

Sage on the Stage or Guide on the Side

There's a Place for You to Teach at SOU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

by Elizabeth Zinser

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at SOU (OLLI) is growing rapidly as more and more local residents, many retired, seek opportunities to explore and learn through the Institute's expanding opportunities. OLLI is eager to expand its faculty of experienced and would-be educators. Presently, OLLI provides nearly 100 classes on a wide variety of topics for some 1200 adult students. While OLLI faculty members come from many places and backgrounds, the SOU Retirees Association is a vital "anchor" for local talent.

Would you consider volunteering your time, expertise and imagination to teach a class for OLLI? We provide some "perks" but the real rewards are engaging classes and making a difference for vibrant aging and a healthy community. You may choose to develop and lead a class where you serve as a lecturer, a recitation leader, a panel discussion moderator, a group discussion facilitator, a trainer or another style that suits you. You define the subject, set out class goals, organize and lead the class. The number of weekly class sessions may be as few as two or as many as ten for each of three terms.

We invite you to consider the following testimony from an OLLI faculty member: "After talking with various OLLI participants and council members, I saw a need for a class about current events focused on economics. So I offered "Real World Economics" in Ashland and then in Medford, drawing 50 and 40 students, respectively. It was a joy. OLLI participants bring rich backgrounds in experience along with their curiosity; and they are hungry for discussion that is both intellectual and grounded in the real world around them—near and far. Teaching for OLLI is a genuinely energizing and rewarding experience; seeing my enthusiasm, my wife Betsy joined OLLI and took her first course this fall."

Bob Hilton, Curriculum Director of OLLIE will be at the winter luncheon to give us an overview of the program and answer any questions. You could then contact him at jobob2466@earthlink.net or Sally Klein (KleinS@sou.edu) to indicate your interest, obtain the short application form, or pursue questions. It could be a great experience and a lot of fun. ▲

WINTER TERM LUNCHEON

March 12, 2010
11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Rogue River Room

*Banks, Federal Reserve and the Financial Crisis:
Who Should We Trust?*

ECONOMICS INSTRUCTOR
DOUG GENTRY

RSVP to Sally Klein by Monday, March 9, 2010
Email (preferred): kleins@sou.edu
or Telephone: 541-552-6049

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bev De la Zerda

At the Winter Retirees Luncheon our speaker, SOU Economics instructor Doug Gentry, will walk us through the functions of banking, the role of the Federal Reserve, and the conflicting beliefs that brought us to the financial crisis of the new century. This is a timely topic and probably a useful one for us all.

The March 12 luncheon is another opportunity for us to contribute to the SOU Retirees Association Scholarship fund. Our goal is to raise another \$10,000 for the scholarship fund, bringing the total to \$20,000. This should give us a good scholarship to award to a worthy student. Due to the rising cost of education, our students need all the help we can give them. There will be donation forms available at the registration desk for all those needing tax documentation.

If you know of a staff member or faculty member who has not been coming to the luncheons, please extend them an invitation. Let them know what great fun we have in renewing old friendships while at the same time creating new ones. Also, please give the name and address of the retiree to Sally Klein or one of your Council members so we may add them to our roster.

See you on the 12th. ▲

Council Elections

It is that time of year again when five members of the SOU Retirees Association Council need to be elected. The Election Committee consists of Wayne Schumacher (chair), Ernie Ettlich, Bruce Moats, and Dan Bulkley. If you know of someone who would like to contribute to the organization by being on the Council, please give their name to one of Election Committee members. Those going off the Council are Bev De La Zerda, Thom Jones, Lodi Belford, Marjorie Bulkley, and Ralph Fidler. Elections will be held at the Spring luncheon. ▲

*A bicycle can't stand on its own
because it is two tired.*

LEARNING NEVER RETIRES *by Jeannie Stallman*

Because you retired from a university, it's a pretty safe bet that you believe in the value of education. After all, you spent a good chunk of your life working to make education possible for others! In retirement you might continue research, teach an occasional class, or volunteer to help with a special university event. Perhaps you enjoy an occasional Elderhostel program or are engaged with a program like SMART. But when is the last time you considered being a college student all over again?

About ten years ago I had one of those moments of enlightenment that stick with you, a crystallizing conversation while talking with an Elderhostel participant. It could have just as well been an OLLI member or an SOU retiree—she made the kind of insightful comment I would expect from any of those people. The diminutive lady sat properly in an upholstered chair, ankles crossed, politely listening to me wax poetic about how much I enjoyed working with Elderhostelers. But when I said “I like them because I learn so much from them,” she interrupted. Leaning forward intently she shushed me with a single “No!” Having effectively startled me quiet, she leaned back and looked at me carefully, eyes narrowed. “It is because we are willing to be beginners. We are willing to sit there in the front row and say ‘I don’t know – tell me about that! This is what makes us so alive.’”

Yes, that rang truth like a horseshoe hitting its target. This is what I love about working in adult education. It certainly isn't the age,

level of educational attainment, or the size of their purses that draws me! It's that spark of the student within, always wanting to learn, to begin anew, to say “I don't know about that, tell me more!” How does someone rack up decades of experience and expertise and still act like a beginner, fresh and ready to learn? There's the fascinating pleasure of hanging around older students.

During your career years you were surrounded with intelligent colleagues, so many exciting ideas and different disciplines that you never had time to explore. That whole world is still here, and it is yours to explore. Did you know that Oregon law specifically allows for adults age 65 and over to audit university classes for free, as long as the instructor approves? And I can tell you that SOU faculty is consistently positive about welcoming auditing adults to their classroom. This is a great way to explore new disciplines, to free yourself to become a student again. It helps SOU because you are included in headcount as reported to the state. And auditors report that our students actually seem to really enjoy encountering retirees in their classrooms; it adds a wonderful depth and touch of a wider life to classroom discussion.

So come be a student again! To pick up an audit form, stop by the Continuing Education office (located next to Omar's on Siskiyou Boulevard). We would love to see you, and be a part of your student life too. ▲

Forever Learning

By John Engelhardt

With a nod to Bob Dylan's *Forever Young*, I write this to encourage those of you who are not OLLI members to consider joining in this fun approach to lifelong learning. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has been an evolving addition to SOU's campus and currently enrolls over 1,000 members. For the very modest fee of \$100 per academic year, you have the opportunity to take a variety of courses in areas of interest to you.

Of the 93 courses offered this past fall, I signed up for three. Courses are offered in various locations in Ashland and at the SOU/ RCC campus in Medford. Instructors for these courses are not necessarily former classroom teachers or university faculty but rather people who have an interest in or a passion for a topic and want to share that with a wider audience. All these instructors are volunteers, as well as a number of people who act in various capacities—12 committees covering logistics, membership, welcoming, scheduling, equipment maintenance, long-range planning, newsletter, etc., and a 9-member council overseeing the program. These are people who generously give of their time to make this program work so

well. The only paid person is Sally Klein who serves as our Retirees Council liaison to SOU's Continuing Education program.

The courses I attended cut across a wide swath of intellectual landscape—Chaos Theory; Plagues, Pandemics and History; and an Excel workshop. Chaos Theory drew a considerable audience for the first session, but after the initial foray into differential equations those who came for the art part were not to be seen again. The five of us who hung in worked our way through a Power Point presentation of a textbook with the colorful graphical displays interspersed with a considerable mathematical underpinning.

Plagues, Pandemics and History drew a consistent audience of 30+ individuals as we traced the path of plagues through time. It just so happened that the HINI virus was making headlines during the fall, adding a timely complement to the discussion. Sybil Russell traced microbes from Biblical times to the present, with a nod to our animal vectors that play a starring role as hosts. Although she did not have a medical degree her presentations were researched and several audience members contributed medical specificity at opportune times.

The Excel workshop was presented by Linda Anderson who made considerable use of Excel in her professional work over the years. She deftly presented useful tips and strategy across a variety of platforms—MACs and PC's with old and new versions of the software. For an avid Excel user like me, it was a treat to fill in some gaps and learn even more about such a useful tool.

This winter's class schedule boasts 89 offerings across the spectrum of Art & Music, Language & Literature, Health & Personal Development, Science & Technology, and Social Science & History as well as those too varied to fit under a category. I'll be taking three more, hoping to keep the synapses firing as I explore a bit more of our world. I suggest you give it a try! Check it out at www.sou.edu/olli and see for yourself.

If you would like to continue sharing your professional expertise or passion in your retirement years, OLLI would like you to consider offering a course. They will be making a pitch to the Retirees Council this winter and perhaps a request at the winter luncheon. Consider it; you've spent a lifetime gaining it so why not continue to share it? ▲

A GREAT COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

By Bev De La Zerda

We never know what is going to happen to us as we go forth in this world. A great example of this is my college education.

I was a very good student in public school. I was able to obtain a scholarship for college that paid for everything except room and board. Even back when I went to college, room and board was very expensive and my family couldn't afford it. My parents made an agreement with me that if I would attend Southern Oregon State College for two years, they would see that I was able to go to the University of Oregon to obtain a degree in Music Education. Knowing our family's financial situation, I agreed with this proposal.

There were eight of us from high school who were going into the field of music. The rest were able to attend the University and felt sorry for me. We promised to have a reunion at the Winter break. I did feel a bit left out since my friends would be working with best music professors in the state! But I knew after two years, I would be able to join them. They could pave the way for me.

So I set out to attend Southern Oregon State College. I quickly became deeply involved with the music department. I was hired as the librarian for band and choir and as student secretary for the department. I found the professors to be very knowledgeable and very helpful. As time went on, I was given more duties that fitted into my chosen field. I was really having a good time, though I stayed envious of my friends.

That is until we met after the first term at a reunion. I listened to them tell me about their classes which had too many people in them. Most classes were taught by graduate students. Most of my friends had not even met their professors who were responsible for teaching the classes! I could not believe what I was hearing. I began to understand I was receiving a better education than they were. I was able to interact with my professors and to work with them on a daily basis. What an education I was obtaining compared to my friends'.

The next few years of my education only reinforced the fact I was getting a better

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FOOLISH BUSINESS

By Gene Stringer

Last April (It may have been on April Fool's Day) an email arrived asking if Janice and I might be interested in taking advantage of a short notice travel opportunity. The offer was rather unusual. You pay for your own round trip tickets, spend two weeks doing chores like painting, cooking, making beds and washing dishes, then when completely exhausted return home to recover. Strangest of all, we said yes to the offer and actually enjoyed the experience. Let me explain: Carol Fields, representative of TCMI in Indianapolis sought some last minute short term workers for their training center near Vienna, Austria. Over 750 students from 22 former soviet states come there to pursue advanced degrees.

Our group of 65 students was the largest ever on site at one time. It strained the capacity for sleeping quarters and dining room space. Our work days began early and ended late. But the opportunities for interaction with interesting people from places we might never get to visit were unparalleled. And there was free time.

After our training and before the students arrived we set out for the Danube River north of Vienna. First stop was the ancient Stift Melk which houses an impressive collection of historical artifacts and an amazing library. Continuing south to Dürnstein the ruins of an ancient castle jut skyward from a rocky outcrop. It was a beautiful day but now it was time to go to work...the students were checking into Haus Edelweiss. At meals we hosted a table of eight guests from places like Estonia, Belarus and Uzbekistan. English was spoken by all but not the first choice for most. The conditions experienced at home by most of our student/guests were sobering. Even after the fall of communism many were struggling with low paying jobs and persecution. In spite of these conditions it was uplifting to experience the joy and happiness they had found in their work. We saw many beautiful and wondrous places in the Weinerwald but they don't compare with the people we met. Call me a fool but we are ready to go again. ▲

Try to live so that when you die even the undertaker is sorry.

—Mark Twain

A Retiree From Abroad

By Geoff Ridding

My retirement story may be a little more complex than most. I am British, and I left the University of Winchester in the summer of 2008. My wife is American and still working at SOU so I had applied in advance to be a permanent resident in the USA, and I waited for that fabled green card. After much delay, it arrived, the process having been complicated by the years I had spent in Ghana early in my career: I had real difficulties in proving I had no criminal record there. By October 2008, I was a US resident, and I now have a social security number and pay taxes in both countries.

I don't suppose it is unusual to find stopping work difficult, whatever we make think while we are working. My disorientation was increased because I was in a new country, because my first grandchild, Emily, was born just days before I left, and because of the economic downturn: the credit-crunch hit me too. The value of the pound against the dollar plummeted, and

life suddenly didn't look quite as rosy as I had anticipated.

But it worked out. Firstly, I got a book contract just before I left England, and writing that text kept me busy in my early months in Oregon. I also joined a very good choir, and my musical education was increased. Ashland is the Shakespeare capital of North America and I had been doing talks here for several years. Suddenly, the Shakespeare Festival got really interested in this British guy who not only knew something about Shakespeare, but also looked a little like him, and they have generously given me opportunities to talk and to review plays. The University here has also invited me to teach some classes and I am glad to do so. I even responded to an advertisement asking for volunteers to train to present a classical music programme on the radio. I passed that, did the training (which was excellent) and now frequently do substitutions when

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STUFF

By Connie Battaile

Stuff. Too much stuff. I feel burdened by so much stuff. It keeps me from feeling light and active, it leaves me feeling pulled and scattered and not in control, it is a barrier to being organized, it hinders keeping track of what is important. And I certainly don't want any more stuff. "No gifts, please! If I can't eat it or attend it, I don't want it."

Without my noting it, I have passed that transition in life from the accumulating stage (family, house, career, activities) to the shedding stage. But now that I am aware of that transition, how do I begin to divest myself of this stuff? Perhaps it is not a surprise that in a culture that puts so much importance on material accumulations, I drag my feet about shedding things.

It's not clear to me what to do. Perhaps I could host a potlatch during which I give away that which is no longer relevant to my life. Perhaps a yard sale. But there is an inner reluctance that may come from not acknowledging the losses associated with giving up all those things that the stuff represents - the emptiness of no longer having children at home, or the bereft feeling at the loss of career after retirement, or the loss of the energy and stamina for backpacking, and especially the loss of Julian. Each of those is a loss worth paying attention to, and one way I hang on to those past parts of my life is by hanging on to the stuff that is associated with them. Not that it works very well.

I wonder if it would work better to gather friends to whom I could say, "The time has come for me to acknowledge the change my life and I have gathered you here to help me make it this transition. I need your help in acknowledging all that I am giving up and will be grateful for your support in my new lighter life."

It's clear to me that my stuff and piles of papers are ways that I cling to my past and my past identify. It is oddly hard to acknowledge that my life has changed, and that the past, whatever its rewards and pains, is not where I now want to live. ▲

RETIREE

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regular (paid) presenters are on holiday. The audience seem to like me because of my accent, and the station loves me because I will do a five-hour shift for free!

I don't believe in the concept of retirement any more - it's just working with the glorious advantage that you can say 'No!' ▲

COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

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have been able to go to work as a junior high school band teacher, with actual experience in all aspects of the job. It was a great feeling. I never did transfer to the University of Oregon. I still thank my lucky stars my parents were unable to afford the room and board so I could attend Southern Oregon State College. It was the best move I ever could have made. ▲

***If you don't pay your exorcist,
you'll be repossessed.***