



PHOTO BY JOHN KELLER

The Curriculum Committee is so large that it's hard to get them all together. Thirty-eight members of the committee managed to hold still long enough for a photo at the January open house at The Cornhusker. For a list of all members and their areas of interest, see Page 5.

# THE POWER OF 50

*How do you spell OLLI? With a giant group of energetic people called the Curriculum Committee. They are the ones who turn good ideas into a rich array of classes. Turn to Pages 4 and 5 to learn more.*

## ... And the glory of more than 1,000 OLLI members

BY DEE AGUILAR  
OLLI coordinator

OLLI is for people who love learning. This desire to know has fueled the growth of OLLI at UNL, which has climbed to a record 1,030-plus members this winter.

What accounts for this vigorous growth? People say they join because it's fun. Because they enjoy the fellowship with other lifelong learners. Because they like the variety of subjects they can learn about, things they can do and tours they can sign up for. And because they make friends in OLLI.

New members often give credit to their friends and family members



Dee Aguilar

for introducing them to the program. Apparently those friends and family have been doing a bang-up job, because the membership milestones

just keep coming.

OLLI has seen a 13 percent increase in membership this fiscal year, with three months to go. In 2011-12, the growth rate was 13 percent and the year before that, 24 percent.

There is much to celebrate with OLLI's continuous growth and success, and there are new challenges to face. To make sure we are up to those challenges, the OLLI council and I have embarked upon a strategic planning process to develop a road map for OLLI's future. (See Page 2 article.)

Our program is having growing pains and it is time to take our work

to the next level to ensure that the dream of the founding members for lifelong learning at UNL will be around for generations to come.

In 2008, the Osher Foundation acknowledged the institute's success with a \$1 million endowment gift. Now that we have exceeded the thousand-member mark, the foundation has invited us to apply by April 1 for a \$50,000 operating grant. It is the belief of the foundation that larger Osher Institutes can benefit from additional operating monies while they build long-term fundraising programs. We will keep you posted on the outcome of our application.

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Lee Rockwell –  
OLLI's tour  
de force

See Page 7

# Where do we go from here? You're a part of the answer

BY GRACE LARSON

Staff writer

Now that OLLI has more than a thousand members, it's a good time to take a look at how it got this far and what road it should take into the future.

OLLI members will play a key role in that process.

This month, OLLI members are being invited to participate in an online survey questionnaire. The survey is one piece of an important environmental assessment. And, the assessment is a critical element in the strategic planning process that OLLI at UNL has begun.

**OLLI members are major stakeholders** because, as a group, they have a significant vested "stake" or interest in the future of this organization.

The assessment involves information gathering and analysis of factors in the internal and external environment that influence and shape OLLI's mission and character. Through the assessment, OLLI will learn the perspectives of various stakeholders and key informants. In addition to members, they include university administration, faculty, community leaders and our partners.

**A comprehensive report of the findings will identify issues and trends that will affect the future of the OLLI program.** It will help decision makers view the organization's current position in light of past events, current conditions and future possibilities. Externally, we will look at trends outside the organization that could affect OLLI's future. Internally, we will review structure, governance and/or operations. The goals and objectives for the growth and enhancement of OLLI programming will be created from this information with a timeline and a person



PHOTO BY ERIN DUERR

**Millie Osten strikes a pose during a 2011 prairie outing that seems to capture what strategic planning for OLLI is all about: facing the future, with enthusiasm. Members can participate by taking an online survey.**

responsible for execution.

This process will be more than a long-range planning activity. The emphasis will be on the views of stakeholders. And, **the outcome will be action oriented.** The development of strategies with specific goals and objectives will build on current issues identified by stakeholders. The process will consider a range of possible futures.

The OLLI Council decided in January to undertake the strategic planning process. The council has contracted with two professional consultants who specialize in strategic planning and have considerable experience working with nonprofit organizations. They are Lane Gewecke Consulting and MBR Strategies.

Members may ask why OLLI is doing this. **It's all about determining the organization's future direction in light of past events, present conditions and future possibilities.** In other words, how did we get this far, what are current perspectives of OLLI, what road should OLLI follow for the future and what is our next desired destination?

OLLI at UNL has experienced great growth in the past few years. Membership now exceeds 1,000. With growth comes inevitable change and challenges. How should the organization go forward? How should we build on our achievements and growth and position OLLI for future success?

The strategic planning process includes the following activities.

1. Council forms strategic planning steering committee (see below)
2. Committee and consultants prepare for the environmental assessment (complete):
  - a. Conduct one-on-one telephone interviews with up to 15 stakeholders and/or key informants
  - b. Send out online survey questionnaire to members
  - c. Convene one focus group of instructors and course coordinators
3. Consultants conduct the environmental assessment and compile a report of findings

**Continued on Page 3 - Strategic**

## Save the Date!

Join us for a reception  
as we celebrate  
**OLLI volunteers.**

**Tuesday, April 23, 2013**  
**5:30 – 7p.m.**

### OLLI Insider

The Insider is written by and for members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It is mailed to members four times a year.

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# Do you know your OLLI Council?

BY KATHLEEN RUTLEDGE  
OLLI Council member

When I joined OLLI, I was vaguely aware there was an advisory council but didn't know much about it.

I figured it was a small group of august personages, sort of like the U.S. Senate in its Golden Age but perhaps without the ringing oratory.

Then one day, not so very long after I took my first class, Jerry Petr approached me about running for a seat on the council. Who, me? I thought to myself.

I gamely allowed my name to be put forward and soon, there I was, sitting around a table with a congenial bunch of folks – competent and well worthy of respect, but certainly not august in any stuffy sense.

I had the pleasure of learning the ropes of OLLI with the likes of Nancy Ernst, Dorothy Anderson, Jerry Sellentin, Herb Howe, Lois Pasco, Ernie Hines, Grace Larson, Dave Thomssen, Ed Cecil, Carol Connor and others.

Perhaps these names are familiar to you, but likely they are not. For the most part, the OLLI members on the council, as well as those on the various committees, do their work in unassuming ways.



PHOTO BY ERNIE HINES

Members of the 2013 OLLI Council: (front row left) Grace Larson, Georgianne Mastera, Leta Powell Drake, Lois Pasco; (back row) Jerry Sellentin, Jim Mastera, Kathleen Rutledge, Marv Almy and David Dyke.

Sometimes the monthly council meetings get into tedious but important subjects – parking, comes to mind – but for the most part its members engage in issues at the heart of OLLI: How do we maintain an excellent curriculum, what fees should we charge, how do we make sure OLLI will be here for generations of older people to come?

The council and the committees embody what we mean when we say that OLLI is a member-driven organization. They are not just window dressing. With the deft leadership of OLLI Coordinator Dee Aguilar, they “own” this program and in a very real sense, make it go.

A big hole opened up on the

council in November with the unexpected death of Chair Herb Howe, retired associate to the UNL chancellor. He was in the second year of a two-year term and had served OLLI so well, pushing among other things for greater recognition and appreciation for OLLI volunteers. We miss his wry humor, his sharp intellect and, well, just about everything about him, except perhaps his obsession with parking.

Fortunately, former Council Chair Jerry Sellentin was willing to step in to the chairmanship while the council figures out a succession plan. And that leads us to what will be happening this spring:

At least one council seat and

possibly two will be up for election this spring. The first elected slot is mine. The second is David Dyke's. The Council was to decide this month whether to open up his seat for a new person, yet keep him on the council as the appointed co-chair of the Curriculum Committee. The council might also create a council seat for the newsletter editor, my current appointed position.

All this will be worked out and a nominating committee will begin its work soon. In May, you'll get a ballot so you can play your part in this member-driven organization.

Also in May, the council will elect a new chair for a two-year term. Meanwhile, a subcommittee is considering bylaw changes that may ease any future such transitions, and fit well with the strategic planning that is going on right now for OLLI.

In the photo above, you see the current members of this council. Three are elected by the membership for staggered three-year terms. The others are appointed by the council chair and are council officers or chairs of standing committees.

It's YOUR council. One way to have your say is to participate in the upcoming spring election for new council members. In every season, the council and committee chairs welcome your ideas and comments.

## Strategic Continued from Page 2

4. Council meets to:
    - a. Identify strategic issues
    - b. Prioritize issues
    - c. Review/revise mission (if needed)
    - d. Develop strategies to address priority issues
  5. Council:
    - a. Develops goals to address priority issues and fulfill the mission
    - b. Formulates objectives to achieve goals
    - c. Finalizes mission, goals and objectives
  6. Current and new Council members meet at annual summer retreat to develop action steps and timeline to implement strategic plan
- Members of the strategic planning steering committee are: Dee Aguilar, OLLI coordinator, and members Grace Larson, Georgianne Mastera, Jerry Sellentin and Dick Vautravers.
- The committee respectfully asks that you respond thoughtfully when you receive your survey. Your response and those of your fellow members will be integral to a full and complete strategic planning process and to the future success of OLLI.

## Spring 2013 Term 4 Schedule at a Glance

<b>Monday</b>	13401	8:30-10 a.m.	Birding
	13402	10:30 a.m.-noon	A Day's Read
	13403	10:30 a.m.-noon	The Lure and Lore of Gems
	13404	1-2:30 p.m.	Great Decisions
	13405	1-2:30 p.m.	Great Artists of the Italian Renaissance, Part III
<b>Tuesday</b>	13406	10:30 a.m.-noon	Music Appreciation, Level 2
	13407	10:30 a.m.-noon	Stress, Aging and the Brain
	13408	10:30 a.m.-noon	Struggling or Excelling Students + Grandparents = Success
	13409	1-2:30 p.m.	Whose God is it Anyway?
	13410	3-4:30 p.m.	Meet Meat
	13411	6:30-8 p.m.	Cutting Edge of Medicine
<b>Wednesday</b>	13412	8:30-10 a.m.	Let's Write
	13413	10:30 a.m.-noon	DNA Analysis
	13414	10:30 a.m.-noon	Unlock Your Word Hoard: The Vocabulary of English
	13415	1-2:30 p.m.	Nebraska and the Civil War
	13416	3-4:30 p.m.	Tours of Artists' Studios
	13417	3-4:30 p.m.	Intermediate Bridge II
	13418	3-4:30 p.m.	Everything You Want to Know About Digital Photography
<b>Thursday</b>	13419	10:30 a.m.-noon	The Future of Lincoln, Part II
	13420	10:30 a.m.-noon	Changing Channels: Lincoln's Early Television
	13421	10:30 a.m.-noon	Writing YOUR Story
	13422	1-2:30 p.m.	Lost & Found: Episodes in the History of Stolen Art
	13423	1-2:30 p.m.	Beginning Yoga
	13424	1-2:30 p.m.	MMM: Making Magical Music
	13425	1-3 p.m.	Bicycle Safety 101
13426	3-4:30 p.m.	Nebraska's Potential for Alternative Energy Sources	
<b>Friday</b>	13427	10-11:30 a.m.	Beginning Guitar
	13428	10:30-noon	China Culture and Language
	13429	10:30-noon	Nebraska's Citizen Soldiers: From the Cold War to Afghanistan
	13430	1-2:30 p.m.	Politics 2013: The Art of Sausage Making
<b>Saturday</b>	13431	9:30 a.m.-noon	Genealogy: Where Do I Dig First?
<b>Special Events</b>	<b>Distinguished Speakers Series &amp; Discussion</b>		
			The Political Career of JJ Exon
			Balancing the Needs of People and Nature
			"Would My Word Free the Slaves?" Lincoln and Emancipation
			Civil War and Art at the Sheldon
			Introduction to Kayaking
		Introduction to Kayaking	
		Explore Pawnee Lake by Kayaking	
		Introduction to River Kayaking	
		Google Earth	
		Google Earth	
		Coffee and Conversation	
		Member-Only Discounts	

See full schedule at [olli.unl.edu](http://olli.unl.edu) or request a copy from the OLLI office

Spring classes  
start March 25

# Curriculum czar's life: From Auburn to the Amazon

You would want an OLLI curriculum czar to be someone like this: Can organize anything, expects a lot, succeeds in business, loves to read, has many friends, wants to know about a lot of things.

You would want someone who declares, "Boredom is my enemy."

Lois Pasco, co-chair of the Curriculum Committee, is all that and more.

The most important thing to know about her, though, stems from a long-ago car accident that took the life of her 30-year-old husband. Instantly, she was a single mother, and she handled that job well, too.

"I raised two boys who are good husbands, good fathers and good human beings," she said.

The next most important thing to know is that she has traveled around the world. She has taken the trans-Siberian train across Russia, gone down the Amazon River and toured China when they were still wearing Mao jackets. "That has changed me more than anything," she said.

Those travels took her far from the farm near Tecumseh where she lived as a young girl, sometimes milking all three cows, feeding horses and chickens, and slopping hogs.

Hers was a family with high expectations, whose daughters went to a one-room school, whose church had services in German.

When she was 12, they sold the farm and moved to an apartment above their tavern in Auburn. You could order a light lunch at The Candy Kitchen, and a piece of her mother's famous coconut cream pie.

She went to Auburn High, got elected president of the Spanish Club, played a teacher in "Our Miss Brooks."

"I was always the chairman of some committee, never the queen or the princess," she said.



Curriculum Co-Chair Lois Pasco

She married Royce Pasco a year after her 1953 graduation. "He was so spontaneous, so much fun," she said.

When their financial situation improved, Royce suggested they visit their friend Allen. "You mean Allen from South America?" she asked. Yes, he wanted to drive down on the Pan American highway. "So we did."

She always had a job, plus she and Royce owned truck stops along interstate highways. They also had an interest in the Turnpike Ballroom south of Lincoln, where big bands such as the Glenn Miller Orchestra and Stan Kenton played.

It was all over so quickly. "He died in an automobile accident on Interstate 80 when he was

30. He literally drove off the road. It was a one-car accident. I think he was just tired," she said.

At 31, she was a widow with four restaurants and two small children. She managed. Son Kelly and his family now live in California, where he owns a bike shop. Son Rick and his family live in D.C., where he is a lobbyist in the agricultural field.

By 1975 she had sold or leased her businesses so she took a break from work for a couple years. Then she bought a house, fixed it up and sold it. She got her real estate license. She worked for Home Real Estate for 25 years. Even now, she owns and manages rental properties.

She has had a lot of fun, too. She has built two homes and an all-weather cabin at Woodcliff near Fremont. She has owned a 1954 and a 1955 Corvette and a 1965 Mustang.

When she retired from Home Real Estate in 2003, she signed up for a couple of OLLI classes at Legacy Estates.

"I asked a few questions in a class and they asked me to be on the Curriculum Committee," she said. Then she was asked to be co-chair with Annette Wiechert because she knew so many people. Eventually Pasco started developing classes.

"If you ever wonder how some classes come about, it's because I wanted to know about something," she said.

Curriculum is just one part of her life. She quilts and does needlework and cross-stitch. She collects dolls and antiques, plays bridge and belongs to a walking group.

On the day before this interview, she had four events: OLLI Council, Women's Welcome Club, an OLLI class and a fun evening of mahjong. She got home at 11 p.m. and read before bed.

That's just the sort of full life you'd expect of a lifelong learner whose enemy is boredom.

## Dyke hopes to maintain OLLI momentum, keep quality high

Heading up a Curriculum Committee of 50-plus people is a big job, so David Dyke and Lois Pasco split the duties. He graciously agreed to be co-chair less than a year ago when Ed Cecil stepped down.

Dyke, a retired gastroenterologist, remains on the science subcommittee and sits on the OLLI Council. He volunteers at People's Health Clinic and sits on boards for BryanHealth and Eastmont Towers.

Here are some of his thoughts on OLLI and its curriculum:

**Q:** People are often surprised that volunteers teach our course. Do other OLLIs do it this way?

**A:** Not all. Some of the larger ones... are able to pay honorariums, and may insist on interviewing lecturers and, at times, denying them participation.

Interestingly, their yearly membership fees may be up to 10 times our local charges.

**Q:** You attended a national OLLI conference in Colorado Springs. Any epiphanies?

**A:** Size-wise, our OLLI membership is probably in the middle of the pack. I was impressed with the overall quality and knowledge of the representatives who attended. Probably most important to me, however, was the realization that



Elaine and David Dyke attend last fall's Volunteer Recognition.

we function quite well in our local chapter, by comparison, as OLLI at UNL Coordinator Dee Aguilar and I were comfortable making some experienced comments in some of the group discussions.

**Q:** Last year, the Gilded Age was a special curriculum focus. This year, the Civil War. How are these themes chosen and developed?

**A:** I think it helps to have a central theme to guide us in course selection, special events and tours. Next season, the Curriculum Committee will be asked to consider "The Roaring Twenties." We'll see where that goes.

**Q:** How does the Curriculum Committee use the course

evaluations?

**A:** As a student of human nature, I recognize that everyone is in a hurry, and nobody wants to take the time to fill out a form --- so often they simply scribble something down. What Lois Pasco and I are most interested in, however, are suggestions for future courses and, of equal importance, who might be recommended to teach them (with phone numbers!). This would greatly simplify our life.

**Q:** You have taken an interest in developing technology courses, such as the iPad classes. Would you call yourself a technology guru?

**A:** When I told my wife, Elaine, about this question, she chuckled!

Until a few years before retirement, I admittedly was computer-lazy, to the point where I would often have the ward secretaries, or nurses, look up medical data for me on the office and hospital computers.

While I admit my enthusiasm, regarding photography and mostly Apple-related electronic equipment, I am a relative Johnny-come-lately. Because I recognized my technical naiveté, for example, I relied on Rich Sincovec's advice, when I organized the current iPad courses.

**Q:** If you could wave a magic stethoscope, what would be your fondest wish for OLLI?

**A:** My wish would have to be multi-faceted. The main desire would be to facilitate OLLI's present momentum, while maintaining high standards of academic quality. I sense the joy of learning in OLLI and the enthusiasm engendered from being a part of this volunteer organization. I would like to see an improved retention of members and I want to maintain the cost of our membership and classes as a bargain. Finally, I would like to tweak the social experience in OLLI so there is even more camaraderie arising from a sense of belonging to a group of like-minded people.



Among many strong elements of the OLLI curriculum was last fall's popular course, Election 2012. It was standing room only when the winner of the prediction contest was announced. She is Judy Heaston (center) who correctly called the presidential outcome plus nine of 10 U.S. Senate races. No one got a zero, but one person scored a 5. "And that person," course co-coordinator Randy Moody quipped, "is going to have to take the class over!"

## How it works: The creation of stimulating courses

BY JANE HINES  
Staff writer

Curriculum. It's been called the backbone, the lifeblood of OLLI. Most members joined OLLI because they wanted to learn and found a course that satisfied their quest. One offering quickly led to others, proving that "curiosity never retires."

So, how is it that this vital curriculum is developed, presented and evaluated?

Take a quick look at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's criteria for its more than 120 affiliates across the country. Two of those criteria grab one's attention. First, there must be "robust volunteer leadership." Second, there must be "a diverse repertoire of intellectually stimulating courses."

Robust volunteers developing intellectually stimulating courses certainly provides the perfect description of Nebraska's Curriculum Committee. More than 50 individuals are involved, working on 10 different subcommittees to develop OLLI courses.

The full committee meets every other month to hear updates from subcommittees on every course being planned. This allows for the sharing of evaluations, provides a forum for new course ideas and assures there are no scheduling conflicts.

Intervening months find each subcommittee meeting to do the nuts-and-bolts work of taking ideas and developing intellectually stimulating courses. Most committee members say that courses offered on a single subject with only one presenter are normally easier to put together.

Harder and more time-consuming are courses with many presenters and those with multiple locations. Take, for example, this term's "The Future of Lincoln Part II." Members of the Contemporary Issues Subcommittee had to decide which organizations

and projects they wanted to cover and who would be the appropriate person to speak and answer questions about the subject.

Once a consensus on course content was reached, the task of procuring speakers was undertaken. Subcommittee member Barb Schliesser says: "This is the task that takes time, perseverance and patience. Our speakers are community leaders and reaching them can sometimes be difficult."

She explains that once you've described your request and the individual has agreed to speak there are sometimes technical needs that must be worked out. She then sends letters to speakers confirming all details and at least a week before each class contacts the speaker to confirm all arrangements. Schliesser adds that she always sends a note of appreciation to each presenter.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of subcommittee members to write a syllabus for each course.

With this course glimpse, one begins to recognize the dedication of Curriculum Committee members. Consider the work involved when courses change locations and presenters every week. Here planning and logistics are complicated. There's no doubt, time and energy are needed.

OLLI at UNL Coordinator Dee Aguilar says, "Every OLLI has its own way of developing curriculum and there isn't any one model, but there are those who are very surprised to hear that ours is a totally volunteer effort."

She cautions about making comparisons because so many factors are special to each OLLI. This includes membership and fee costs, length of time for each term, professional staff personnel and schools with multiple campus locations.

However, she does share some examples from other OLLIs. Some have paid staff that develop the curriculum; some have volunteer committees that create a theme for the year and the staff arranges the courses; others solicit course proposals from faculty and/or community leaders and then a volunteer committee determines the offerings; some have OLLI members only as instructors while there are those that pay instructors and lastly there is one OLLI that is now offering the majority of its classes online.

Reviewing the online catalogs of two OLLI affiliates, the University of Missouri and Northwestern University, reveals some contrasts and similarities. Missouri's curriculum format appears similar to Nebraska's. There are 24 courses including special events scattered throughout the week during the spring term. The Missouri OLLI has its own building where offices and classrooms are housed, courtesy of the City of Columbia.

Northwestern University has two OLLI locations, in Evanston and Chicago. The curriculum focuses on weekly study groups numbering more than 150 this semester. A study group delves into a non-fiction or fiction book and participants engage in an in-depth study of the work led by one or two OLLI members.

There are also series of cultural/social courses that provide for a time of both learning and socializing, as well as courses devoted to highlighting special attractions in each city. In addition, Northwestern offers a distinguished lecture series featuring nationally known scholars and distinguished individuals.

Whether it's Columbia, Evanston, Chicago or Lincoln, OLLI and its diverse curriculum provide members with intellectually stimulating courses.

### OLLI at UNL Curriculum Committee

David Dyke, co-chair  
Lois Pasco, co-chair

### Creative Arts and Art History

Leta Powell Drake, chair  
Bob Basoco  
John Clinton  
Carol Kendrick  
Nancy Meeker  
Diane Pratt  
Kathy Richter  
Marge Snodgrass  
Mary Ann Sullivan  
Jane Williams

### Contemporary Issues

Marvin Almy, chair  
Nancy Comer  
Randy Moody  
Jerry Petr  
Kathleen Rutledge  
Barbara Schliesser  
Robert Shapiro

### History and Government

Georgianne Mastera, chair  
Dick Boyd  
Carol Connor  
Jon Hamilton  
Jane Renner Hood  
Pat King  
Ross McCown  
Tom Phillips  
Ned Sharp

### Language and Literature

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Dorothy Anderson  
Judy Cook  
Bob Haller  
Kathie Putenson  
Mary K. Stillwell

### Lifestyles

Carla Fetch

### Philosophy and Religion

Mary Christiansen, chair  
George Robie

### Science

Ed Cecil, chair  
Jim Carr  
Dick Dam  
Archie Devore  
David Dyke  
Beverly Gottsch  
Edward Schmidt  
Wil Hass  
Rich Sincovec  
LeEtta Sprackling  
Anne Vidaver

### Social Sciences

Dick Dienstbier, chair  
John Clinton  
Bob Florell  
Daniel Wheeler  
Bob Stoddard  
Nancy Wood

### Tours

Lee Rockwell, chair

### Writing

Barb Carlson, chair



## Picture yourself in Nairobi or Yellowstone or at Buffalo Bill's

Lee Rockwell takes OLLI members on travel adventures near and far.

Just this month, the destination was an internationally known wildlife site that's very close to home – the Rowe Sanctuary near Grand Island. OLLI members viewed the spectacle of the Sandhill cranes from a blind along the Platte River.

**Here's what's coming up next:**

**May 17-26**

**Civil War tour**

Professors Will Thomas and Ken Winkle of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln History Department will lead this tour of 1863 Civil War battlegrounds and other sites in Richmond, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Participants will visit locations important to both the Confederacy and the Union. They also will attend a special performance of the musical "Showboat" at the Kennedy Center. Registration deadline was March 15.

**June 21-July 3**

**Kenyan safari**

Lions and elephants and hyenas, oh my! This tour features stops in Nairobi, Amboseli National Park and the jewel in Africa's crown, the Maasai Mara National Reserve with Maasai dancers in tribal regalia. The registration deadline was March 15.

**August**

**Hall of Fame tour**

There's a lot to see in Nebraska: Willa Cather's Red Cloud home; the McCook home of George Norris; the Harlan County Reservoir; the Museum of the High Plains and the Frank Lloyd Wright house in McCook; Buffalo Bill's Ranch near North Platte; the Diversion Dam near North Platte; a possible rodeo; Ft. McPherson; and the Gateway Arch over Interstate 80 at Kearney. Details and registration deadline will be announced later this spring.

**Looking ahead to 2014**

Rockwell is exploring the possibility of a European river tour and a motor coach tour of several national parks in the western United States.



PHOTO BY LETA POWELL DRAKE

Lee Rockwell is eager to get on the road again as the organizer of OLLI tours. Next up is a Civil War tour that will take travelers to Richmond and Washington, D.C.

## See the world with Lee Rockwell

BY LETA POWELL DRAKE

Staff writer

Lee Rockwell is a global gadabout. And he takes OLLI members with him when he goes.

He didn't even break a sweat as OLLI seniors stepped into canoes, squeezed into kayaks and boarded rafts to paddle down the Niobrara River last summer. He finds OLLI students to be aware of physical limitations and considerate of their fellow travelers.

Jerry Petr helped plan the trip, with Mel and Rosemary Thornton as river guides and hosts extraordinaire. It was one of Rockwell's most memorable journeys.

Rockwell started his tour business after he retired as assistant general manager of Nebraska Educational Telecommunications in 1998.

His company Valden Tours began a partnership with OLLI in spring 2008 by offering a trip to Washington D.C. Fifty OLLI members had a capital time. Thirty more adventures were to follow.

The ideas for those adventures come about in three main ways:

First, a Curriculum Committee member may suggest a tour that could be tied in with class content.

This happened with the Nebraska agriculture and birding tours, the Niobrara rafting escape, the Gilded Age tour of New England, and the upcoming Civil War tour in May.

OLLI members in general are another rich source of ideas. They may suggest trips on class evaluation forms or offhandedly mention a trip to a Curriculum Committee member.

Finally, Rockwell himself has traveled around the globe, so he knows destinations OLLI members might enjoy. He is a past president and member of the board of the Friendship Force of Lincoln.

He believes OLLI trips must have educational value, not just sightseeing appeal. He also considers the age of the travelers and the need to keep prices reasonable for a group of 25 to 50.

Once he identifies a destination, he explores specific locations to visit, and checks out the hotels, eateries and transportation. He develops a budget to determine if this is a trip the membership can afford. If so, he books the destination and prepares marketing materials to sell it.

On occasion, he may work with a travel agency that specializes in developing a tour in the region. He never takes a pre-packaged tour, but

listens to their ideas and suggestions. He then selects what he wants and the agency handles the details.

Once a trip is under way, he has to be flexible. In the middle of the night, he had to take a traveler to the hospital. Another tour participant broke an ankle stepping off the bus. One student passed out on an airplane. A couple had to leave in the middle of the trip to attend to family emergencies. Although he has learned to expect the unexpected, these tours usually go very smoothly.

Rockwell himself ran into a rough patch last fall. He tripped the light fantastic while taking one-step-at-a-time to the old oak tree in Ponca State Park. Losing his footing, he stumbled and broke his tibia. Surgery was necessary. Oh no! Only one week before the Golden Age tour to New England! Lee's wife Kay came to the rescue. The trip went ahead as scheduled.

As he recovered, the bionic Rockwell advanced from a scooter and walker to crutches, while keeping up the travel planning. Now that he's back on all twos, he is looking forward to setting off airport alarms as the TSA scans the hardware in his leg, knee and spine. He is eager to get back on the road again.

## O, to be in New England -- on an OLLI tour

BY JEANNE KERN

Staff writer

Forty OLLI travelers headed to New England in October to cap the Gilded Age series.

Our goal was the "cottages" of the ridiculously rich, where a room in The Breakers was paneled in platinum and the bill at The Elms for a single social season ran over \$300,000 even then.

We saw lesser homes, too: of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Robin Cook; Daniel Webster and John Kerry; and where Paul Revere reared

his 16 children.

We gazed at the belfry of Old North Church, boarded Old Ironsides, walked the battleground at Lexington. Nowhere did we feel more American than in the Norman Rockwell Museum.

We can all say with pride that we "went to Dartmouth and Harvard." And we reveled in culture: French and Saint-Gaudens, Howard Pyle, Grandma Moses.

We learned local etiquette. Mary Christiansen discussed the election with two locals who stayed

reasonable and calm. Then she asked if the weather was typical. One said it snowed last Halloween, the other said no it did not, and suddenly they were yelling. Mary tiptoed away.

We ate "local"-- Ben & Jerry's, Dunkin' Donuts, clam chowder, maple syrup. And mountains of lobsters.

At last, atop the Bennington Memorial in Vermont--the blazing reds, vibrant yellows, electric greens of fall foliage. "Aaah," we all said, secretly thinking, "but Nebraska is beautiful, too."





Breanna Benjamin wears ruffles and lace, while cutaway coats and cravats are the costumes of the day for the men who read parts in "Destiny of the Republic." The men from left: Dennis Frederick, Ken Gettman, Steve Gaines and Jerry Petr.

## Read all about it! Destiny of the Radio-Active Players

BY LETA POWELL DRAKE

Radio-Active Players coordinator

Fifty years have passed since OLLI member Dennis Frederick was on stage in high school, playing Wild Bill Hickok in the melodrama "Deadwood Dick."

It was the OLLI Radio-Active Players that drew him to the stage again in January. He had watched his wife, Cherie, perform in the Players' first production, a Jack Benny show, then waited for a non-musical.

"Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President" motivated him to audition. His half-century absence from the stage didn't stop him from earning the leading role as President James A. Garfield's secretary and narrating the story of the murder of the 20th president of the United States.

This historical novel, written by Candice Millard, was the 2012 One Book One Lincoln pick. OLLI collaborated with Lincoln



The Destiny cast blossomed with the professional advice of Morrie Enders, executive director of the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

City Libraries and the Lincoln Community Playhouse to take it from page to stage for two performances. Librarian Layne Pierce masterfully edited the book for this production. Morrie Enders of the Playhouse directed.

Like all good OLLI students, everyone in the cast had read the book! What motivated the readers to audition?

Jeanne Kern finds that it's always fun to make new OLLI friends. "People new to the stage are timid at first and then begin to blossom, energizing the old hams. They remind us all what a joy the theater is," she said. She has acted in productions for

the Nebraska Rep, the Playhouse and TADA, as well as in commercials and films.

Jerry Petr got out of his comfort zone to play a cigar-chomping political boss and a conniving, self-serving medical charlatan. Petr enjoys attending live theater. He said he "got the chance to experience the adrenalin rush on the other side of the footlights, with professional instruction from Morrie Enders."

Dave Thomssen had no acting experience when he responded to the call: "We need a few good men!" Nudged by his wife Marge, Dave had been cast in an earlier Players' production of the radio drama, "The

War of the Worlds." He had so much fun working with Enders and the cast that he came back for more, playing Bob Hope in "A USO Show." It was his Destiny to be cast as President Chester Arthur.

"Reading, not memorizing scripts, makes this easy enough for anyone to act," he said.

Robert Doxtator played Charles Guiteau, the crazy guy who shot President Garfield. He learned from Enders not to "telescope" the ending, that is, not to give the audience any hint of what would happen. "This bit of wisdom gave me a new way to looking at my character," he said.

A book can't convey the passion of music, but the stage can. Enders tapped Jim Rowoldt -- who sings and plays guitar -- to bring 1881 campaign slogans to life with his Jubilee Bluegrass Gospel Band.

Ned Sharp looked forward to taking the stage again after having played Jack Benny. He soon learned "that several of my friends in the troupe had been scanned so many times that they were, in fact, radioactive. That explains Morrie keeping his distance and the death-grip on his Geiger counter."

You too, can be Radio-Active -- if you have the energy!

*"Your honor, I plead not guilty to the indictment by reason of insanity. It was God's act and not mine. The divine pressure on me to remove the president was so enormous that it destroyed my free agency, and therefore, I am not legally responsible for my act. . ."*

*—Charles Guiteau, the man who shot President Garfield*



Robert Doxtator plays Charles Guiteau

PHOTOS BY ORVILLE FRIESEN