EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Gary Aten

Now that the elections are over, there is uncertainty about what that will mean for our future. One thing that is certain is that there will also be changes to our OLLI @ Furman program. They won’t be caused by governmental leadership differences, however.

If you take a look at the contents to the left you can get an indication of the changes I’m talking about. The OLLI Network Statistics reflect growth in OLLI programs around the country, and we will be among them. Dr. Shields’ new leadership position and the Furman Advantage program will mean changes and opportunities for Furman and OLLI. The multi-sport Maine trip is an indicator of the opportunities for OLLI members to travel, which are expanding. The Herring piano promises new ways for OLLI and Furman students to interact. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) at OLLI continue to grow, and the Read and Explore with OLLI program starting this term could become an annual event.

All of these changes indicate there will be more ways for OLLI @ Furman members to be involved in our program and with Furman University as a whole. So pay attention to OLLI Notes, the bulletin boards, and other announcements to see how you can be part of the changes.

If you are reading a hard copy, remember, Gray Matters is on the OLLI website. By reading online you can see the issue in full color and expand the type size and images, if you wish. Just click on “Member Resources” and then “Gray Matters” to view this issue and past editions.

Carole Eisen, Sue Renault, Judy Aten, and Nancy Kennedy proofed 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 caffeine addition counselor, Bruno Moore.
The Osher Institute Network
2014-2015 Annual Survey Data

OLLI @ Furman - White Highlights

119
OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTES

154,505
MEMBERS

379
CITIES & TOWNS ACROSS AMERICA

OLLIs
BY SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP

16.8%
601 - 800

6.7%
2,000 +

6.7%
1,801 - 2,000

16%
1,201 - 1,400

20.2%
1,001 - 1,200

10.9%
1,401 - 1,600

5.8%
801 - 1,000

11.8%
600 OR LESS

OLLI FEE STRUCTURES

35
ALL INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP FEE

63
MEMBERSHIP FEE & A LA CARTE CLASS FEE

21
OTHER

Does the Institute use online registration?

Yes 85%
No 15%

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED BY Osher Institutes

Facebook 35
Instagram 28
Twitter 11

Google + 43
LinkedIn 3

None 23

Annual report survey conducted by the National Resource Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes and The Bernard Osher Foundation
For all you new members (and returning members who may be hazy), here is a listing of the OLLI @ Furman staff. A very brief description of their duties is included so you can see who you should talk to with questions.

**Director**

**Nancy Kennedy:** Full-time, year-round. Hours 8:30-5:00, Monday-Friday.
Nancy oversees the staff and overall vision and mission for the organization. Talk to Nancy if you have questions about OLLI policies, suggestions for program improvement, or ideas for new OLLI initiatives.

**Associate Director: Curriculum and Registration**

**Susan Rae:** Full-time, year-round. Hours are 8:00-4:00, Monday-Friday.
Susan provides staff support to the Curriculum Committee, which involves development of term curricula and course brochures. Talk to Susan if you have questions about proposing an OLLI course or online registration. She also processes all drops/adds for courses.

**Program Coordinator: Instruction**

**Pam Roberson:** Full-time, 10 months. Hours are 8:30-4:30, Monday-Friday, mid-August through early June.
Pam provides support to OLLI instructors once they are placed on the course schedule. Talk to Pam if you are an instructor in need of training or support, or if you have questions about payments, refunds, or reimbursements. Pam also distributes instructor honoraria payments and works with Bonus Events.

**Program Coordinator: Enrichment**

**Heidi Wright:** Full-time, 10 months. Hours are 8-4, Monday-Friday, mid-August through early June.
Heidi works with social events, volunteers, SIGs, travel, Senior Leaders Greenville, and other events/programs that enrich OLLI offerings (not curriculum). Talk to Heidi if you have questions about or suggestions for social events, if you’d like to volunteer with OLLI or start a SIG, or if you want to know more about OLLI travel.

**Department Assistant**

**Carson Ruffrage:** Part-time, year-round. Hours are 8:30-1:30, Monday-Friday.
Carson oversees the management of the office and the volunteers who support its day-to-day operation. Talk to Carson if you need a Wi-Fi password, if you have questions about an upcoming art show or your OLLI Paladin Pass, or if you’d like to help with the coffee bar.

**Student Workers**

**Laken Weaver, Samantha (Sam) Kolls, and Sam Hayes:**
They can help you with registration questions, sign you up for special events, direct you to your classes, make copies, and answer other general questions. They are also great on the computer and might be able to help you with basic smartphone/laptop/iPad questions.
HIKING GROUPS VISIT THE MOUNTAINS

Martin’s Hiking group visit Sassafras Mountain, the highest point in South Carolina. Photo: Tom Kester

Monday’s High Country Hikers at an overlook near Bad Creek. Photo: Greg Peters

THE BEST ADVICE YOU EVER RECEIVED?

As seniors, we have given out a lot of advice over the years. Some of it was even wanted. We tend to forget the advice we received. What is the best advice you ever received? It may have been from a parent, a teacher, a boss, a friend, or even someone you met in a line for a movie. Send the best advice you received and who gave it to you to Gray Matters, and we’ll put a page of the responses together. If it was good advice for you, it is probably good for all of us; so share it with your fellow OLLI members. Send your submissions to gary.aten42@gmail.com.
You might ask yourself how a Yellow Jacket from the Georgia Institute of Technology, a state school known for engineering, science, and research, would end up at Furman, a private liberal arts school, this past summer. If you did, you might be surprised to find out it was a logical progression, and Dr. Shields is really in the right place at the right time.

George was the eldest of four boys and one girl in the Shields family. He grew up in Marcellus, New York, a town near Syracuse, and engineering seemed the logical choice for him. His grandfather was an engineer, and his father was an electrical engineer, so it wasn’t too surprising he enrolled in chemical engineering. Going to Georgia Tech was influenced by a friend of his who was going there and the lack of that New York snow in the Atlanta area. A couple of experiences with professors at Tech influenced him and, preferring science over engineering, he changed his major to chemistry. He did the unusual, earning his bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees all at Georgia Tech. He had a successful stint as a teaching assistant in a chemistry lab and was considering getting his master’s and teaching high school chemistry. When Dr. Shields began conducting research, not only did he like it, he was also good at it and continued in that direction for his doctorate. He then moved on to Yale, where he did post-doctoral research. While at Yale he had a discussion with a fellow student about the impact that student’s professor had on him by being personally involved and mentoring him. That talk hit home. His calling was neither at a high school chemistry lab nor at a large research university, but at a liberal arts college where he could mentor undergraduates to better prepare them for their futures.

He selected Lake Forest College, a private liberal arts college just north of Chicago, for his first teaching assignment. At Lake Forest, a school of about 1500, he started his academic leadership assignments by becoming the chair of the chemistry department. He moved on to Hamilton College near Clinton, New York, another private liberal arts college of about 1800 students. His assignment there was to reorganize the chemistry department that was felt to be underperforming. During that work, he brought his staff to visit Furman to see how its chemistry department operated because it had a good reputation for research. While working on the reorganization as the chemistry department chair he was also the Winslow Professor of Chemistry.

Dr. Shields moved from Hamilton to Armstrong State University, a division of the University System of Georgia at Savannah, with a student body of about 7000 students. He served as the founding dean of the College of Science and Technology and also taught chemistry. He was happy to return to the South’s milder winters, and, more importantly, he could contribute to advancing the enrollment of women and underrepresented minorities in the sciences. While there, he implemented a program that
had instructors conduct research during the summer months to help them level their income while gaining research experience. Although he found his time at Armstrong interesting, he realized that state schools can be subject to political pressures, biases, and variable funding, causing issues that he felt were not always in the best interest of the students. That prompted his move to another private liberal arts school, Bucknell University. At Bucknell, a school of about 3600 students at Lewisburg, PA, he was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, oversaw the School of Management, and was a chemistry professor. During all these assignments, Dr. Shields received a variety of awards for his research and academic excellence.

FURMAN

Meanwhile, Furman had been making a name for itself in science research. In most large research universities, research is carried out mostly by graduate students. Furman, not offering advanced degrees in the sciences, relies on its undergraduates to do research. (Many OLLI @ Furman members have participated in psychology research projects.) Without huge research grants, Furman professors and students have to be creative and selective, and they have been increasingly doing that over time. Thus, when an opening appeared at Furman, Dr. Shields was familiar with the school’s reputation. When he was offered the position as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, he gladly accepted. When asked how to explain what that position entails, he said he is “responsible for making sure all our students have the best education possible.” So he is responsible for the academic program at Furman. Dr. Shields said, “It’s the best job I’ve ever had. One of the great things about this job is that the senior leadership team and the faculty are all fabulous.” The only downside to his Furman position he could come up with when asked was that he is the one that will decide when to cancel classes because of weather.

One of the reasons he pursued the position was to be instrumental in the inauguration of the Furman Advantage program, announced by Furman President Elizabeth Davis in October. Briefly, it is a strategic vision to make sure every Furman graduate has the advantage of a transformative experience during their enrollment that will prepare them to be successful in life after graduation. These experiences will include many possibilities, including internships, community involvement, study abroad, and, right up Dr. Shields’s alley, undergraduate research. Several planning teams are now designing how this program will be implemented, and how the recent gift from the Duke endowment will support it.

On a personal level, Dr. Shields is a member of a blended family. His partner, CoCo Harris, has three children; the oldest is at Bryn Mawr College, the second is at Spelman College, and the third is in 10th grade in Greenville. CoCo runs a boutique patent law firm and is the Founding Editor of Telling Our Stories Press. Dr. Shields also has three grown children. The blended family lives downtown and enjoys being convenient to all Greenville has to offer.

OLLI TIE-IN

Dr. Shields is also responsible for Furman’s continuing education program. Brad Bechtold reports to him, and that puts OLLI @ Furman in his sphere. There are several items on the OLLI Council’s and Dr. Shields’s common radar. How can OLLI @ Furman members connect better with the Furman academic program? How can OLLI members’ years of business and life experience, expertise, and contacts be of use? Possibilities may include helping arrange internships, mentoring, fundraising, volunteering to help with classes, or other activities. The OLLI Council, Nancy Kennedy, Brad Bechtold, and Dr. Shields are all thinking of ways this can be done. With our membership’s involvement, we can help show our appreciation for the support OLLI @ Furman has received by Furman University.

Dr. Shields is passionate about the Furman student experience and is in a position to make a real difference in how they receive their education. His entire career has seemingly been tailor-made to put him in this position. It will be interesting to see how he puts his imprint on the Furman academic program, including OLLI @ Furman. Welcome to Furman, Dr. Shields.
Herring Center Entry Planter Ready For Fall - More Creative Work By Cathy Dwyer

Alyson Amato’s *Dance for Everyone* Class Gives a Demonstration

Student Worker Laken Weaver Performs As Mayzie LaBird In *Seussical*

OLLI Trip To Atlanta Botanical Garden in October

Several members of Jeffrey Makala’s *Six Centuries of the Book* class present their old books for discussion at the final session.

The first of several Furman students participating in Homecoming HAVOC visited the Herring Center to collect money for her favorite charity.
Wow. What else can I say! Combine great weather, scenic location, biking, kayaking and hiking with an outstanding enthusiastic group of OLLI folks led by a fantastic group from Coastal Kayaking Tours and hosted by a South Carolina native and you have a bunch of wide-eyed, tired, adventurous travelers. Would I do it again? In a heartbeat.

Folks traveled by air to Bangor or Portland then on to Bar Harbor, Maine. Glenn Tucker, the South Carolina native, and his crew from Coastal Kayaking Tours have led this Road Scholar adventure trip many, many times, but there was nothing in their handling of this group to indicate that they have become complacent. His leaders were superb, talented, professional, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. It’s hard to describe in words the friendliness of the OLLI folks and care for one another and the good cheer from Glenn and his crew. Glenn was a master of the story, told good jokes, and represented his southern upbringing with genteel hospitality along with his lovely wife Nancy. Glenn hosted the group at his beautiful home, described by many as decorated as for a photo shoot with Southern Living. His view of Frenchman’s Bay is picturesque, and enables him to rise with the sun from the east each day when he and Nancy are in residence.

Our bike riding took us on bike trails along and up and down the carriage roads, and we lucked upon a group of touring carriage riders setting out on Friday morning in beautiful carriages with the men and women dressed in period appropriate clothing. I can’t recall how many had stated they had experience kayaking, but we found great humor when presented with our “skirts.” Attempting to keep the sea water out of the kayaks when in the open sea was the purpose, but we found that they can leak. Those in the rear struggled with finding, adjusting and operating the pedals to control the rudders, but all were pleased with Glenn’s trip planning, allowing these new-found kayakers to take advantage of a healthy tailwind. The hike up Cadillac Mountain was 3.5 miles with a good elevation gain. This way of getting to the top of the mountain was a bit more arduous than our earlier bus visit, but some found it easier than the biking. Some knee issues prevented all of us from hiking and should have caused another to defer, but, against better judgement, all trudged through a forest, aside a bog, scrambled across fields of pink granite, and negotiated one hand-rail with assisting hands.

On the optional day, the trip members participated in golfing, a beach and gardens excursion, more hiking, or a nature cruise that included viewing grand cottages. Highlights included bald eagle and seal sightings and a grand meal with crab cakes and a favorite of many, blueberry pie. A final bike ride along the coast or continuing on to different destinations concluded the trip. Our graduation diplomas are proof we completed the trip but can’t prove that we had a wonderful time.
Announcing the 2017 OLLI Curriculum Enhancement Grants

Have you thought of developing and teaching an OLLI course but didn’t have the funds to do the necessary research? Are you currently teaching but wish you could enhance your course? Is there something you’ve always wanted to learn about and are willing to share that knowledge with OLLI in some way? Then a Curriculum Enhancement Grant is for you!

Since 2012, these grants have helped enhance existing courses and produced new courses and bonus events. Some examples include grants to Mike Broder and Gail Johnson for research and visits to historic sites for history classes. Grants were also awarded to Susan Nelson in the area of document preservation and to Dudley Tower to help create the popular Dynamic Aging Program. Other grants have been awarded in hobby areas including cooking, photography, bridge, and kayaking.

Anyone who has been an OLLI member or instructor for at least 6 terms may apply for grant of $200 to $2,000. Within 2 years, recipients must share their knowledge with the OLLI membership in some way: teaching a course, presenting a bonus event, starting a new SIG, or developing a special event. Applications are due by March 3, 2017. The Grants Committee will review completed applications in March and April, and applicants will be notified in early May. A public announcement of the grantees will be made at the OLLI Spring Luncheon. We are looking forward to some exciting new courses.

A packet including grant requirements and an application can be found on the bulletin board across from the restrooms in the Herring Center beginning in January. This information is also available anytime on the OLLI website under Current OLLI Members / Forms. Please contact members of the Grants Committee with questions: David Johnson (Chair), Geraldine Weyermann, Tim Henry, Judy Vick, and Pat Booker–Christy.

WHEN SEPTEMBER SINGS

Judith Isler

When September sings her peppery song, racing from hot notes for those who long for summer to last to the slow, cool part she croons for devotees of nature’s art of turning leaves and grasses once green to dusky browns and yellows that mean the sun must slip away early to bed ‘midst lively shades of bold orange and red, I long to stand on a dune near the sea and breathe sweet air the waves shuttle to me from a place where the seasons never shift, the sun never sets and gulls sweetly lift their voices in hymns that angels teach to souls whose upraised arms never reach nor fingers claw at a passing day as they take their pleasure in nature’s way.
HERRING PIANO DEDICATION

Dedication of the Yamaha Disklavier Piano was held October 27, 2016. The piano is a gift to the Herring Center for Continuing Education and the Furman Music Department by Gordon and Sarah Herring. After some opening remarks by Nancy Kennedy, OLLI @ Furman Director, and Hugh F. Floyd, Furman Music Department Chair, several selections on the piano were played by Furman Music Department students and faculty. George Litterest, brought to Furman by Yamaha for this event, then demonstrated the educational and performance capabilities of the Disklavier. It can be played, of course. Additionally, it can play music downloaded to its memory by recording selections played on it or using pieces from the internet. Instructors and students can use the piano for instruction in various ways, even if they are in different locations. A committee has been formed to explore ways to use this outstanding instrument.

Pictured from left to right are French Forbes III, Yamaha representative, George Litterst, Yahama Disklavier expert, Gordon and Sarah Herring, and Dick Jones, from Piano Central, the local Yamaha dealer.

OLLI SIG CONTINUES WORK WITH SCHOOLS

The 3D Design & Printing SIG continues to expand its scope. One of the latest efforts is working with drones. Recently, some of the members’ work with Dorman High School students continued to pay dividends. Those Engineering Club students taught others in the club to fly drones. Then they took their expertise to Roebuck Elementary and taught younger students about the drones. In a thank you letter to a member of the SIG, Rebecca Richardson, Dean of Dorman’s School of Engineering, Manufacturing, & Industrial Technology, said, “I heard our high school students answering questions about how the drones work and the science of flight. It was incredible, and it is all due to your willingness to help our students.” If you would like to be involved in this effort, contact Reid Becker at reid.becker@gmail.com.
During the winter term, our OLLI will join an impressive list of cities and universities across the country that sponsor “one book/one read” programs. The idea is that members of a community are all invited to read the same book. Then they have an opportunity to participate in a variety of events suggested by the book, from art projects to trips, whatever fits the book’s theme.

Our project will be called Read and Explore with OLLL. Our book will be the highly acclaimed One Foot in Eden by North Carolina author Ron Rash. It’s a murder mystery set in the 1950’s to 1970’s South Carolina as Lake Jocassee is being created to bring electric power to the area. As the water rises over the Jocassee Valley communities where a bullet-riddled body is hidden, the reader meets issues of ecology and progress, cohesion and destruction of communities, mountain language, landscape, and lore.

Our list of events will include guest speakers and entertainers, book discussion sessions, a day tour, a movie, and an exciting mountain festival. Multiple copies of the book will be available to borrow if you don’t choose to buy your own. Look for books and more details at the Read and Explore with OLLL table at Back to OLLL and during the first week of winter classes, and watch OLLL Notes for later announcements about related activities.

OLLI BOWLING SIG HALLOWEEN

The Bowling SIG showed up at the alley ready for Halloween. There was no word on whether the costumes affected the line scores.

Photo by Elaine Stephens
TRIBUTES

Barbara Leimsieder

Bankim Shah by Carole McAfee

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Bankim Shah; we had so much more to learn from him. Bankim was deeply human. He was a friend and mentor and was always willing to share his knowledge with anyone who sought him out. He taught several classes for OLLI, including What is Globalization?, Home Resources for Healthy Living, and Seminars on Health. Born in India on February 16, 1940, Bankim came to the United States as a student to pursue an advanced degree at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He died in his sleep on July 17, 2016 at the age of 76. We will miss his gentle and perceptive wisdom.

Terryl “Terry” Johnson by Bob Dwyer

Among the many benefits for “transplanted” participants in the OLLI program is the opportunity to meet and make new friends with very interesting and engaged people. Those of us lucky enough to have met Terry Johnson in that process were indeed fortunate. A dedicated historian and avid overall learner, Terry was a valued and active participant in every class that I have ever given. He loved Furman University sports, and he and Shelley were fixtures in the Paladin fan base at basketball and volleyball games for years. Terry died on October 9 at the age of 73. We will all miss his wit, enthusiasm, and ready, warm smile. Go Cubs, go!

Ron McKinney by George Fletcher

Ron McKinney, long-time Attorney for the City of Greenville, died suddenly on November 2 at the age of 68. He played a major role in such city initiatives as the downtown baseball stadium and Falls Park. He retired in 2014 and enjoyed his retirement immensely. He was a Furman graduate and involved in numerous aspects of the university. At OLLI, he taught a bonus event on one of his hobbies, Oriental rugs. He also took classes in Shakespeare, history, exercise, and music. He was truly a Renaissance man, and we will miss him.

Helen Rumler by Lois and Greg Parker

We were so glad that Helen was in our Aquacize class. She had a great smile and was always happy to be with her friends. She enjoyed it so much. In the spring term last year, she had some health issues and missed a few classes due to doctors’ appointments. She died on November 21 at the age of 73. She will be missed by her Aquacize friends.

James H. “Jimmie” Stewart by Don Cockrill

James H. “Jimmie” Stewart passed away on November 11 at the age of 73 after a long illness. Jimmie retired from the law firm of Ogletree Deakins, which he helped found in 1977, and became active in OLLI over a year ago. He was a Master Gardener and had a wide range of interests, but he especially loved the OLLI history courses. His smiling face and gentle demeanor will be missed.
Sometimes medicine offers us wonderful, almost unimaginable gifts. Heart attacks that were devastating, life-altering events a few short decades ago are now treated with an expediency and skill that our grandparents couldn’t imagine. A couple days pass, and the victim is home with stents in occluded arteries and directions to modify activity and diet. Pneumonia, once the ‘old person’s friend’ (so called because it took the aged to eternity), is far less terrifying, thanks to both antibiotics and the pneumonia vaccine.

However, some of the things we do give benefits that are less clear. Although it could be an entire column in itself, the ‘stroke center’ movement, with the promise of miracles from ‘clot-busting drugs’, is a thing full of as many questions as answers. And what about depression and anti-depressants? When I looked up the side-effect profile of an anti-depressant a friend was taking, I was reminded that all of them have the potential side effect of increasing suicidal behavior.

But what about pain management? Thanks to improved understanding of the physiology of pain, the persistence of medical providers, and the investment and research of pharmaceutical companies, we have a wide array of pharmaceuticals available for the treatment of pain. Some are over-the-counter, like acetaminophen and ibuprofen. And others, those we refer to as narcotics or opioids (because in previous times they were derived from opium), are useful, potent, and (as is increasingly evident) fraught with danger unless used very cautiously.

Of course, for a very long time, physicians were taught to be judicious in prescribing narcotics. Our venerable teachers warned young doctors in training to be frightened of the side effects. We were especially aware of the very immediate danger that patients would stop breathing and die due to excess sedation. We were also aware that over time, patients on narcotics might develop problems with addiction.

About 20 to 25 years ago, that whole paradigm shifted and physicians were suddenly accused of callous disregard of suffering for prescribing too few narcotics. I remember this because I was in my emergency medicine residency at that time. We were constantly reminded to give more narcotics and be sensitive to pain. We were taught to use the ‘pain scale,’ in which a patient-reported score of zero meant no pain and a score of ten meant ‘the worst pain of your life.’ Never mind that it was entirely subjective and that there was no objective standard, no ‘painometer’ against which to measure it. We were instructed to see pain as the ‘fifth vital sign’ after blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate and temperature. Of concern to many, these initiatives coincided with the development and aggressive marketing of ever more powerful, addictive medications like Oxycontin tablets and Fentanyl patches and lozenges.

Patient satisfaction surveys included the question ‘was your pain adequately treated?’ Physicians were castigated when those satisfaction survey scores fell. Physicians were instructed, by non-clinician
administrators, to give more pain medication to make patients more satisfied. (A satisfied customer/patient is one that may come back!) Physicians who resisted, in the name of science or safety, were too often met with threats of reduced income or job loss if patient satisfaction scores fell. In some instances, physicians were (and still are) reported to state medical boards for alleged inadequate treatment of pain.

I sincerely believe that most of those encouraging us to write more narcotics prescriptions did so out of genuine concern and compassion. People are in pain, so why not treat the pain? In medicine, where science meets suffering humanity, it’s so easy for us to say, ‘Well, it just makes sense, doesn’t it?’ We assume that our compassion will be supported by our science. It happens with infections; sure it’s probably a head cold, but what’s the harm in an antibiotic to keep the patient happy? The child bumped her head pretty hard, so what’s the problem with a CT scan, even though she looks good? The parents are customers, after all, and want a scan!

With tragic consequences, our compassion sometimes causes harm as the Law of Unintended Consequences rears its ugly head. For instance, those antibiotics for colds? They can cause dangerous allergic reactions and life-changing intestinal infections requiring hospitalization or surgery, and resulting in death. Those CT scans everyone wants? Physicians are trying to reduce the number of scans, as many of us are concerned that they may induce malignant tumors later. And those pain medications? The evidence looks pretty damning.

Addiction to prescription narcotics is growing at a terrifying rate in the U.S. Likewise, death rates from narcotic overdoses have soared. The U.S. has seen 165,000 deaths from opioid overdose between 1999 and 2014. http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/overdose.html. In fact, opioid-related deaths have now surpassed deaths from firearms in the United States. http://www.cbsnews.com/news/drug-overdose-deaths-heroin-opioid-prescription-painkillers-more-than-guns/ Admittedly, some of those deaths are not due to prescription opioids but rather to injected heroin. However, many heroin addicts began their addiction issues when taking legitimately prescribed pain medication.

Sadly, seniors are not immune. Physicians don’t want to see seniors suffer, so they often give narcotics even for pain that in decades past would not have been treated with those drugs. We give them for back pain, headache, arthritis, or other less serious conditions. And we use them extensively in treatment of chronic, intractable pain. In fact, in 2015, one-third of Medicare recipients received a prescription for an opioid analgesic; some 40 million prescriptions. https://www.statnews.com/2016/06/22/many-opioid-prescriptions-seniors/

Furthermore, seniors not only develop addiction, not only die from accidental overdoses, their narcotic analgesics have a host of side-effects, including (but not limited to) the following: excessive sleep, impaired thinking, increased pain sensitivity, nausea, constipation, and cardiac arrhythmia. In addition, opioid drugs contribute to weakness and loss of balance and thus to falls, resulting in head and spine injury, various fractures, and other trauma. Their already impaired reflexes are dampened by their medication so that for those who still drive, it becomes an even more dangerous activity than before.

No one is immune from this devastating epidemic, not rich nor poor, not young nor old. The medical profession, the mental health community, law-enforcement, social services, churches, families, and friends all have to come together and find ways to roll back the rising tide of death and addiction, which came as an unforeseen outcome of attempting to ease suffering with compassion and science.

This problem will be highlighted this spring at an OLLI bonus event, March 31, 2017: Seniors and Opioids: Unexpected Origins of a Greenville Epidemic. I will be speaking in conjunction with James Campell of the Phoenix Center addiction and rehabilitation facility. We really hope you join us to learn more about this pressing public health crisis.
The new year has arrived and so have much awaited OLLI travel opportunities. The OLLI Travel Committee has been busy planning a menu of exciting trips for OLLI members to choose from.

**The Battlefields of Western Europe** will feature beautiful cities of northwestern France. Think the Normandy coast. Beginning and ending in Paris, participants in this small group excursion will be led by Dr. Marion Strobel, Furman history professor and an expert guide to the culture, cuisine, and history of Normandy. Before returning to Paris, you will have the opportunity to visit Rouen, the Peace Memorial overlooking Omaha Beach, quaint villages, and magnificent cathedrals. This intimate visit will include 15 to 20 participants. The dates for this adventure are May 16-26, 2017. The deadline for enrolling is February 1.

**Road Scholar Santa Fe and Taos: Tale of Two Cities** is a featured exclusive OLLI trip on June 5-11, 2017. As you travel with Road Scholar, you will get an insider’s perspective on Santa Fe and Taos visiting with local artists, exploring the Georgia O’Keeffe museum, enjoying traditional music, and learning about native cultures. You will share all of this with fellow OLLI members. Perhaps you will catch a glimpse of the image of Georgia O’Keeffe quietly painting with her oils and watercolors! If not, you will be assured of exploring the same beautiful scenes and buildings that inspired not only Georgia, but also Ansel Adams and many other local artists.

If you would like more information or to register for any trip, please contact Heidi Wright in the OLLI Office. She holds your ticket to grand adventures.

Heidi.Wright@Furman.edu
Samuel Hayes, our newest student worker, is getting into the swing of things quickly. Although you will frequently find him at the student worker desk (where he is pictured at left), you are likely to bump into him all around the Herring Center, carrying out new tasks.

Born near Charleston, SC, is the younger of two children. When he was two, Sam moved with his family to Mt. Pleasant, where they still live. His father works as the football coach and the athletic director for the high school, and his mother works for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Sam was active in gymnastics, choir, and theatre at Wando High School, a school of about 4000 students. After graduating, he chose to attend his father’s alma mater, Furman. He was also influenced during a tour by learning about Furman’s smaller class sizes and the opportunities provided by the Heller Service Corps, a group that focuses on assisting in the community.

Sam is pursuing a double major in history and political science. He is especially interested in the years around the Revolutionary War. Although it is early in his studies, Sam is considering working in the field of historic preservation for a non-profit organization, specifically to preserve old buildings. As a freshman, he is primarily taking core courses with a couple of classes in his major added to his curriculum. He and his roommate reside in Blackwell Hall in the South Housing residence hall area. Sam has made a lot of new friends there, but he looks forward to exchanging his “tiny room” for a larger one in another hall in the future.

His interest in non-profit organizations is reflected in his work with the Heller Service Corps. Through that organization, Sam has volunteered at Cherrydale Elementary School, and worked at Furman’s Fall Festival, among other things. He went through an interview with OLLI before starting to work at the Herring Center. He feels this is a better fit for him than previous intern positions, where he may not have been as enthusiastic about the organization.

Although a Furman student that is studying, volunteering, and working with OLLI doesn’t have a lot of time on his hands, Sam does enjoy reading and going to football and basketball games when time is available. He is glad to be at OLLI, where everyone is very friendly. Stop by when you are in the office and join us in welcoming Sam to our OLLI community.
DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Nancy Kennedy

Happy new year, and welcome back to OLLI! Following are a few updates from the OLLI Office that might be of interest to you.

In December, we had visits from a few other lifelong learning programs. A group of volunteers and staff from Winthrop University came to hear more about our program as they are getting ready to start one of their own. Sarah Fletcher, OLLI member and founding director of FULIR (OLLI @ Furman’s predecessor), joined us as we told the FULIR/OLLI story and encouraged them as they develop their own program. And then the Director of the OLLI at Arizona State University joined us for three days while on a mission to identify best practices at OLLIs. The Osher National Resource Center suggested he visit Duke, UNC-Asheville, and Furman to learn about how we incorporate so many volunteers into our program. In January, staff and volunteers from the new lifelong learning institute at Wofford are coming to spend some time with us. It is a compliment to OLLI @ Furman that so many are looking to us as a model program. And it is thanks to so many volunteers that we have such a quality program. So thank you for all you have done to help us build.

Speaking of building, as I write this we have 1938 annual members for the current year. That number will continue to grow, and we look forward to welcoming the 2000th member very soon. You have probably noticed that the number of courses we offer has grown along with the membership so that there are enough seats in courses to go around.

And while OLLI is growing, we are always looking for ways to build community. Read and Explore with OLLI is one of those ways—go to page 12 to learn more. We started with the question “What would happen if everyone at OLLI read the same book?” We are about to learn the answer as we read One Foot in Eden. Stay tuned for announcements about supporting programming.

I look forward to seeing you during the winter term. Stop by my office to visit, and please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. That’s how we continue to improve!

GRAY MATTERS and YOU

Gray Matters is always looking for OLLI @ Furman members’ contributions. Articles, poems, photos, reports, or other items of OLLI interest are welcomed. Remember, this newsletter is about and for OLLI @ Furman. If you have something to contribute or questions, contact Gary Aten at gary.aten42@gmail.com or 307-871-1050.
Thanksgiving was celebrated by over 40 members with their OLLI family. Turkey and ham were supplied, and the rest of the fare was available from the members in a lavish potluck. As usual, there was plenty of food and there was the ability to visit with existing friends and make some new ones. Everybody chipped in to help. Thanks to the committee’s hard work that allowed this annual event to take place again this year.

Some of the members that helped decorate the OLLI holiday tree are pictured at left. Ornaments were unpacked, light strings were untangled, and decorations were placed in the lobby. Cookies and other snacks were brought in by some, and, of course, coffee was available.

We shouldn’t forget that although the decorating is a fun time, the Social Committee had to get everything ready, and there is always a lot of work putting the decorations back in storage for another year.

If you haven’t done so in the past, next fall after classes, drop by and take a look at the end result. Better yet, stop in and help.
verb
[ no obj. ] move forward, typically in a purposeful way: the troops advanced on the capital | she stood up and advanced toward him.
• make progress: our knowledge is advancing all the time.
• [ with obj. ] cause (an event) to occur at an earlier date than planned: I advanced the date of the meeting by several weeks.
• [ with obj. ] promote or help the progress of (a person, cause, or plan): it was a chance to advance his own interests.
• [ with obj. ] put forward (a theory or suggestion): the hypothesis I wish to advance in this article.
• (especially of shares of stock) increase in price: two stocks advanced for every one that fell.

There are many meanings to the word “advance.” In this case, we are limiting the discussion to the verb that means to move forward. OLLI is certainly moving forward. And, we are making that movement in a purposeful way. All of the changes discussed in the page 2 Editorial Ramblings column are part of our advancement. Those things, which advance the OLLI program, result in more opportunities for our members. But that is the broader OLLI @ Furman. What about our own personal advancement?

That seems to imply a purpose to the advancement. So I ask you, what is the purposeful advancement you are choosing to make? For OLLI @ Furman advancing the program needs the inputs of many. Of course, going to classes advances you. You learn new things, stay active, and maintain relationships. Beyond that though, OLLI @ Furman needs many people to be an active part of the program. Take a few moments and reflect on the skills you have. How can they be used to advance OLLI? By applying those skills with OLLI you will not only advance OLLI, but you will also advance yourself.