



AT THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF GEORGIA®

# OLLI TIMES

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## OLLI@UGA: A LIFELINE FROM AFAR

By Larry Dendy

When my wife Gail and I moved from Athens to West Chester, Ohio, last September, I knew leaving the city we'd lived in for 49 years wouldn't be easy. It wasn't.

Learning our way around this attractive but sprawling, traffic-heavy suburb of Cincinnati has been intimidating. Coming from a place where we were deeply involved in community activities and had many friends and family to a place where we knew only our son and his family left us feeling lonely and isolated.

Despite warnings about cold winters, it's been a shock. The first snowfall came last November and there've been several since, mostly light snow that melted in a day or two. But in early February freezing rain coated trees and streets, followed by an inch of sleet and two inches of snow.

Though road crews are supposed to handle this with plows and salt, officials declared a high-level emergency and told people to stay home. Streets were impassable. Schools and businesses closed. Stores ran out of supplies. Television meteorologists called it the worst winter storm in decades.

Just my luck to be here.

As bad as the ice and snow are the incessant frigid temperatures. Almost every morning the thermometer reads below freezing, often in the 20s, sometimes in single digits. As I've bemoaned to Athens friends, my old Georgia bones are not happy.

Despite my grouching, I'm adjusting to life here. I'm learning the lay of the land and getting bolder about

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Dawn Torcivia



Dawn Torcivia

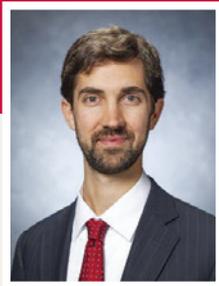
Recently while I was ushering at a performance at UGA's Performing Arts Center, I was chatting with someone about OLLI@UGA. When she heard that I am the current President, she asked me how I ended up signing up for this role. The question set me back since I never sought this position. So how did I end up here?

When I joined OLLI in 2018, I was relatively new to the Athens area. Before we moved here, I knew about OLLI and had decided that I would definitely join once I retired. I attended a New Member Orientation meeting and discovered some interesting ways that I could get involved in the organization and make some friends and acquaintances. I signed up for classes, joined a few SIGs, and made the jump to actively participate in some committees including Membership and Curriculum. At the time, Cher Snyder was chair of the Membership Committee. She took me under her wing, and before I knew it I became the new Membership Committee chair so she could start preparing for her role as President-Elect. When it was time for Cher to start looking for her own President-Elect, she tapped me.

How do these various roles work at OLLI? The OLLI@UGA President-Elect holds a one-year term, followed by a second one-year term as President. The benefit of this arrangement is that the President-Elect is mentored by the current President for an entire year. They work closely together and also with OLLI's Executive Director Tim Meehan, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors. This arrangement serves as a great opportunity to prepare for the role as future President.

While serving as President-Elect, I met several times a month with Cher and Tim to prepare for committee and Board meetings, address members' concerns, and

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**Tim Meehan**

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

not be under any illusion that to get back to where we were will be easy.

We miss a lot of members at the current time but hope that you feel that we have something to offer you soon, whether it's classes or social events or travel opportunities. We also welcome new members, from all walks of life, and from all areas of the country – I know you will find a place here. Thank you to all who have stood beside us during this time; we value your membership, participation and financial contributions.

It was two years ago that we had to change overnight to deliver classes online. Now, we deliver classes both in person and online and record sessions where we can for those who miss them. This takes much more coordination, and we always work to ensure that we meet our members' needs.

At the end of April, the OLLIs across the country will be meeting to share stories and best practices, this time in Denver, Colorado. It has been a long time since we have been able to network with like-minded institutes across the country – our last in-person gathering was in 2018. We will be able to celebrate that we are being able to move forward together. Along with our President-Elect, Mamie Mierzwak, I will be proud to represent OLLI@UGA at the conference. As Dawn Torcivia, our current President, elaborates in her article – it takes all of us to make OLLI work, and I would like to thank everyone for their contribution to building our lifelong learning community. Maybe we can even learn something as well to bring some additional nourishment to our springtime.

We are beginning to see the first shoots of spring, both figuratively and literally. With the full return of in-person classes, Lunch & Learns, the Beerganza, and Travel Study trips taking shape for the fall, it finally feels like we are really turning the corner.

However, we have to remember that not all of us can move at the same speed. Some of us are more comfortable around people, some people are more comfortable wearing masks than not. Or attending class in person or not. We need to be patient with each other as we continue to come out of this enforced hibernation. We should

### Gift “A Taste of OLLI”

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining OLLI but who hasn't yet made a full-year membership commitment?

You can gift them an OLLI@UGA trial membership. The membership runs now through June 30 and costs just \$15.00. They will have access to OLLI benefits, including Shared Interest Groups, social events and activities, and the Late Spring catalog of classes.

The April 30 deadline to gift a membership is fast approaching.

[olli.uga.edu/trial](http://olli.uga.edu/trial)



### Late Spring Classes Have Started

Sign up for In-Person or Zoom Classes, plus Lunch & Learns at Trumps Catering

[olli.uga.edu/catalog2](http://olli.uga.edu/catalog2)



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By Martha McFerron



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Since 1946, FBG has grown to be one of the most well-respected and largest law firms in Northeast Georgia. Over the years it has become known for its public service in Athens and the surrounding area. All three of the founding partners, Edwin Fortson, Upshaw Bentley,

and John Griffin served in World War II and were active in civic affairs in both Athens and Clarke County throughout their legal careers.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN *cont'd from pg 1*

ensure that the organization was running smoothly. Now as President, I do the same with Mamie Mierzwak, our President-Elect.

Two other important OLLI officers are our Secretary, Linda DiPietro, and our Treasurer, Greg Mitsoff. The primary role of the Secretary is to keep minutes and records of meetings of the Executive Committee, Board, and General Membership. The Treasurer serves as a member of the Finance Committee, submits written reports on finances monthly, develops a yearly budget, and is responsible for all monies and securities belonging to the organization that are subject to audits.

The Board of Directors includes ten members who serve a two-year term with an opportunity to run for a

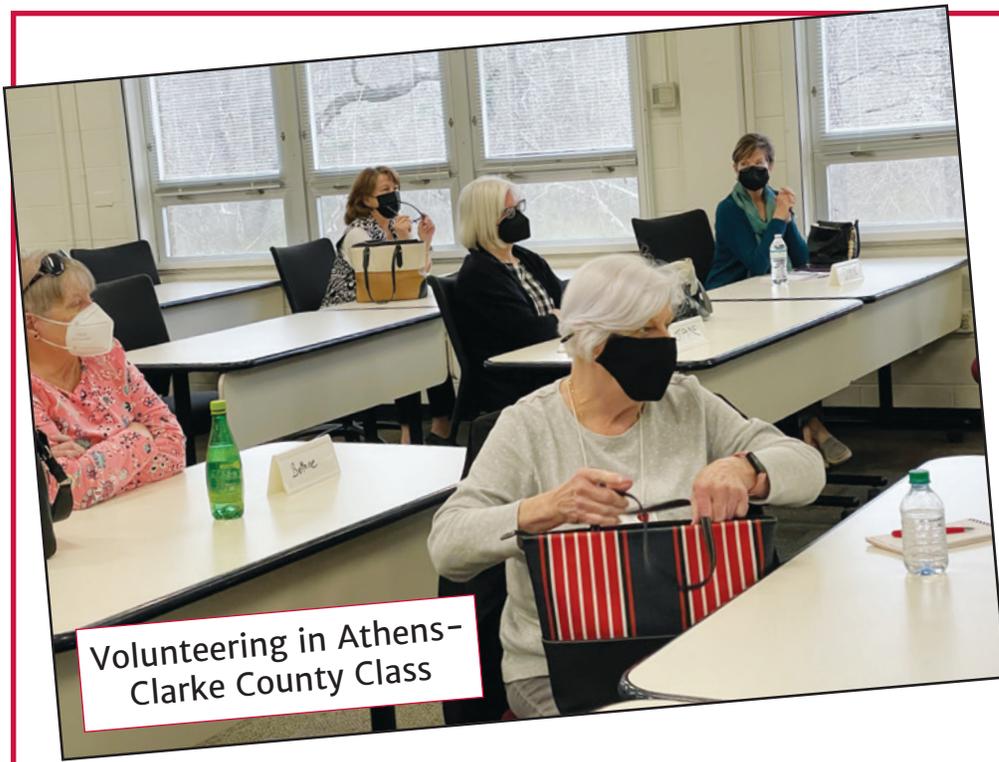
second term. Directors oversee the business of OLLI. Prior to each monthly Board meeting, directors review the agenda and supporting documents. During the meeting, they discuss reports and vote whether to accept them. The Board may review and approve new programs or other items as requested by the committees or the Executive Director. This may include approving an annual budget, budget adjustments, non-budgeted expenses, contracts, annual tax filing, audits, and new policies to the bylaws.

Many people are involved in keeping OLLI@UGA running smoothly. Thanks to everyone for the part they play.

## FOUR NEW LUNCH & LEARNS THIS TERM

Check them out at  
[olli.uga.edu/lunchandlearn](http://olli.uga.edu/lunchandlearn)

# We're



Volunteering in Athens-Clarke County Class



New Member Orientation



Mark Twain Lunch & Learn



Lifelong learning promotes lifelong brain change

Brainiacs Class

# OLLI!



Travel Committee



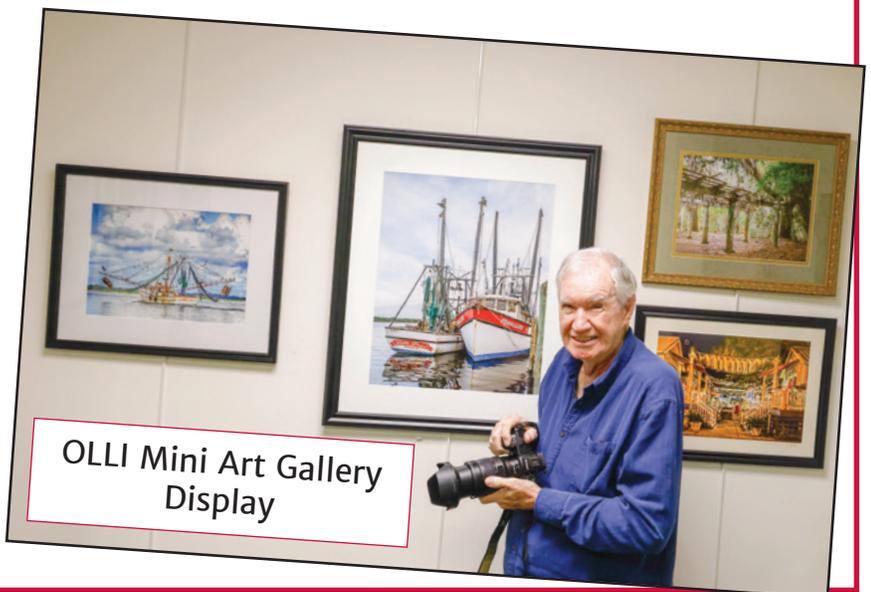
Picture This! SIG



Happy Hikers SIG



Beerganza



OLLI Mini Art Gallery Display

# FAVORITE LATE SPRING CLASS

By Patricia Dixen

The OLLI Curriculum Committee is composed of wonderful members who come up with ideas for classes and reach out to presenters. We asked some of them to tell us one of their favorite classes for the Late Spring term, which runs from April 11 – June 10.



## Angela Greene

**“Desegregating UGA 1961: Memories and Consequences”**  
“It is so powerful to learn about important moments in history from the people who lived through them.”



## Cindy Quayle

**“Getting Around Athens”** and  
**“Hidden Gems of America’s National Park System”**



## Sue Myhal

“This was harder than I expected since we have a number of enjoyable classes booked. The **“Whale and Dolphin Conservation”** class is presented by John Schacke, a semi-retired

UGA ecology professor. He and I shared a few stories about whale-watching, one of my favorite activities, and how the population and migration patterns have changed recently. Dr. Schacke’s presentation will focus on several different types of whales, as well as other marine mammals, and the threats facing virtually all marine mammals.”



## Penny Oldfather

**“The Future of Coral Reefs”**  
“Presenter Dr. Jim Porter is a world-class ecologist who has spent his entire career documenting coral decline and the effects of global warming on coral reefs. A

superb presenter, he brings deep knowledge and passion to these issues. Jim played a key role in the creation of *Chasing Coral*, a Peabody Award-winning film presented through PBS. We are very lucky to have him in our midst as an OLLI presenter.”



## Laura Carter

“Donnie Summerlin’s **“10 Essential Motown Songs and the Stories Behind Them”**” Actually, there are too many to name just one for the next term. Elizabeth Kraft’s screwball comedy classes

are always fun. Participants watch the movies ahead of time, then meet to discuss.

**“How BikeAthens Serves the Community”** “This local not-for-profit is one that I had been aware of for years but did not appreciate the many-faceted roles it plays in the fabric of our community until a few years ago.

“The **“Making Athens-Clarke County Transit Work for You”** class and tour was great. (I took it before COVID.) I learned lots and actually used the bus a few times as a result.

“Anyone interested in the economic development of Athens-Clarke County should attend the **“Sip ‘N See at the Classic Center”** class. Tourism, which includes conferences and meetings, is the second-largest industry in Georgia and the Classic Center has consistently been a generator of that income in Athens-Clarke County since its opening.”



## Dawn Torcivia

**“Wilderness: The History of an Idea”** “Anything that Tom Keene presents is well worth attending. He is a scholar of history and science, and he challenges his students to think outside the box. For the first time, Tom will be presenting **“Wilderness: The History of an Idea”**. Join for a lively discussion.”

**Check out the Late Spring catalog for all the classes [www.oli.uga.edu/catalog2](http://www.oli.uga.edu/catalog2)**

## OLLI@UGA: A LIFELINE FROM AFAR

*cont'd from pg 1*

driving. Being with our son and his family is a joy (especially joining them for Cincinnati Pops concerts).

But I dearly miss Athens and all my friends and activities, and one of the things I miss most is OLLI. As a member for the past 10 years, I've recruited and attended many classes, served on committees and helped with events. Leaving OLLI was one of the hardest things about leaving Athens.

But happily, OLLI remains an important part of my life, even from 500 miles away. I'm still a member and donate to the Annual Fund. Zoom classes let me chat with friends and staff. I'm still on the Marketing and Communications Committee and help with the OLLI Times. I can even continue offering my class about UGA's North Campus thanks to Tim Meehan arranging a video tour.

I'm not alone in maintaining OLLI ties from afar. Carter and Heidi Naylor are among several people in other cities and states who take Zoom classes. The Naylor's, OLLI members since 2011, spend summers at their mountain cabin in Wyoming and use satellite internet for Zoom.

They say classes are informative and thought-provoking but not the most important reason they stay connected with OLLI. "Number one is all the personal relationships and friendships," Carter says. "It's important to me to keep supporting OLLI, especially through these times of restricted social activities. I want OLLI to remain a strong force in the life of Athens—and at least one corner of Wyoming."

West Chester, Ohio, isn't as far from Athens as Wyoming but I second Carter's endorsement. I could take classes from the University of Cincinnati OLLI program (or probably any OLLI anywhere). But OLLI@UGA is my lifeline--to friends I can't be with and the city I love but can't be in.

## Thank you OLLI partners and sponsors for your continued support.

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