

THIS MONTH AT OLLI-FEB. 2019



by Joe Bailey

We have finished the first week of the Spring term and as usual it wasn't perfect. OLLI, like life is a series of choices and consequences. Without fail I can always find two courses that I just must take. And they are on the same day in the same time slot, or I got wait listed for one or both. Sometimes there are more classes than I can fit into my life schedule. Because of volunteer activities and other commitments, I can only really spare the time for five classes; so as usual I was able to pare my choices down to eight this term. Even with that there are classes I would like to have taken. Like many of you I have gotten over my disappointment and vowed to prioritize better if the class is offered again. I did learn early in my OLLI membership that it is important to overbook classes. Occasionally a class turns out to be different than I thought it would be and I must drop it. If that had been my only class, I would have put my wife in the awkward position of having to tell me that I didn't have to go to school, but I couldn't hang around and be under foot all day.

Here are a couple of interesting things that I learned this past week. I take classes in Lewes on Tuesdays, and one of those classes is "Ellis Island Immigrants" taught by Jo-Ann Vega. She told the story of her grandmother who came through Ellis Island as half of what sounded like an arranged marriage. The new bride and her husband had a total of nine children. She said it was after the birth of their fourth child that she fell in love with her husband. This was probably not an unusual story of the immigrants. I have heard Bob Heifetz speak of his family coming to America through Ellis Island. I am sure many family members of OLLI members came to America through there. We are after all a nation of immigrants. My wife, Connie really wanted to be of Irish decent. She has ancestors named Sculley. Surely, they must have been Irish. After much searching she has traced our ancestors back as far as Jamestown; bummer. In fact, there is a point where we have a common relative. Hopefully incest can't survive seven or eight generations.

Jo-Ann did something else I thought was interesting. I have always known that Delawareans are a minority group at OLLI. There are at least thirty-five members in the class and when she asked how many of us had come to Delaware from another state two of us did not raise our hands. She asked another question that I think every instructor should ask, "How many of you are new to OLLI or to this OLLI?" She then suggested that we should get together because we are all friends here. What a good ice breaker.

The other interesting story comes from the small world department. Several years ago, a class called "Letters of Note Vol. 1" was offered, and I found it very interesting. "Letters of Note Vol. 2" is offered this term and I signed up. Imagine my surprise when I saw that the first letter was written by someone I knew. Pat Weaver, George Fisher, Connie and I were in high school classes with Robert Crumb, the letter writer. I think R. Crumb is originally from Philadelphia. His family lived in Milford for a time and he went to Dover High School for part of his junior and senior

years. In 1995 the News Journal did a two-page spread on him and his dysfunctional family. Robert is a cartoonist on the famous or maybe infamous line. He has lived in France since the 1970's. A lot of his art is sexually graphic. One of his creations is the X rated cartoon, "Felix the Cat". He also published a book where he illustrated the book of Genesis, all fifty chapters along with the text. While it seems like a strange project, I have the book and I don't find it to be in poor taste. However, in the beginning there was some begetting going on, and the art minimizes the need to visualize that. There is a warning on the book jacket that adult supervision is required for minors.

You may have noticed a couple of changes this year. We have color coded name badges to help identify us. Council members have blue, instructors have yellow, members white, and the one to notice is green. These are members that are new to the Dover OLLI. They may have been OLLI members elsewhere. Don't be shy. Walk up and say, HI. It is almost like the way we have been making friends at school since the first grade. The biggest difference being, now we wear name tags. In kindergarten or first grade maybe we couldn't read a person's name, but we could remember it. You see where this is going, right?

It took me almost the whole first week to find the new bulletin board. It is now prominently located in the front hall (so much for my powers of observation) and our source for what is happening now at OLLI. Don't miss it.