Cover: Nancy Yan is relatively new to OLLI, but has already taught a Chinese Painting class. She allowed me to crop these tall paintings so they would fit the cover, but they retain the flavor of her work. The left image is titled The Beautiful Life, and the right one is Enjoying.

In this issue, we start a new series that will appear in future issues of Gray Matters. This is our “Inside Furman” series, which will bring attention to Furman departments that support, directly or indirectly, our OLLI experience. This issue highlights the P2X group, which, among other things, prints the hard copies of Gray Matters.

Speaking of Gray Matters, if you are reading this as a hard copy, you should know it is available in full color on the OLLI website: www.furman.edu/olli. Choose “News from OLLI,” and then “Gray Matters.” You can view the current and previous issues there. The previous issues include our World War II and Korean War issues. In those editions, we profile and honor those OLLI armed forces members who served during the conflicts.

Although we still have an exciting summer session to go, the main part of our academic year has come to a close. Many of you will be traveling. As you travel, be on the lookout for a subject you may want to suggest as a class. Even better, you might decide to learn more and teach the class yourself. Also, don’t forget Olliver! Many members have found our Furman swan the ideal travel companion.

Thanks to all our members who contributed to this issue, especially our proofreaders: Carole Eisen, Sue Renault, Nancy Williams, and Nancy Kennedy. Also, thanks to our Gray Matters turf management specialists, Moses Lonagan and Alonzo Greene.
WHO IS THAT?

Which one of these kids grew up to be an OLLI @ Furman Council President? Also what is the name of the president?

The answer is on the bottom of page 10.

Now that you’ve had fun with this, contribute your childhood or young adult picture for people to try to identify. Send to gary.aten42@gmail.com

GRAY MATTERS NEEDS YOU!

In an effort to keep Gray Matters fresh, we are looking for more participation from the OLLI membership. If you would like to conduct interviews, write articles, take responsibility for a set of pages, or have another way you would like to contribute, get in touch with Gary Aten by email: gary.aten42@gmail.com or phone: 307-871-1050. Work will need to be done with Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. Of course, we also welcome articles, photos, and poems as usual. Use the above contact information.

WHERE IN FURMAN ARE WE?

Do you know where this picture was taken? Hints and the answer are given below.

1. Middle of Campus
2. Close to Duke Library
3. Close to Hipp Hall
4. Expect Students Here

East entrance to the upper floor of the Trone Student Center
Following is a summary of OLLI @ Furman Council members’ activities. Compiled by Elaine Brummett

President – Elaine Brummett
Presided over four Council meetings and attended meetings on finance, long range planning, the biannual survey, and the May luncheon. Prepared action items for consideration after the SE Regional Conference. Increased member sustainability efforts (recycling, using fewer coffee cups). Improved the visibility of Council members and activities via OLLI notes, bulletin board display, etc. Organized the Thanksgiving Day pot-luck.

President Elect – Steve Davis
Attended various committee meetings, continued membership on Finance Committee, and chaired Nominations Committee. Co-lead for the High Country Hikers on Monday.

V.P. Administration – George Hammond
Reviewed OLLI financial data; then prepared tables and charts for Council review of the information.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Administration and Finance - George Hammond
Researched and recommended Council approval to spend up to $44,500 on upgraded microphones in Crabtree Room, support the Straight Talk Series, curriculum grants, art wall display system in the Crabtree Room, additional chairs, Senior Leaders Greenville scholarships, satellite phones for hiking groups, and a wireless tour guide system.

Long-Range Planning – Karl Sedlarz
The main issue addressed was space in the Herring Center in light of OLLI’s rapid growth (recommended to first improve the utilization of already available classroom space by using all four daily class times); considered emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs); and the appropriate use of the annual earnings of the Osher Foundation Endowment for operating support.

Instructor Support - Judy Pearson
Continued to find ways to show appreciation to all our instructors, to give extra support to new instructors, and to provide training to improve instructional skills. Committee members made early contacts with new instructors and held coffees where they could learn about the AV equipment and ways to help teach senior learners. ISC members observe each new instructor in an early classroom session, followed by feedback and help if needed. Also sponsored pre-term events where new and experienced instructors met each other and enjoyed hors-d’oeuvres together.

Curriculum – Jim Smeaton
The committee consists of 84 people organized into 18 subcommittees, each focusing on a specific part of the curriculum. This year, 278 courses, 74 Friday bonus events, and 24 L&L (Lunch & Learn) Tuesday sessions were offered during the regular terms. In addition, 27 courses and 11 events are being offered this summer. Constant, but manageable personnel turnover in this large organization requires ongoing attention, but replacements enrich the CC with their energy and new ideas. The Travel Subcommittee was redundant and eliminated. The Computer and Technology Subcommittee was reconstituted and is positioned to broaden the future course offerings using new, innovative means. Closer links with the Instructor Support Committee and the Furman undergraduate faculty were established.
Social – Sharon Sickler
Held an Antiques Fest, provided decorations for several events, organized the tree trimming and back to class receptions, and helped plan the May Luncheon.

Outreach – Jack Hansen
Organized a sampler course at Long Branch Baptist Church in fall 2014. After evaluating that work, plans are underway for another outreach effort in fall 2015.

Newsletter (Gray Matters) – Gary Aten
Five issues were published this year. One regular issue included a poetry collection by OLLI members. The fifth issue was a special edition with eight stories about OLLI Korean War veterans.

Volunteer – Elaine Brummett, Temporary Chair
Hosted two events during volunteer week.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Roger Wheeler
Promoted community volunteer opportunities with a lunch & learn presentation; encouraged and supported SIGs by informational articles in Gray Matters; showcased OLLI authors in OLLI Notes and Book Nook; and promoted member-published/written works with a view to holding other events (book fairs or signings, Lunch & Learn presentations) in fall 2015. Also organized a class.

Dick Eton
Led hiking classes and revised of the (third biannual) member survey conducted February 2015. Nearly 600 members responded to the survey. Information in the report will be used for future planning and activities in OLLI. Pertinent facts presented to OLLI members attending a Town Hall Meeting April 30, 2015.

Diane Lawrence
Member of Instructor Support Committee, organized a multi-instructor course on Appalachian Studies for the fall, assisted with several events, and contributed to Gray Matters.

Pat Hicks
Member of Curriculum Committee, organized a class, and assisted with several events.

Greg Parker
Took many photos of OLLI members and activities, taught Aquacize, member of Social Committee, and formed a Travel SIG.

Barbara Wojack
Member of Outreach Committee and assisted with Senior Leaders Greenville.
A BLAST FROM THE PAST

FULIR trip to Haygood Mill - Taken about 2006

Clemson Botanical Garden trip - April 2007

Photos provided by Elaine Brummett
Painting pictures with Ashley is great fun.  
As a teacher he is number one.  
He taught us tricks to get it just right.  
Using colors from dark to light.

Four colors can give you a very nice picture.  
With pigments and water in just the right mixture.  
We start first with a puddle of color  
Making sure it doesn’t look duller.

A Hake brush is not for playing on ice  
But it sure makes our wash look extra nice.  
A second wash is called a glaze  
The result will often truly amaze.

Blossoms are nice when viewing flowers  
But not on a painting on which you have spent hours.  
Reflections and shadows are not the same.  
Don’t mix them up or you’ll never gain fame.

Transparency makes water colors bright.  
Even if you are viewing them at night.  
And if you get the brush at just the right angle  
You sable bristles will never tangle.

Ashley paints just like a master  
Compared with us, he is much faster.  
But don’t despair and have no fears  
He says we’ll be much better – in 50 years.

Proper brush, wet or dry, fast or slow.  
Will we remember all there is to know?  
Whatever we do, whenever we’re done.  
He taught all about having fun.

**LIMERICKS**

**Bob Strother**
There once was a girl from the street  
Who strutted her stuff just to meet  
A guy with a fifty  
Or a dinner quite nifty  
Either way she was off of her feet.

**Betty Watson**
We met the sweet cat at the pound.  
She instantly held us spellbound.  
The distressed look on her face  
Said, *Take me out of this place.*  
She was a great treasure, we found.
Many of you probably remember your old post office box at college where you would check to see if you got a letter or, even better, a notice you had a package to pick up that might herald some cookies from your mom. Well, some of the students at Furman remember their old post office boxes too. They have to remember them because they are gone. What? How does that work? Let’s see.

In 2012, the top floor of the Trone Student Center was updated. In 2012 and 2013, the bottom floor was updated as well. Post office boxes take up a lot of floor area - valuable real estate that might be used for other purposes. In addition, only about 25% of boxes actually had something in them at any one time. Part of the Trone Center update included planning for the next generation of college mail service. A pool table that gets a lot of use is now in the area where the boxes and part of the university printing function were located. Furman may not be the leader in this new mail delivery concept, but it is ahead of the curve. Here’s what happens.

Every morning, the main Greenville post office delivers some rolling carts, loaded with letters and packages, to a locked room adjacent to the Furman postal facility. The staff sorts packages, which are coded as to their size and type. They are placed in bins or shelves that are arranged by box number groups. Even perishable items are categorized and refrigerated.

Magazines, envelopes up to magazine size, and the like are rough-sorted into bins. Each bin is for a group of box numbers. The contents are then taken and placed in hanging folders. Each folder is assigned to a student and has his or her number on it and his or her name in it. As the letter is placed in the folder, the name is checked to ensure that a letter has not been sent to the wrong box number. This folder system is called “high-density” mail. Sounds simple enough, but how do the kids get their mail?
This is where technology enters the picture. Each hanging folder also has a bar code on the outside. As a letter is placed in the folder, a scanner reads the bar code. Students are notified via the Furman network when they have mail. Of course, they also get notices about their packages. After receiving a notice, a student can visit the P2X facility, which is located conveniently on the bottom floor of the Trone Center between the dining area and the book store. After having his or her Furman card scanned, the student is given his or her mail. The student also electronically signs for it, and that record is kept for possible later use.

This system has advantages for the students. They don’t have to check their mailboxes every day, but only when they know they have something waiting. If they are waiting for something specific and get a notice, they can call P2X and the staff can check to see if it’s what they were waiting for. These advantages outweigh the inability to check their boxes at 2:00 a.m. The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. P2X also handles many postal functions such as selling stamps and mailing packages but, in addition, can send material UPS or FedEx. By the way, the Furman post office handles 300 to 400 packages a day, is on track to deliver more than 50,000 packages this academic year, and sees about 450 customers a day.

Meanwhile, the mail courier makes a morning visit to drop off and pick up mail to about 75 locations around campus. A second trip to about 25 high users, such as Admissions, happens in the afternoon. Bulk mailings can be metered and pre-sorted. Outgoing mail is loaded on the rolling carts and staged for the Greenvile post office to pick up in the evening.

Obviously from the title of this department, there is also printing going on. Most large printings (over 100 copies) and special sizes are done here. The main workhorse printer can print color or black and white in up to 11” X 17” size. There is a large copy color printer that can handle poster sizes up to 24” X 60” and another black-and-white printer for standard-sized paper. Hard copies of Gray Matters are done on the first machine, which also folds and staples the issues.

All this work is done by a full-time staff of five Ricoh employees, augmented with four student workers. Russell Kagan is the Site Manager and has been in print services management for over 25 years. Russell grew up in the Boston area and, after college, married his childhood sweetheart, who is a psychologist. Moving for their careers included New York, Texas, and now Greenville. They moved here 4 years ago, so he was here for the change to the new high-density mail system. Russell says that although P2X “…can’t be everything for everybody, we can be most things for everybody.”
OLLI PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWCASE

You may already know…….
……that a new OLLI Photography Showcase is being established in the Crabtree Room. The first exhibit will be up in the next few days. Many beautiful photographs were submitted by some very talented OLLI members and staff photographers. What you may not know is that this exhibit will be rotated three or four times each year and the next call for photos will be in early August to get ready for the fall term. We know that there are many talented photographers in OLLI and hope that all OLLI members and staff will consider submitting one of their favorites for everyone to enjoy. Watch for the next call for photos. If you have any questions please contact Greg Peters (peters5369@gmail.com), Alan Weinberg (aweinberg@bellsouth.net), or Ian Clarke (ianmclarke@hotmail.com).

This photo of an Oconee Bell was taken by Greg Peters at Devil's Fork State Park.

LIMERICKS

**The Batter** - Joe Deehan

The batter stood strong and waited.
A home run he anticipated.
The pitch was let fly.
He thought it was high.
When strike three was called he deflated.

**Rummage** - Judy Aten

A little old lady would rummage
Through the items crammed into old luggage
It gave her great pleasure
To discover each treasure
Never once believing them rubbish

**WHO IS THAT?** - Page 3 - **ANSWER**

The girl in the center of the picture grew up to be our 2014-2015 president, Elaine Brummett
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Jim Smeaton

I am delighted to lead 83 men and women serving on the OLLI @ Furman Curriculum Committee. They serve on one or more of our 18 subcommittees, each focusing on a single part of the curriculum. They are doing a fantastic service of arranging 95 courses, 25-plus bonus tours and events (BTEs), and 8 or more Lunch & Learn sessions each school term. I am confident we can offer even more quality courses and events as our student membership grows.

We are always experiencing attrition with such a large group. Losing experienced veterans can be cause of concern; however, it also provides openings and opportunities for new people to bring positive energy and new, creative ideas to the organization. Please contact Greg Peters, any member of the OLLI staff, or me if you are willing to participate on one of the curriculum subcommittees.

The Curriculum Committee does not work alone. The OLLI Council provides oversight, and the Long-Range Planning Committee offers strategic direction. We also have a close working relationship with the Instructor Support Committee to ensure the best possible classroom experience for our students.

The superb work of these volunteers would not be possible without the competent OLLI staff. Susan Rae is responsible for the daunting and complex task of taking all of the Curriculum Committee recommendations and fitting them into the spaces and times available and also resolving conflicts. She also creates the course brochures and oversees student registration. She makes the process appear easy and simple; she is truly outstanding!

Join me in thanking Susan!

TRIBUTES

Barbara Leimsieder

Bill Morrow

Bill Morrow, 81, passed away on February 3, 2015. A quiet and congenial man, he was a native of northern Greenville County. He joined OLLI in the fall of 1996. He created and taught several OLLI classes of the popular series “History of the Dark Corner” about life in the early days of northern Greenville County. He also arranged bus tours of the region. A graduate of Furman, he established the William P. Morrow Fund at his alma mater.

Ernie Lewis

Ernie Lewis, 81, died on April 30, 2015. A very kind, gentle, and scholarly man, he joined OLLI in the fall of 2002. He loved math and science courses, and he audited physics classes at Furman. He also enjoyed taking a variety of other OLLI courses with his wife, Mary Jo. We will miss his congenial smile, knowledge and warm humor.
I’m a cyclist. Some would say an avid cyclist. And some say I’m a crazy cyclist. I think I just like a challenge. Most of the time I ride with a local group of friends 2-3 days per week. In the last couple of years, I’ve gotten more into touring by bike. In 2014 I started working for a bike tour company—Adventure Cycling. But my bike touring resume is weak and I need more experience.

For the first time in a number of years, I found I had nothing scheduled bike-wise in September and October. What an opportunity for a bike tour! And there’s a week-long bike ride that I’ve been wanting to do for a number of years—the Cycle North Carolina Mountains to the Coast ride. The tour takes a different route each year, and this year’s ride was from Sparta to Hatteras, NC - 7 days and nearly 500 miles. Thinking about my bike resume, I decided I could do the ride carrying all my gear—tent, sleeping bag, clothes, etc. This is NOT how the vast majority of the other riders do this ride. The tour organizers provide trucks to transport all your gear from one city to the next, and you only need to hop on your bike and ride each day.

Then I started thinking about getting to and from the tour. Riding to Sparta from Greenville looked doable, but it begged the question: what to do when I got to Hatteras? I took the leap and decided I could ride the entire trip on my bike and that’s... uh... wow!... 1200 miles and 17-18 days of riding. I think I’m standing on the crazy side of the avid-crazy cyclist scale.

The Cycle NC tour portion was a snap; the route and destinations were already planned. All I had to do was sign up, plan to camp outdoors with the other riders, and sign up for the optional breakfast/dinner meal plan. But for the rest of the trip, I needed a plan and some details for getting to Sparta and home from Hatteras. Google maps gave me the “bike-friendly” directions for each portion. When riding fully loaded/self-contained, 65 miles per day is the rule of thumb, with adjustments for terrain and weather. So I started plugging the directions into a bike-specific program to work out my daily mileages and directions.

But where to stay? There’s a great website called “Warmshowers” (www.warmshowers.org). It’s a website where people sign up and offer to host touring cyclists for free. I’d read about other people’s experiences for several years and have a friend in Anderson who just became a host. Hosting can be as simple as offering a shower and your backyard for a cyclist to pitch a tent or, more generously, letting them sleep in a spare bedroom and providing meals and laundry or more. I’m in luck—there are Warmshowers hosts on the way, and, after contacting them, they agreed to host me. From Hatteras to Greenville there are only one or two hosts, but there are several state parks and numerous private campgrounds. I’ve got a travel plan!

Day 1. The panniers are packed. Time for a reality check. The bike weighs 35 pounds without gear. Load the panniers and it now weighs 80 pounds! Fortunately, the bike is designed to carry all that weight and geared so that I can actually move the bike. I was a little apprehensive as I kissed my wife goodbye and headed out. I know these roads I’m starting out on and ride them often. But today, at the end of the day I won’t be back home. It feels different than when you travel somewhere to start a tour on unfamiliar roads.
A detailed description of the trip is more than space permits. It was always different. Weather, hosts, campgrounds, roads, scenery, people along the way, food, and my body all changed every day. The little towns we passed through welcomed us in lots of ways. For example, in Mayodan the residents built a giant bicycle out of round hay bales and PVC pipe and offered up free snacks and drinks for all the riders. Day-by-day itineraries and additional photos can be found at www.trackmytour.com/6x5fg.

At the end of the Cycle North Carolina tour, most people hopped buses for their trip home. Most of the approximately 100 remaining cyclists camping around me were headed back to Sparta via bus the next morning. The wind picked up during the night to 20-30 mph. I had pitched my tent into the wind and was doing fine until the wind shifted and broadsided the tent. My conventional tent stakes didn’t hold in the sandy soil, and I had to get up twice during the night to resecure it. The trip resumed early with a couple of ferry rides where I caght up on much-needed sleep.

After 2 weeks, I finally crossed the border back into South Carolina. I was getting antsy to get home. Touring is fun but riding and camping solo is not nearly as much fun as sharing the ride with others and staying with Warmshowers hosts. Still, it’s an adventure. You never know what you are going to see. One day I stopped at a pine forest and there were men harvesting the pine needles and baling them. So this is where pine needle mulch comes from. Near the end of my trip, I found I was not going to make the campground before dark. So what do you do when you can’t make your destination? Splurge!! I stopped in Richburg, where there are hotels and restaurants. I treated myself to a night in a hotel. I had dinner at a Mexican restaurant and I think I surprised the waitress when I cleaned my plate and then asked for dessert, as well as drinking 4-5 tall glasses of iced tea. And she didn’t even see the snacking I did before I got to the restaurant.

It’s Friday night in Richburg. I’ve been on the road for 16 days. Looking at the map I’m still 2 days away from Greenville. I call my wife, Ruth. She volunteers in Charlotte every Saturday. How about I meet her in Blacksburg off of I-85 as she’s driving back to Greenville? It’s a plan.

The last day. I was leaving the hotel in the morning and looked up to see a beautiful rainbow in the sky. It disappeared in less than 5 minutes, but I took having caught sight of it as a good sign. The roads to Blacksburg were getting steeper and hillier. Despite its being nearly the middle of October, the temperature is in the high 80’s and that pesky headwind is still blowing. Is this Indian Summer? Despite all the adversity I was having a great time and headed home. About 2:30, I crested a hill and saw I-85 and the exit. Gliding into the gas station parking lot I spotted the car and Ruth waiting for me. I did it! I can stop pedaling, at least for now. A friend of mine emailed me shortly after I returned and said we need to tour together in 2015. Hmmm.
By now, many of you have already heard about the Dynamic Aging Program (DAP) being offered at OLLI this past year and then again next fall. The DAP is the world’s first year-long program of classes and interactive classroom discussions taking the latest theory and science from multiple disciplines and molding them into a “systemic” and proactive approach to aging. For those students who engage energetically with the program’s content, they will begin to live a more knowledgeable, conscious, meaningful, and joyous life – even as their bodies grow older.

This optional one-year (fall, winter, and spring terms) program is not for everybody - but is the perfect opportunity for those individuals who would like to become more knowledgeable and motivated with regard to their own aging process.

This is important because having the highest quality of life (QOL) possible as we get older involves more than simply taking better physical care of ourselves. It also involves doing everything we can to:

- Keep our brains healthy and produce new neural pathways
- Become more mindful and self-aware
- Improve the quality and supportive nature of our relationships
- Find new meaning and purpose for the last third of life
- Reduce stress (the number 1 killer in the world)
- Improve our adaptability to changing life circumstances
- Live an energetic life on the edge of our capabilities and comfort zone
- Enhance the development of our unique potential as a human being

Combined with exercise and nutrition, this more systemic approach to aging will add years to an increasingly meaningful, satisfying, energetic, and productive life.

The DAP’s first year was extremely successful, with 20 graduates of the three-term program and another 9 students completing two terms. The program’s student reviews have been outstanding, and the group has grown to be extremely supportive of one another. Ask any of the DAP graduates for more information about the program and what they thought of the process.

For more information on the DAP, please click on the link below and go to my website at:

http://www.dynamicaginginstitute.com/dynamic-aging-program/

We are also starting a new class next fall - only for DAP graduates - titled “Masters of Aging,” where we will explore the specific ideas and concepts of dynamic aging and “beyond” in increasingly greater depth.

If you would like to learn more about the DAP, you can reach me at:

dotower@earthlink.net
CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT

OLLI members inspect a car equipped with the Michelin “Tweel”, an airless tire, shown after a presentation by a Michelin engineer.

The Volunteer Appreciation Day included a sing-along in the Manly Lobby.

Students in Nancy Yan’s Chinese Painting class.

Starting on a basket in the Baskets with Unusual Basses class taught by Peggy McCarson.
I’ve been thinking recently about the benefits of being an OLLI member. There are, of course, the obvious ones…the courses you enjoy, the friends you make, the coffee you drink…..But, have you thought about the benefits available to you simply because we are part of a college campus?

Have you visited the Furman library? Stop by with your OLLI name tag and they’ll add a bar code to make it your library card. You have full use of the library for research and reading for pleasure. I’ve learned that the Furman library has books readily available that, in our public library system, have long waiting lists. To me, that’s one of Furman’s best-kept secrets!

I know many of you enjoy Furman’s Dining Hall, because I see you in there frequently. But, in case you don’t know, OLLI members may enjoy meals for just $5. And, that’s not just for lunch. You get the same great deal for breakfast and supper as well.

Furman benefits from world-class faculty, and we are often fortunate to have those faculty members teach in our classes. Furman undergraduates pay more than $50,000 a year to learn from the best; you have access to them for just $50 a course.

Academic departments on campus often bring in guest lecturers, and sometimes they share them with us. A perfect example of this benefit happened in February. The English Department had Dr. Robert Smallwood here from the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon. He spent a week working with Furman’s English majors in various contexts, but he also gave a stimulating lecture right here at OLLI just for our members and then joined us again the following day to introduce our encore showing of Henry IV, Part II.

Finally, many of you enjoy interactions with Furman students. If you’ve never participated in psychology student research, or attended a student music recital, or enjoyed a performance at the playhouse, you might want to try one of those.

What’s YOUR favorite best-kept secret at Furman? Email me at nancy.kennedy2767@furman.edu and let me know.
Senior Leaders Greenville Now Accepting Applications

Senior Leaders Greenville (SLG) is a program designed and facilitated by OLLI @ Furman. Participants attend monthly day-long sessions August-April to learn more about issues affecting the senior population in Greenville and in South Carolina. Our goal is that graduates of SLG use information learned through the program to better inform their individual volunteer activities and become a powerful voice of advocacy for seniors, resulting in better choices for aging well, to the benefit of all seniors and the greater community.

SLG Class I graduates Lea Rohrbaugh and Susan Cyr are Chair and Vice Chair of the SLG Steering Committee, charged with planning for Class II.

Anyone interested in learning more about SLG can visit the OLLI website and click on Senior Leaders Greenville. You may also stop by the OLLI Office to pick up a brochure and application. Cost is $350 and scholarships are available. The deadline to apply is July 1. Questions? Contact Nancy Kennedy in the OLLI Office.

SEEN IN THE KITCHEN
Winter 2015 All-Member Survey Summary
Dick Eaton & Nancy Kennedy

In February, 2015, OLLI@Furman members were invited to complete a survey to provide opinions regarding current and future OLLI classes, programs, and other activities. About 600 people completed the survey, which was approximately 37% of the current membership at that time. Most participants completed the online version, while a few filled out paper copies in the OLLI Office.

Seventy-six percent of respondents are either single courses purchasers or 6-course package owners. The top three reasons for joining OLLI are to be intellectually stimulated, to acquire new skills/knowledge, and to meet new people/socialization. Sixty-two percent heard about OLLI through word-of-mouth channels (so please keep telling your friends and neighbors about OLLI). History and Politics, Culture and Literature, Current Events are the top three categories of course interest.

A few new ideas for OLLI were tested. When asked about an independent film series, 74% said they would be interested, with most interested in films once a month or 3-4 times a year. Members (65%) are also interested in group travel with OLLI, using Road Scholar trips.

Around 40% of respondents are willing to attend a class during the 3:15 time slot, and 73% are willing to take a course offered on Fridays. This is significant information as OLLI continues to grow because it will be necessary to offer more courses during under-utilized time slots.

Our members continue to increase their use of social media and technology. Fifty-nine percent of respondents own smart phones, up from 35% in 2013, and 46% own an iPad or tablet, up from 31% in 2013. Facebook counts 39% of survey respondents among its users.

Demographics of those who responded: 61% female, 62% between the ages of 65 and 74, 76% married or partnered, 85% completed college or graduate school, and 87% fully retired.

Those taking the survey provided many useful comments and suggestions in the free answer portions of the survey. OLLI staff is going through those comments and sharing them with the appropriate staff and committee chairs in order to improve customer service in the office, course offerings, committee work, the OLLI website, and much more. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete a survey. Your input makes a difference.
progression

noun
a movement or development toward a destination or a more advanced state, especially gradually or in stages: the normal progression from junior to senior status | their mode of progression through the forest.
• a succession; a series: counting the twenty-four hours in a single progression from midnight.
• Music: a passage or movement from one note or chord to another: a blues progression.
• Mathematics: short for arithmetic progression, geometric progression, or harmonic progression.

ORIGIN late Middle English: from Old French, from Latin progression, from the verb progress (see progress).

As I looked back through this issue I was struck by the connections through time with our organization. We have one of our newer members sharing her talent on our cover and in an art class, pictures of field trips from several years ago, and activities, such as basketry, that have been part of FULIR/OLLI since our start. Then I noticed other progressions. A picture of one of our presidents when she was a little girl; a man challenges his bike riding ability and interest; a photography gallery is started in a classroom; mail is delivered a different way on a college campus; the Herring Center hosts activities that have been going on for a long time and new ones never done before; and reports from committee chairs highlight changes that have been made over time.

Our definition above says “…movement or development toward a destination or a more advanced state.” I would say we don’t really have a destination, but we certainly have progressed to a more advanced state. Some of us may boast that we remember when FULIR was housed in the basement of Plyler Hall and then moved to the beloved “trailer,” but we certainly don’t want to regress back to those places. Our Long-Range Planning Committee is contemplating our continuing progression, but they would be the first to say they don’t know exactly how we will progress in the future. From our newest members to our oldest, you will all help to shape our future. We need you to do so. Invest your time and talents in that progression.