



April 2017 Newsletter

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Connect with Coffee & Conversation

April's coffee breaks are:

Wednesday, April 19

11:15 - 11:45 am

Thursday, April 27

1:15 - 1:45 pm

TWO GUESTS at Wednesday's Lunch Bunch

Author Michael

Stanley will Skype in from South Africa. (We tried this today and it worked!) AU Associate Dean Michael Keynes,

Letter from the Chair



Deputy Executive Director Tony Long and I had the wonderful opportunity of representing our OLLI at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes National Conference

hosted by the Bernard Osher Foundation. The conference was held in Irving, Texas, from April 3 to 5. Representatives from the 120 OLLIs around the country attended.

The workshops were outstanding and covered such topics as: recruiting and retaining volunteers; identifying and developing leaders; fundraising effectively through building a culture of giving; reaching out to the community; improving the curriculum; creating diversity; and using inexpensive and effective marketing.

The plenary session speakers were excellent. The first plenary speaker was Beth Steinhorn, President of the JFFixler Group, which focuses on engaging members and volunteers to strengthen and amplify an organization's impact. Her topic, "Crossing the Generational Divide Volunteer Engagement in a Multigenerational World," was not only relevant and informative but fascinating. Citing many research studies, she explained the differences in work style, expectations, and relationship to organizational hierarchy among Traditionals (most of us), Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials. One of her central points was that it is essential to understand to which generation a volunteer belongs in order to make the volunteer experience as meaningful as possible.

Dr. Bill Thomas, one of the nation's leading gerontologists, was the keynote speaker for the second plenary session. His message was unique and inspirational. He told us, "Everything we know about

friend of Mr. Stanley and traveller to Africa, will be there in person.

Both will take questions, share their experiences, etc. Even if you have not read the book, but would like to hear the discussion, you are welcome -- as many as the room permits.

Wednesday, April 12, 12:00 noon-1:00 pm, 5th floor, room G (543).

Questions: Contact **Susan Greif** at susangreif@gmail.com

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Vending Machines

There are snack and soda machines are the 4th floor and the 6th floor at Spring Valley. The machines accept different forms of payment: some accept \$1 bills, some accept coins, and some accept credit cards.

Joel Denker Talk in Boston

On Tuesday, April 18, Joel Denker will address the Culinary Historians of Boston. The topic will be his latest book, *The Carrot Purple and Other Curious Stories of the Food We Eat*. For more information, see

aging is wrong." Dr. Thomas denounced our society's ageist assumptions. He explained that changing one's stereotypical attitudes can enable the third phase of life to be seen as fulfilling and productive as the rest of life. I spoke to Dr. Thomas after his presentation. He would love to visit our OLLI when he is in the area. We will explore that possibility.

Tony and I also had a marvelous conversation with Bernard Osher, a remarkable man who will soon be 90 and is a great example of all Dr. Thomas spoke about. We thanked Mr. Osher on behalf of OLLI at American University and for all he has done for lifelong learning throughout the country. It also was great to network with so many other OLLI folks.

When we left the conference we made a list of ideas and programs we might implement. Here is a sample of the ideas we will be considering:

- having a more robust volunteer program, including developing a volunteer needs assessment, better ways to match members' skills with volunteer needs, and creating volunteer ambassadors to recruit volunteers;
- creating a working group on innovative programs to come up with inventive activities such as a mentoring program;
- a Community Book Read;
- a documentary film festival;
- holding "Inside OLLI" meetings at which members can learn more about Board roles, the staff, our finances, etc.

There are many more ideas and programs we learned about from the folks from other OLLIs. We will be considering these during the next few months.

Don't forget to vote for the Board. Voting began last Friday and will end at 5:00 pm on Friday, April 21.

Also, if you have not signed up for our 35th Anniversary luncheon, please register as soon as possible as seating is limited. You should receive an invitation in the mail by no later than the end of this week. If you have not received an invitation by then, please contact the office at olli@american.edu or 202-895-4860.

All the best,
Stan Newman

OLLI Interview

Of all the books you've read, what's your favorite?

Mary Moore: My favorite book is *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese. As a first piece of fiction by the author, who has a medical background, the book sweeps across time, family drama and detachment, and unrest in Ethiopia. The early years of the protagonist, Marion, are riveting in their depiction of his African upbringing and experiences. There is also a mysterious family saga that unfolds across the many pages and years that the book covers as Marion becomes a physician who ultimately practices in the U.S. Truthfully I could not put the book down and I remember the story well even after 6 years has passed.

Gerald Padwe: After giving it some thought, I would choose a book I haven't re-read in over 50 years. It's *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville, and I was first exposed to it during my high school years. I would vote for it as a lifetime favorite because of its incredible writing style and the development (over pages and pages) of its characters. I clearly recall my initial reaction to the book, as I finished it and put it down, that I had never read another book where a prose novel left me thinking I had just spent substantial time with a book of poetry. As I look back now, I still react the same way. Fantastic story, beautifully written, and likely to stay at the front of the line for a few more centuries.

Mildred Wurf: *Dark Money* by Jane Mayer was the memorable book I read. Mayer started the story of the right wing of American politics with the Olin and Scaife families and comes to present day with the Koch brothers. Their developing structure and accomplishments are downright scary, but well presented and backed with extensive research.

Devil in the Grove by Gilbert King was another remarkable book — the story of Thurgood Marshall from Howard Law School, his work with the NAACP, and a focus on a situation in Florida in the 1940s and 1950s. The police chief/sheriff, well-regarded in his community, was literally killing several young black men accused of raping a white woman. The woman

had not been raped and she and the young men had never met.

Annie-Claude D'Agostino: After much hesitation, I decided to limit my choice to fiction books in English published after 1800. Among many books, it seems to me that I enjoyed and re-read most *Middlemarch*, George Eliot's chef d'oeuvre. It is both serious and entertaining with a gallery of diverse characters, a social comedy, with comments on politics and provincial life, as well as a evocative psychological study of both men and women.

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