An article featuring OLLI’s Peer-Learning Activities (PLA)

Issue 4, May 2014

“Oskar Schindler saved my life,” says Celina Biniaz, the youngest female on Schindler's List.

On Wednesday, May 7, 2014 the Shoah Foundation presented Barack Obama with its Prestigious Humanitarian Award. Celina Biniaz was a guest speaker at the event.

Several days before that, she was interviewed on the “Today Show” by Matt Lauer. I watched that interview and was reminded of the very first time I met Celina and heard her story. It was during the Winter of 2005. We were both enrolled in an OLLI class entitled “Primo Levi, Chemist, Writer, Auschwitz Survivor.”

During a class discussion, I remember noticing her friend, Anita, touch her arm lovingly. After a few moments, Celina raised her hand and asked to speak. In her precise, clear voice that we’ve come to know so well, she proceeded to share with us her experiences as the youngest member of “Schindler’s List.” Since that day she has spoken before a great many groups. She brings a message of gratitude and hope to all who are privileged to hear her.

There are not enough words to describe this great lady. Her warm, thoughtful, helpful, considerate and caring way are well known to her OLLI colleagues. We honor her as a dear friend, a valued member of the OLLI Curriculum Committee, and above all, a remarkable human being.

Getting to know Celina was, indeed, a pivotal moment in my life.

Celina on stage at USC Shoah Foundation's 20th Anniversary Gala May 7th, 2014

See and listen to her story at: http://sfi.usc.edu/content/celina-biniaz-liberation-br%C3%BCCnnlitz-concentration-camp
The Griffith Observatory tour was fascinating and fun on a beautiful SoCal day. Starting with a personal greeting from the Director, Dr. Ed Krupp, we learned about the mission and history of the observatory. After watching the Foucault pendulum swing in the entry lobby, OLLI people scattered throughout the exhibits and looked at the live solar telescope images. We gathered on the west terrace for sunset views of LA, and entered the planetarium for a wonderful show.

When it got dark, we climbed the stairs to see Jupiter in the impressive Zeiss telescope.

Smaller telescopes on the north lawn provided views of the moon and more time on Jupiter. After a full 6 hours, we watched a movie about the Griffith Observatory or napped as our driver returned us home with a smile on our faces.

Jerry Clifford

“A FLASH IDEA IN THE DESERT”

“RIDING TO THE WEST FRONTIER SEEMS TO THE HEAVEN.
Since my leaving home, the full moon twice seen.
I wonder where I will be staying tonight as the flat desert vast without human sight”.

Cen Sen (717-770 CE)

“TREASURES OF LOS ANGELES – THE DOHENY MANSION”

Home to the Doheny family for nearly 60 years, the Doheny Mansion was built in 1899 for the Oliver P. Posey family by architects Theodore Eisen and Sumner Hunt. Its eclectic Romantic Revival exterior unites elements of Gothic, Chateauesque, Moorish and even California Mission styles. The opulent interior reflects the wealth and status of pioneering oil baron Edward L. Doheny, who purchased the mansion in 1901 and, with his wife Estelle, led a fascinating life within its walls.
Left to the stewardship of Mount St. Mary's College, the Doheny Mansion and all of the surrounding properties on historic Chester Place now form the College’s downtown campus.

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SEABEE MUSEUM – 15 May 2014

On May 15th, fourteen OLLI students stepped out of Ventura’s fifth day of a heat wave into the cool lobby of the Seabee Museum on Naval Base Ventura in Port Hueneme. While a few had been to the "old" museum, we were quite taken aback by the variety of displays and became truly educated at the incredible vastness of the Seabees’ influence.

With our wonderful docent, John, we were led on a journey from an idea and inception to the Seabees presence today: Between 1942 and present, the Seabees have served on seven continents. During World War II, approximately 250,000 Seabees passed through Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC), Port Huenene, on their way to or from the Pacific Theater. Anxious to get home after extended duty overseas, the Seabees left vast quantities of memorabilia and "war trophies" in Port Hueneme and we had the pleasure of hearing the stories behind much of these treasures.

During WWII, the mission of the Seabees was to prepare maneuverability paths for our troops. They were often working in heavy combat areas, unarmed, with little or no protection. Since September 11th, Seabees have continued to provide critical construction skills around the globe in support of the war against terrorism. In Afghanistan, the Seabees main focus was the construction of multiple Forward Operating Bases (FOB) for U.S. and coalition forces, deemed the largest earth-moving operation undertaken by a single battalion since World War II.

NEMO The Naval Experimental Manned Observatory (NEMO), a deep submergence vehicle created at Port Huenene in the 1970s.

Another notable achievement took place in 1962, when the Navy's Seabee builders constructed Antarctica's first nuclear power plant.
BOOK CLUB

UCSB Lecture with Lisa Randall, Author

The above members of the OLLI Book Club spent the afternoon of March 8th listening to Lisa Randall, physicist and author of “Knocking on Heaven’s Door”, our then current reading selection. We heard her speak of how science illuminates the modern world and how scale matters. Randall spoke of ordinary matter, dark matter, and dark energy. She demonstrated the workings of the Higgs-Bosom, spoke of extra dimensions and how the scientific method dominates our thinking.

“Top Quark Mass of World’s Heaviest Elementary Particle Found.” The measurement was made using the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Geneva Switzerland and the Tevatron at Fermilab in Batavia, III. NBC Press Release.

A consensus of the Book Club members was that reading the book was daunting and would have been more difficult had it not been for the author’s illustrations and analogies.

Our Current Read:

The Girls of Atomic City. by Denise Kiernan. The incredible story of the young women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who unwittingly played a crucial role in one of the most significant moments in U.S. history.

Curriculum Committee

WHO ARE THEY AND JUST WHAT DO THEY DO?

Twenty months into the “NEW OLLI” organizational strategy. I am submitting an appreciation comment on the function and accomplishments of your Curriculum Committee.

The committee is made up of fifteen (15) members: Laura Behjan, Celina Biniaz, Michael Bunkin, Joyce Childress, Vicki Engard, Janice Hibbs, Leonard Levine, Ann Lewin, Tom McKiernan, Arlene Miro, Dan Murphy, Bob Newman, Jean Nesper, Joan Zender and OLLI Program Director Nick Fuentes, Advisor and Consultant

Their mission is to provide recommendations after thoroughly discussing potential implications of any issue/proposed decisions from a curricular coherence, membership, and historical perspective.

Some of these decisions are course selections and recommended site locations based on membership
needs and instruction preferences. Along with course choice and scheduling we vet new instructors, review class evaluations, and document our process and procedures. We also offer related extracurricular activities including a Taste of OLLI, Library Lectures, Peer-Led activities (Road Trips, Day Tours, and a Non-Fiction Book Club) and a Curriculum Feature Article, “NOW PLAying”, details the many PLA offerings and can be found at the OLLI Website http://ext.csuci.edu/documents/olli/flyers/playing-now

Our Curriculum Committee members are a diverse group whose interests, talents and considered opinions transcend these wide varieties of duties. I believe our committee members are second to none in their dedication to serving the needs of our OLLI program.

**“It really does take a village.” ****

Respectfully,
Pat O’Neil, Chair

RECRUITMENT

If you have any comments for the Curriculum Committee on suggested courses, instructors, Road Trips or Day Tours, please send us an email at placi_olli@yahoo.com

We want also to hear your experience on our Road Trips in our “voices from the bus”

OLLI INSTRUCTIONS WANTED!

Do you know of someone who would like to teach at OLLI? Do you know of someone who would be a good instructor, someone that has the expertise in areas of our membership’s vast interest: geology, water, history, science, medicine; someone who has a passion and knowledge of a subject that could bring great insight to our program by providing a course of that passion? They may be part of academia or of the great world of business or government.

Additional information can be found at http://ext.csuci.edu/community-ed/osh/ index.htm, “Teaching at OLLI”. If you know of someone, please contact Nick Fuentes, Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), nicholas.fuentes@csuci.edu or (805) 437.2698.