

# OLLI Times



Betsy Hay, President

## A Message From the Board President

Norma Clippard and I have just returned from the OLLI National Conference in Texas where the 120 OLLIs shared ideas and were challenged by inspiring speakers. A special treat was meeting and thanking Mr. Bernard Osher who is celebrating his 90th birthday and is still focused on helping “seasoned adults” have lives of artful aging. He has already made an extraordinary difference in the lives of over 160,000 members in the OLLI network through his Osher Foundation funding and support.

One speaker, Dr. Bill Thomas, geriatrician, challenged us to create a new phase of life beyond adulthood that would emphasize doing new things, savoring the world, and promoting bonds with other generations. In this proposed “Elderhood” model a person could move beyond stereotypes and find real fulfillment.

Other speakers suggested different ways that members could get involved in OLLI . After reviewing my notes and reflecting, I think an important first step is to ask our members, “What are the skills and talents you could gladly share with us if we made it possible?”

Let’s keep our OLLI moving forward by getting more people involved with additional thoughts and suggestions.

We want YOU!

Cheers,

*Betsy*



Betsy Hay, President and Norma Clippard, Director with Mr. Bernard Osher and friends in the photo booth at the 2017 National OLLI Conference

### What’s Inside

OLLI is Continuing our Go Green Initiative!

Sages & Seekers

Lost & Found

Become a Contributor!

I Love You, Baby Snooks!  
Sandra W. Plant

The Cinephile  
K.C. Smythe

God’s Will  
Glenn Davis

From the Office

# OLLI is Continuing our Go Green Initiative

The OLLI Team is engaged in an effort to be better stewards of the Osher dollar and to shrink our environmental footprint. Some of these changes are already in place. For spring, we made the move to electronic course evaluations instead of paper evaluations. This summer, we are piloting a new, compact mailing which directs members to our website to view the catalog and sign up for classes. A postcard was mailed in place of a printed catalog that let members know when registration would be open. The postcard was followed up by an email announcing that registration had opened.

**For these reasons, it is becoming more and more of an advantage to give OLLI your email address and utilize our online registration system.** Those who make use of these tools receive up-to-the-minute notification of registration openings and are able to sign up for classes immediately!

If you are not already receiving email notifications, send an email to [oshervu@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:oshervu@vanderbilt.edu) and indicate that you'd like your email to be added to your file.

These have been the first of our efforts to go green, but they certainly won't be the last! In the future, we look forward to corresponding with our membership through electronic means most (if not all) of the time and cutting down our paper-mailings as much as possible.

Keep an eye out for these changes and more as your OLLI team works to innovate new ways to continue providing excellent programming at an affordable cost.

## SAGES & SEEKERS

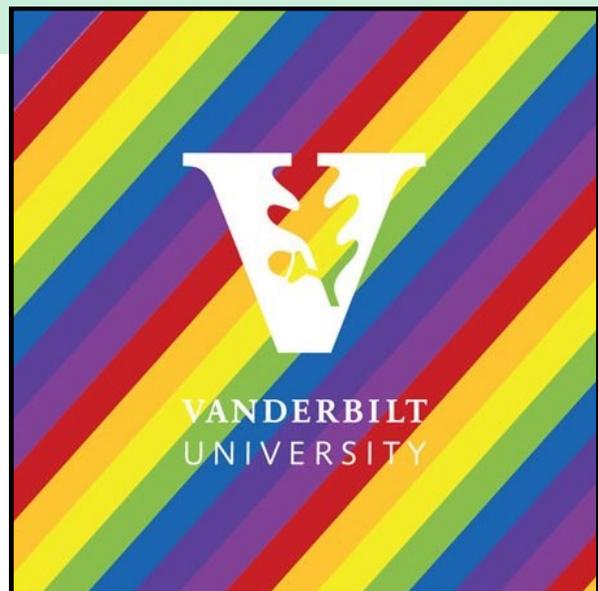
This past term, OLLI was pleased to engage in a pilot project called Sages & Seekers, an intergenerational mentorship program which aimed to foster one-on-one connections between youth (Seekers) and elders (Sages). This time, OLLI focused on serving the LGBTQIA+ community, but may serve other populations in the future.

**SAGE** An LGBTQIA+- identifying member of the local community, age 50+, interested in sharing stories and passing down lessons to the next generation.

**SEEKER** An LGBTQIA+- identifying person age 18-25 interested in hearing the stories of someone who has walked this path before them.

This small group met for eight weeks at the K.C. Potter Center and other Vanderbilt meeting places to learn from each others' experiences and bridge the gap between generations. At the end of their time together, Sages and Seekers gathered to share a meal and honor the connections that had been forged. Sages each made a toast to their respective Seekers wishing them well on their journeys. Seekers each wrote a short essay honoring the accomplishments and challenges of their Sages' lives.

Scroll to the next page to read the essay and toast/poem of Victoria Harris (Sage), and her Seeker, Nikki Craycraft.



## Nikki Craycraft, *Seeker*

When I signed up for the Sages and Seekers program, one of the mental images I had was of The Past. The Past was a bleak landscape of closets and punchlines, punctuated by brave souls fighting for what they deserved, creating a long slow path to the (well, relative) comfort that I can experience living as a queer person today. The Past was a time of struggle, and conflict, and pain. And then I met Victoria. And never have I been so happy to be proven wrong.

There are many things I admire about her, but the most important one for me to talk about is her absolute faith in herself. She's known who she is since she was very young; even more remarkably, she was able to have a safe and supportive environment to feel pride in her identity. I came out of all my various closets at least to myself, and usually to those close to me, pretty young. But I had the internet to connect my experiences and feelings to labels and ideas, to know I wasn't the only one. It was naively easy for me to assume The Past was this monolith of oppression, and that it was impossible for anybody to feel so comfortable so early. But Victoria did. And, for that matter, still does.

Did you know she was on national TV? When she was 15, playing the drums, which was decidedly not a girl instrument at the time. But there was no way in hell such a fact was going to limit her. And then other girls around the nation wrote her letters talking about how she was an inspiration for them. It takes a particular blend of courage and determination and lord knows what else to be the face others can pin their dreams to, but that's just who she is. Hearing her talk about her work in the heyday of HIV outreach made the crisis facing our brothers and sisters feel real in a way that books and movies couldn't quite hit.

All that stuff is important for helping me feel connected with a world that had much more nuance than I was giving it credit for. And it's great to feel kinship with those like me who came before me. But honestly? The single best part of getting to know Victoria is that I made a friend. It felt like we could talk from the moment we sat down to the moment we had to leave, and if Alex wasn't there to politely kick us out, we just could have kept on talking. It was a joy to have somebody as genuinely interested in my world, my people, my experiences, as I was with hers. And so complimentary! I'm usually pretty weird about people saying nice things to me, but it never once felt like anything other than...Victoria just saying what she thought. And if she could think it about me, it felt easier for me to think it about myself.

Before the program started, I expected that most of what we would discuss would be the kinds of things that require capital letters and look like they belong on college syllabi. Queer Issues, Then and Now. Historical and Current Understandings of Sexuality. You can imagine the kind of nerd I am that I signed up for it anyway. To be sure, those conversations still happened. But they were interwoven throughout an organic discussion about what it's been like for her to live her life and what it's been like for me to live mine. I was lucky to meet a fantastic woman and learn about her personality and the context of her life.

Let the record state that Victoria has a wicked sense of humor, a light in her soul that's infectious, and an air of support and compassion that could make anybody feel at ease talking to her. Her dog Spanky is super cute, too! I'm going to miss sharing my life and learning about her, and I hope that we can find ways to still be connected after Sages and Seekers is over.

*There was once a young Seeker named Nikki  
She chose me as her Sage, obviously not very picky*

*Oh yeah, "I" hit the jackpot  
Our conversations were always right on spot  
(It was me who talked about pot)*

*We covered some history and ways gone by  
Then I learned new things, oh my, oh my*

*Seems like we had a trust factor from the very start  
We told the truth right straight from our heart*

*Now I am hoping the best for her impending year  
May it be open, un-judged, and completely without fear*

*Farewell my young Seeker friend  
I hope your goals and freedoms never end*

*But, if someone should decide to bully you  
Contact me, 'cause we will always remain true*

## Victoria Harris, *Sage*

## LOST & FOUND

### The OLLI office has a growing collection of lost items!

We are looking for the owners of an umbrella, Vanderbilt coffee mug, Vanderbilt padfolio, winter cap, and necklace, so if you find yourself to be damp, under-caffeinated, disorganized, chilly, or unadorned, (or lose something in the future) head over to the brand-new [Lost & Found Page](#) on the OLLI Website and take a look!

If one of these items belongs to you, please call the office at 615-343-1130.



## BECOME A NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTOR!

Along with giving the OLLI Times a makeover, your OLLI team has re-imagined the newsletter content. Much of the need-to-know information about the OLLI program is now included in the course catalog so we can utilize the newsletter for content that is produced *for* OLLI members *by* OLLI members.

In this issue, we've featured the writings of three OLLI members who have taken the creative writing seminar. Turn the page to read these thought-provoking essays!

We are excited to consider the following types of submissions for the next newsletter:

- Short - form creative writing  
(300 word maximum for poetry and 500 word maximum for other formats)
- Photography/printable art
- Opinion editorial about subjects affecting OLLI membership  
(500 word maximum)
- Member Brags: Know of someone who deserves a shout out? Submit a brag and celebrate the accomplishments and milestones of a fellow OLLI member!  
(100 word maximum)
- Event Reporting: Want to share your experience of an exceptional course series, Special Interest Group, or special event? This is the place!  
(500 word maximum)

Please email your submissions to [oshervu@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:oshervu@vanderbilt.edu) for consideration in the next issue of the OLLI Times.

# *Baby Snooks, I Love You!*

By Sandra W. Plant, *OLLI Contributor*



My younger brother Jim Boy and I grew up listening to radio shows. Our family didn't even have a TV until 1953, but we didn't care. We loved our radio shows.

We would sit cross-legged on the rug in front of the big, wooden Philco radio set, eyes wide as we waited for Sky King and his niece Penny to spot a gang of rustlers as Sky masterfully piloted his low-flying Cessna over his Arizona ranch. And sometimes I almost wet my pants rather than leave at the exciting part when Sergeant Preston of the Yukon was close to saving the lives of two gold miners stranded in a fierce Arctic blizzard. I could just see the dog sled swishing over deep snow, led by the sergeant's faithful malamute Yukon King. At the sergeant's sharp command, "On you huskies!", we knew that lives would be saved and this hearty member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police would win again.

Of all the radio shows we listened to and enjoyed, none was more beloved than Baby Snooks. The two of us could hardly wait for Sunday night at 6:30 pm when the Baby Snooks show came on the air. Jim Boy and I would howl with laughter at the way she tricked her parents every week. One time, it was her report card that mysteriously disappeared. Another time she hid a bee's nest in the living room where her mother was having her club meeting.

We never liked going to the doctor because it usually meant we would get stuck with a needle, usually in the butt. Just like us, Baby Snooks didn't like going to the doctor either. We couldn't stop laughing the time she and her daddy sat waiting in the doctor's office. The x-ray machine caught the attention of Baby Snooks.

"Will it take my picture?" she asked.

"Not that kind of picture," Daddy said.

The always curious Baby Snooks began punching buttons on the X-ray machine until it blew up with a loud bang. And Daddy said, "Now you've done it! Promise me that you will apologize to the doctor and explain what happened."

"Oh yes, Daddy, I will."

At that point the doctor rushed into the examining room. Seeing the damage, he was irate. "What have you done to my \$5,000 dollar X-ray machine?"

Daddy looked to Baby Snooks. Although we couldn't see her, we were sure that our favorite little girl batted her eyes and began her story. "Well, you see, doctor, we waited so long for you that Daddy got mad and kicked your X-ray machine. He's really sorry."

"Get out, get out," screamed the doctor. And Baby Snooks didn't have to go to the doctor after all.

Jim Boy and I thought this was hilarious. Why didn't my sweet little brother and I have the nerve to try the tricks that Baby Snooks got by with every Sunday evening?

Sometimes Jim Boy and I would sit in our backyard tree house and talk about things. Sometimes it was parents or friends and sometimes it was the radio shows. One day, my little brother asked me, "Why do you like Baby Snooks so much?"

Being 18 months older and much wiser, I said, "I like her because she is always outsmarting the grown ups."

"By being cute," added Jim Boy.

*Continued on next page*

# *Baby Snooks, I Love You! (continued)*

By Sandra W. Plant, *OLLI Contributor*

“Why do you like her so much?”

“I like her because she’s a little girl about my age,” said Jim Boy.

Then came the terrible news one Sunday evening when we took our place in front of the radio. The announcer came on and said, “We regret to inform you that Fannie Brice died today. There will be no more Baby Snooks.”

We began sobbing so loudly that our Mother came to see what had caused the anguish. “Baby Snooks is dead,” I wailed. “The announcer said it on the radio.”

Big tears pouring down his pudgy cheeks, Jim Boy sobbed. “The man said, ‘No more Baby Snooks.’ Does that mean forever?”

Then Mother knelt beside us on the rug, a comforting arm around each of us. She gently explained that Baby Snooks was not a real person. She was performed by an actress, a grown up lady who pretended to be a little girl. It’s Fannie Brice who died, not baby Snooks.

“No, no, she’s real,” he insisted.

“I thought you knew it was just a comedy show on the radio,” Mother said. “I’m so sorry for the bad news.”

Later that night, Jim Boy and I lay awake in our twin beds in a cozy blue bedroom. I was trying to work out in my mind how Baby Snooks could be an actress and a little girl at the same time. I heard my little brother sobbing quietly in his bed.

“What is it, Jim Boy? “

“I’m crying because mother said that Baby Snooks is not a real little girl. She’s wrong! Baby Snooks **IS** real. And now she’s dead.” This brought on more sobs. I got up and gave him a Kleenex. He wiped his eyes and blew his nose loudly.

Still sniffing, Jim Boy threw off his blanket and crawled to the foot of his bed where there was a window. Looking out into the night sky with twinkling stars and the sliver of a moon, he whispered his farewell.

“Good-bye Baby Snooks. I’ll love you forever.”

## *The Cinephile*

By K.C. Smythe, *OLLI Contributor*

Here was the plan: live by the schedule of Turner Classic Movies. Start in the winter, when darkness fell early, cold settled in, and his mood tended toward noir. Sign up for their newsletter, download their app, like their Facebook page. Find their schedule online, copy and paste it into a spreadsheet, and plot the upcoming week. What to watch live, what to record? What to skip? Should anything be skipped? Should he aspire to be a Turner Classic Movies completist, go to their fan conventions, sail on their cruises, become acquainted with host extraordinaire Robert Osborne, amaze him with his completism, appear on his show, get offered a contract, a whole new career! Yes, he could do this!

So he would try to be a completist, which meant he would have to keep a log, and prioritize whether to watch something on its next airing, or record it, or wait for it to come back around again in the rotation. Such discipline and dedication for a fanboy!

*Continued on next page*

# *The Cinephile (continued)*

By K.C. Smythe, *OLLI Contributor*

The theme weeks would have to be a priority. And he couldn't miss the theme's interstitial content, the trivia and perspective passed on by the host and or celebrity cohost. Of course, the downside of theme-centrism might be the obligation to slog through a marathon of Doris Day movies while a sleeping-hours gem with, say, Charlie Ruggles or Thelma Ritter, would be doomed to catch-up via recording or the purgatory of the unknown subsequent air date. He would be subject to the caprice of the programming manager.

Multitasking would be necessary. Nuking a can of soup while Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald embraced and belted love duets. Online grocery shopping during cattle drives. How many between-movie promotions were long enough for quick showers, answering emails, and paying bills? He would have to budget this into his weekly schedule.

Sleeping was another matter, though. Insomnia vs. reanimated memories. All-night TV would be his refuge from the miasma of his subconscious. When he finally slept, let the movies haunt his dreams instead. How could his schedule account for the inconsistency of his slumbers?

He was overthinking this.

He just needed to get the schedule down on paper, his war map, then set whatever-the-hell he wanted to record. There would always be a backlog of recordings; he'd watch them when he watched them.

The theme edifice was crumbling. He might have to throw Doris Day under the bus.

# *God's Will*

By Glenn Davis, *OLLI Contributor*

My childhood friend lay in a coffin in the corner bedroom of his grandmother's white frame house. He looked like he was sleeping fully dressed in his Sunday clothes. He wore a blue blazer, a white shirt with a blue and white striped tie and gray wool pants. Seventeen years old, he had been in a car wreck. He lived two days. The driver, a fellow student at a boys' prep school, was unhurt.

I walked across the hall into the room where his mother and father sat on the bed. Her tears fell on the red and white cathedral window quilt. The same colors of the letter jacket their son had worn on the local school's basketball team.

His mother looked up at me, "He begged us not to send him away to prep school his junior year. If only we hadn't forced him to go, he would still be alive."

Before I could say anything, his father said, "We can't go back and change anything now. God, that we could. I keep thinking this is just a bad dream. That we'll wake up and he'll still be alive."

Our local minister sat with them in the bedroom. "It's not your fault," he said. "You couldn't have foreseen what would happen." Later he would tell me that when their son died in the hospital, the mother of the driver said to them, "It was God's will."

The father stood up and went into the bedroom where his son lay. He looked at him lying in the solid cherry coffin, his eyes empty, his shoulders slumped. He ran his hands along the side, feeling the wood and studying its grain. He was president of a local lumber company that produced fine hardwoods for flooring and cabinetry.

*Continued on next page*

# God's Will (continued)

By Glenn Davis, *OLLI Contributor*

Dozens of family and friends and former classmates wandered through the house, numb and in shock, barely able to speak, unable to eat. In the kitchen, a tuna casserole, ham and rolls, congealed strawberry salad, chess and pecan pies lay untouched on the table. It wasn't a funeral home parlor, but the carnations and lilies made it smell like one.

I walked outside into the backyard. I needed fresh air. Giant oak trees stood bare and lifeless against the mountain. They struggled to hold their limbs toward the sky that cold and gray December day.

A few months later on a summer day, I sat at a table eating a club sandwich and drinking iced tea at the local country club. I felt someone looking at me. You know the feeling, when you feel eyes staring at you even though you haven't seen or heard anybody. I looked up and it was his mother. "Today is his birthday. He would have been eighteen." She smiled wistfully. I didn't know what to say. But I knew not to say, "It was God's will."

## From the Office

### Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

#### EVENTS

Annual meeting: Thursday, May 18

#### SUMMER 2017

Registration deadline: Friday, May 26

#### ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Fall 2017 term begins: October 8, 2017

Winter 2018 term begins: January 14, 2018

Spring 2018 term begins: March 25, 2018

Summer 2018 term begins: June 10, 2018

### SUMMER REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

#### Ways to register



#### ONLINE

[www.vanderbilt.edu/olli](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/olli)



#### PRINT AND MAIL

From our [website](#), look for "To print the registration form"



#### IN-PERSON

Visit 2007 Terrace Place, Nashville 37203  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. & 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
May 1-5; May 9-11; May 15-19

#### Norma Clippard

Director

Phone: 615-322-5569

Cell: 615-364-1331

[norma.clippard@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:norma.clippard@vanderbilt.edu)

#### Melissa Bussear

Administrative Assistant

Phone: 615-343-1130

[oshervu@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:oshervu@vanderbilt.edu)

#### Betsy Hay

Advisory Board President

[betsyhay@att.net](mailto:betsyhay@att.net)



[Find us on Facebook!](#)