builders to express our interest in pocket communities and one-level town homes that incorporate universal design (e.g. 3-ft doorways and few steps). If you have any questions, contact Judith Ziemer at judyjudyh@aol.com.
THEY GREW UP TO BE … ?

Answers to the January Edition question.

Nobody ventured a guess about the two people pictured. The boy on the left grew up to be the director of Continuing Education at Furman, Brad Bechtold. Looks like a Beatles influence to me. The girl on the right is none other than our own Pam Roberson. The athletic jersey is appropriate. You can see her today running to the PAC.

DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

Nancy Kennedy

Community. That’s the theme of this issue of Gray Matters, and also one of my favorite things about the OLLI program. Many members come to us the first time to take a course. And they come back for more courses, but I think they also return because of the friends they make and the social opportunities this program provides—the community they find here.

I’ve watched as people brand-new to the Greenville area join OLLI, come to class, and get more and more involved. Soon they are having dinner with someone they met in class, or joining a Special Interest Group, or even signing up to teach a course. They become part of the OLLI community.

OLLI members create community in so many ways—through Special Interest Groups, social events, and other events and trips. You eat together—parties at the end of courses, impromptu lunches, and the annual Thanksgiving Day meal. You drink A LOT of coffee together, enjoying conversation while filling your cups.

What are the best ways to support a community? Volunteering is a good one, and there are many ways to volunteer within the OLLI community. Office volunteers make a huge difference in the day-to-day operation of our office. Volunteer instructors are the heart of our program. Volunteers serving on committees work to improve OLLI’s offerings every single day.

You’ll see in this issue how our Senior Leaders Greenville graduates are taking what they learned here and helping the larger community.

Communities sometimes go through sad times, and OLLI is not immune to that. I love seeing how OLLI members support each other during those sad times. Again, it’s one of those things that makes this place special. And it makes it a community.

Thank you all for what you do to create community at OLLI and for welcoming new members to this fun, supportive community. I’m glad to be a part of it.
Did you know that, over time, portions of our brains can actually shrink by up to 30% - and that conventional retirement can be a leading cause of this shrinkage? The good news is that modern science has shown we can replace those fading neuropathways by becoming meaningfully engaged with our environment. In other words, we need to get back out there and interact with new people, new ideas, and new ways of doing things – engaging with others in a meaningful and purposeful way – or else we could be contributing to our own cognitive and physical decline.

The Personal and Community Engagement (PCE) program is being developed to assist in the placement of OLLI members with organizations, commissions, causes, new business development, and other manner of meaningful engagement within the Greenville area in order to improve both the quality of life (QOL) of the individual and her or his surrounding community.

In the PCE program, we will work with organizations to identify appropriate, meaningful opportunities for you to actively engage. OLLI members currently engaged with organizations will serve as a conduit for you, answering your questions and “shepherding” you through the process of identifying the right fit for you. If you need help identifying your skills, gifts, and passions, we will help you with that, too. In addition, we will have ongoing Special Interest Group (SIG) sessions to introduce new opportunities and discuss current ones. Perhaps you have something you always wanted to do and don’t know where to go. Come to us. If you need more volunteers where you volunteer, let’s chat.

If you have questions or want to help develop the program, please contact either Tom Nowlin or Dudley Tower at the following email addresses: Tom: thomasonowlin@gmail.com or Dudley: dotower@earthlink.net

Sign up in the OLLI Office for the Growth Through Personal and Community Engagement bonus event at OLLI on April 29, 2016 from 1:00 to 3:00.

DANCE DEMO

Alyson Amato’s Movement Makers dance class held a demonstration of what they achieved during the winter term in the Herring Center. The performance on March 1 was met with enthusiastic applause by the onlookers.
You have probably heard OLLI @ Furman referred to as a community of learners before. That really fits definition number 2, above, and it is certainly true. We foster that sense of fellowship by having a common interest in learning. This issue illustrates that OLLI @ Furman is part of several levels of possible communities. Nancy Kennedy commented on this in her column on page 18, and here are some more thoughts on those communities. Every group or committee mentioned in this edition is working toward a goal. Look at any of the group pictures and you'll see OLLI members pursuing common interests and goals. We at OLLI are part of the larger Furman Continuing Education community, something apparent since we share the facilities of the Herring Center.

The Inside Furman series this time focuses on the Furman University Police Department. The officers and staff of that department consider all of Furman, including OLLI members, their community to take care of. The Synapse column offers you the opportunity to become involved in promoting walking.

The articles on the Personal and Community Engagement SIG and Senior Leaders Greenville show how OLLI can connect us into the larger community, helping us promote wider goals in Greenville. This is just another step in OLLI members reaching out. From 3-D printing artificial hands for physically challenged people to reading with school children, our members are involved in helping others. Individually, OLLI members also volunteer in a wide variety of activities. This is consistent with our being at Furman, an institution that has a long history of community involvement.

Lastly, we are part of a nationwide network of OLLIs, all with the pursuit of learning as an interest and goal.

Now the sales pitch. You are already a member of the OLLI @ Furman community. Consider how you can help promote our (and your) interest in learning by becoming involved in a committee or a Special Interest Group, being a teacher or liaison, or participating in any of the many opportunities that OLLI @ Furman offers.

Increase YOUR OLLI @ Furman community involvement.