

# OLLILife

## PANDEMIC!

### *a Journal*

*issue #2, June 2020*

This is the second of our **OLLILife PANDEMIC Journals**. In issue #1, May 2020, we told our stories of coping and resilience as we sheltered in place. We watched the “numbers” grow: numbers of affected, numbers who died, numbers from South Carolina; and watched for proclamations from Governor McMaster to help us know things: can we go to church? get a haircut? (no) walk on the Swamp Rabbit Trail? gather in groups?

We were in it to win it!

Now, it’s June. We have more stories.

We are still plucky. (*Heck, did you see that amazing annual luncheon we did virtually with colorful graphics and crazy hats and music from around the world?!!!! Even a break-out discussion group?*) But we’re also getting antsy. We’re tired of puzzles. We’ve gained weight, we hate cooking and we want to shop for summer sandals, not hand sanitizer. Let us out!

We promise to obey the rules for social distancing.

We promise to wear face masks inside the grocery stores. We promise to self-quarantine if we get a sore throat and to visit loved ones from outside their windows (Linda Mader, p. 3).

As OLLI member Lynne Nachman (p. 5) says, “I (We) am ready for the new normal.”

What’s on your mind? Tell us: [sue.renault@gmail.com](mailto:sue.renault@gmail.com)

**Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Furman**

## The longer I remain isolated, the more I miss my husband

I know many of you will understand if I tell you that that the longer I remain isolated in my apartment, the more I miss my husband Art. Although he's been gone two years now, I still miss his loving touch, his hugs, his sense of humor, his lively mind, his interest in everything. The isolation of the pandemic has been difficult.

Yet, OLLI connections and classes have helped a lot and Zoom meetings with friends and our informal poetry group and good books and binge-worthy TV shows. And I finally got out on the Swamp Rabbit Trail with my bicycle: Here's hoping for more and more of these respites.

### Saving the Day

When I heard the daily doomsayers proclaim the scourge had accelerated, I decided to go out on the biking trail, and, keeping my social distance, ride without a face mask. It doesn't matter that I am wobbly on my bicycle, gift of my sister. Wind in my face, I might be ten years old again, invincible as Mighty Mouse ("Here I come to save the day!"). I cheered as he dispatched all villains when I wasn't outside. Outside! Outside!

*by Elizabeth Drewry*

### **i HAVE BECOME COMFORTABLE STAYING AT HOME** by Sue Renault

I have become very comfortable staying at home. I go to bed early and I sleep well. I don't have to-do lists bubbling around a restless brain trying to convince me I've forgotten a birthday card or to fill a prescription. (I still forget the card, but spend less time losing sleep over it.)

My simpler "outer life" has led to a calmer "inner" life. I eat simpler. Instead of a piece of fish, a vegetable, rice and a salad, I'm content with a piece of fish and a salad for dinner. Such a small change affects the way we shop (less), and spend (less), and even waste (less).

While I'm happy at home, I nonetheless rejoice that one of our "allowable" excursions is for exercise. I thrive on my routine of walks and bike rides. Done with

Lance or with special friends, these keep me tuned to the pleasures and privileges of friendship. Done by myself, they are pilgrimages of the spirit.

I have taught myself to read slower. Instead of skimming through a magazine article looking for key words that stitch together a broader theme, I relax in the moment of not having a half dozen competing tasks. I reclaim time to focus entirely upon the reading at hand. At ease, I take the gift of information or entertainment as one savoring a meal instead of wolfing it down.

The thing is, it's June. People are growing tired of the Simple Life. They're ready to open up: open up restaurants, malls and libraries. I see it in the news. I feel it around me, and I don't think I'm ready.

### CONTRIBUTORS

Judy Aten

Ann Briskey

Elizabeth Drewry

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Vito Fiore

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Linda Mader

Arthur McMaster

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Sue Renault, editor

## Even neighbors she hasn't yet met start little chats across the street

Spending an unusual amount of time with books, puzzles,  
Netflix, Zoom meetings,  
catching up on chores at home.

I've done it all since the COVID-19 pandemic forced us  
to drastically alter our daily activities. I've cycled through a range of emotions,  
the worst of which has been stressing over when I may be able to travel  
to see my children and grandchildren again.

And oh, the pain of knowing  
I will miss my eldest grandchild's wedding  
or "Hamilton" at the Kennedy Center with my daughter-in-law!

*But there is another side to this which allows my normally optimistic outlook to prevail.*

During the daily walks which now substitute for my regular workouts at the Y,  
I've noticed a new openness and willingness among even neighbors I haven't yet met  
to start little chats across the street.

*Since I first gave the FedEx delivery driver a thumbs-up in thanks for his service, he has begun pausing occasionally to inquire how I am doing. Our friendly exchanges put a smile on both our faces. I do hope this kind of good will and awareness of each other continues long after the pandemic has faded.*

*by Ann Briskey*

## We communicate by phone and through her window



In 2008, my parents moved to SC, the year we were having a house built in Greer. We have had highs and lows celebrating birthdays, a 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, illness and ER visits.

My mother Elizabeth turned 100 in January and we enjoyed a wonderful celebration that our family will always remember. Now, with her living in an assisted living facility, we communicate by phone and through her window.

We, at all ages, are proof that we can cope with this virus.

*by Linda Mader*

## “I LEARNED I DON’T HAVE TO WEAR A BRA.”

During this pandemic, I learned I can go to the store and buy enough groceries to last a month instead of going several times weekly for a few items.

I learned I can effectively use less toilet paper if I gently tear a few sheets instead of jerking off too many.

I learned I can refrigerate ripe, yellow bananas for weeks since I don’t mind removing darker peel before eating one.

I learned there are more babies, children, dogs, walkers, runners, bicycles, skateboards, strollers in my neighborhood than I formerly saw when walking my daily 10,000 steps.

*I learned that every day I don't have to wear a bra, take a shower, dress in a different outfit, or put on makeup when the only person I'm with is my husband of 65+ years.*

I learned many family members and I could virtually join my great-grandson’s 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday party even though he and his parents live in Ankara, Turkey. I learned that social distancing continued on Mother’s Day when our daughter and son-in-law surprised me with an outdoor visit, flowers, yard work, and lunch on the patio.

by Liz DuBose

## OLLI Instructor Arthur McMaster says, “Wild-ass guesses seldom pay off... Let’s be smart.”

Surely, the Corona virus is causing most of us to feel much “at sea,” as the expression was used by families of ocean-going merchants, plying off their trades to distant markets some hundreds of years ago. Men out of sight and away from the known world. It’s all new. No frame of reference. Who knows what to make of it?

I am reminded of a friend from my agency accompanying me on a government “business” trip to Bonn several years ago. First night in town he got up from dinner to use the WC and came back to his beer looking startled and, if you will, rather much at sea. “What happened?” I asked. He, knowing no German at all, took a shot at which door to use. It seems he rejected HERREN and chose instead the portal marked DAMEN because he figured the HER on the first door was for the gals. The “her” threw him off. He used intuition, but not facts. He might have asked. Or observed to see who was using which facility. But no. Wild-ass guesses seldom pay off.

*Let's all agree to be observant.  
Let's follow the facts. The science. Let's be smart.*

by Arthur McMaster

## HATS OFF TO VITO FIORE

What did OLLI staff and volunteers pull off on May 19, 2020? A Virtual Annual Luncheon — *with more than 100 participants!!* Guests and hosts donned favorite hats to celebrate OLLI members and activities: Hats off to Nancy Kennedy and staff for moving to at-home offices on a moment’s notice *and making it work!* Hats off to emcee, Linda Kelly; Hats off to retiring OLLI president, Sally Bornmueller and in-coming president, David Johnson; Hats off to Vito Fiore, Social Committee mover extraordinaire and Volunteer of the Year!

**Every day Larry and I walk our dog Red.  
We try to pick a different venue each time.**

Overbrook,  
Greenville  
Country Club,  
Crescent Avenue,  
West Prentiss

**We talk to gardeners in every  
area as we look at the  
beautiful spring flowers and  
budding trees.**

historic areas  
such as Hampton  
Pickney and  
Earle Street

new areas of  
Hollingsworth, Hartness  
Estates, Chanticleer and  
Thornblade (where we  
dodge the golf carts).

The result of the walks is  
visits to the nurseries and  
purchases of jasmine and  
climbing roses. Our yard  
has turned into a jungle!

**This pandemic has been a challenge!**

**I read every book I can.**

I'm a movie buff. I love movies of  
the 30s and 40s which remind  
me of my youth. The hats,  
cigarettes, cigars, pipes and  
highballs were all there.

Life when everyone  
rode the train and  
things seemed simpler  
even though it wasn't.

I always  
check TCM to  
see what's  
playing.

Saturday was  
our  
granddaughter's  
virtual Tulane  
graduation. We  
had to scrap  
our plans to  
party with her in  
New Orleans.

I miss hiking  
with my  
friends.  
Social  
distancing  
will be  
difficult but  
worth the  
effort.

**I am ready for the new normal!**

*by Lynne Nachman*

## **TANIS BRYAN AND KELLY ROSCHE RECEIVE OLLI GRANTS TO ENHANCE THEIR CLASSES**

**HATS OFF:** OLLI instructors, Tanis Bryan whose specialty is humor and Kelly Rosche, yoga, have received grants from OLLI for extra study activities to enhance their classes. Expect more laughs from Tanis and extra Zen from Kelly. Hats off to them for seeking and winning these grants and wanting to bring their best to our members.

### **WHO ELSE GOT AN ANNUAL-LUNCHEON TIP OF THE HAT? NOTA BENE!**

Who were the celebs in the (virtual) crowd? You'd have to include Instructor Ginny Anderson and her winning band of Latin scholars. OLLI at Furman was the *only* OLLI to enter the annual National Latin Exam (we're talking *hundreds* of very smart people). Hats off to Helen Graben, Latin 1, Gold; Susan Kirton, Latin 2, Gold; and Michael Kilgore, Latin 4, Gold.

### **ANYONE ELSE BUSY WINNING PRIZES LATELY?**

Yes, some OLLI photographers entered the annual Friends of Lake Robinson Juried Art Competition whose theme was the Natural World of the Upstate. Nineteen entries, out of 44 submitted, were selected for exhibition, among them, OLLI photographers Alan Weinberg, Sherry Robertson, Linda Hosek, and Frank Erk. (Hosek received an Honorable Mention for her photo.) SMILE.

### **How does the OLLI IMPROV-ing with Age SIG keep its comedic juices flowing?**

The IMPROV-ing with Age SIG has found ways to keep the OLLI comedic juices flowing. Kathy Knox has come up with numerous ways to keep the SIG going via e-mails. One in particular, Round Robin Story, allows for members to create a story building upon what was already written.

Kathy starts with a photograph to serve as inspiration for the story then sends an email with the photo to one of the group. That person writes a few sentences to start the story and sends it back to Kathy who in turn sends it to person number two to add to the story, taking their lead from what was written by person number one, and so the story builds as it goes from person to person.

Couple of rules; what is written should connect in some way to what was written previously, must be family friendly and twists, turns, and surprises are encouraged!

The first story has been completed and as you can imagine it is truly a masterpiece. We will work on a way to get the completed stories "published" for OLLI members to read and enjoy!

*Submitted by Vito Fiore on behalf of the IMPROV-ing with Age SIG*

## ***The NANCY REPORT: WE LEARN, WE ZOOM, WE LEAD!***

### **WE LEARN:**

While I do a lot of planning, I never thought about how we'd respond to a pandemic. *I've learned a lot, and it has been on-the-job training for sure!*

- I've learned we can continue, thanks to technology, and I have learned A LOT about technology.
- I've learned that enthusiastic support from members, volunteers, and instructors makes a difficult time easier.
- I've learned the value of looking to peer organizations. Conversations with other lifelong learning directors have been helpful. Osher National Resource Center has provided tools for OLLIs to share ideas and training tools.

### **WE ZOOM:**

About 365 people enrolled in a course or bonus event for the summer term. We had at least 125 people enjoy the annual luncheon on Zoom. We've held two OLLI Council meetings, numerous committee meetings, and regular staff meetings via Zoom. A few Special Interest Groups are meeting on Zoom. The Zoom orientation sessions and office hours have been well-attended, with an average of 15 members each time, sometimes many more than that. Members are enjoying learning a new technology, and love having the chance to see their OLLI friends.

*One member wrote me to say, "It was so good to see everyone. I felt better for the rest of the day."*

### **WE PICK GREAT LEADERS**

At the Annual Luncheon, outgoing president Sally Bornmueller passed the gavel to our new president, David Johnson. The membership elected Bob McGrath as president-elect, and also two new members-at-large: Marie Eldridge and Ron Teare. Ron Eldridge is serving his third year as VP for Finance and Administration, and I'm thrilled to announce new committee chairs: Kathy Roed and Jim Nicholson for Curriculum and Ted Sauvain for Travel.

### ***THANKS, OLLI COUNCIL MEMBERS***

*FYI: Characters in History is the largest summer course, and Bob Dwyer's look at The Great Migration is our largest Friday Bonus Event.*

## **THE TEAPOT SHOWED JOY THAT GRANDMA SURVIVED**

Sitting on a shelf in our den is a little china teapot - part of my teapot collection. It's a very small and very old decorative item given to my Grandmother by her best friend. It was meaningful to her, and I know why. Her best friend came calling the afternoon my great-grandmother invited her over. She sat down beside Grandma and handed her that teapot to show her joy that Grandma had survived the Spanish flu. My daughter knows the story behind it now, and one day, it will be hers.

*by Judy Aten*

**GLORIA LARKIN HAS SORTED LETTERS  
THAT GO BACK TO 1958!**

This strange time of isolation:  
far fewer in-person contacts,  
no concerts,  
no classes,  
BUT I'm thankful for livestream church,  
curbside shopping,  
spring gardening,  
phoning,  
extra time with new insights and  
mental challenges (iPad and ZOOM),  
*internet for family game nights!*

Extra time has meant tackling  
procrastinated home projects and  
*sorting letters that go back to  
1958 with decades of joys,  
sorrows, and life events.*

That has led to a couple of renewed  
contacts and the warm feeling of the  
presence and friends. I'm now inside a  
crystal ball, knowing how events of the  
past have played for better or worse.  
Oh yes, while I'm not exercising at my  
usual level, I've become better acquainted  
with neighbors by walking outdoors —  
*at a safe distance!*

*by Gloria Larkin*

**Why I do laundry  
more often than I used to**

I claim it's simply a healthy response to  
daily exercise trips into the outside,  
germ-infested world. Gotta wash those  
germs right out of my sweats. The fact is  
that it's pleasant-enough busy work,  
requires little concentration, is perceived  
by others as "meaningful," and takes at  
least two hours when you add dryer time  
and folding. It's active. You have to stand  
up a few times. Sit for the wash cycle;  
stand to put towels and heavy stuff in  
dryer; sit and wait for dryer to run its  
cycle; stand to remove clothes from  
dryer. You can feel very good about so  
much sitting and standing. Everyone  
knows that uninspired people don't cope  
well. They check Facebook 80 times a  
day, take unnecessary naps, watch way  
too much TV, and barely make it through  
chapter one of a recommended read  
before boredom sets in. Let them throw a  
load of laundry into the washer during  
the commercial, and they become  
Virtuous. Almost Biblical.

The Editor

Thank you to all who contributed to our **OLLILife PANDEMIC! Journal**. The **OLLILife** staff is grateful for your sharing and your inspiration. Walk your dog, ditch the bra, make friends with the FED Ex guy...your stories have lightened our hearts and reaffirmed that in so many ways we are more *together* than alone. OLLI Strong!  
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