

Road Scholar Institute Network  
CURRICULUM IDEAS  
September 2014

## From OLLI at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks

### *Oscar Near Misses*

We will watch and discuss four Oscar-nominated films that could, and arguably should, have won the Academy Award for best picture. Specifically, we will see: *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941; lost to *How Green Was My Valley*), *Picnic* (William Holden and Kim Novak, 1955; lost to *Marty*), *Friendly Persuasion* (Gary Cooper and Dorothy McGuire, 1956; lost to *Around The World in 80 Days*), and *Fargo* (Francis McDormand, 1996; lost to *The English Patient*). These films are quite different from one another, but they are all excellent and would have made quite acceptable choices for the Academy.

### *Changes in Northern Vegetation*

Climate change is occurring faster in the north than elsewhere on Earth. Northern vegetation is adapted to and limited by our cold climate. How are the changes we are experiencing affecting vegetation in the interior of Alaska and in the Arctic? We will look at the latest research, how scientists measure change, and what they have found. There will be lots of opportunities to discuss the meaning of these results.

### *Understanding Weather Maps*

Have you ever wanted to know more about weather maps and what all the lines and symbols on weather maps represent? This class includes descriptions and examples of weather maps used on television, in print, and on the Internet, from weather charts intended to help the general public to maps designed to meet the needs of aviators and mariners. Weather radar and weather satellites will also be discussed, all with the intent of making you a more informed user of weather information.

## From Colby-Sawyer College Adventures in Lifelong Learning

### *What if? — Alternate Histories*

If historical events had turned out differently, how might the world of today have been changed? Some authors have written alternate histories, usually about major historical events, and the changes that might have resulted had they turned out otherwise. The course will look at two such events, the WWII and the Protestant Reformation, and at a variety of ways in which an alternate history, and an alternate present stemming from each of them, have been created by imaginative authors.

### *Hale Award Writers*

Since 1956, outstanding New England writers have traveled to Newport to receive the annual

literary award named for Newport's Sarah Josepha Hale. The bronze medal symbolizing the honor has been awarded to fiction and non-fiction writers, poets, journalists, biographers, playwrights to name a few. This award was initiated in 1956 as a fundraiser for the Free Richards Library in Newport, and Robert Frost was the first to receive the medal. The course will focus on selected readings from award medalists.

## Explorers Lifelong Learning Institute at Salem State College

### *The New Yorker Poem*

Do you read everything in The New Yorker but the poetry? This course will challenge your assumptions about poetry published in the New Yorker. Poems from the most recent issues will be our subject.

### *Canticle to the Cosmos*

An immersive, classic course on the story of the Universe, Earth, Life and Humans. This fascinating, in-depth telling of the scientific story of the universe instills within the viewer a feeling of its sacred nature.

### *What's a Peace Corps Volunteer Doing in Ukraine? Janet McLaughlin, Retired Peace Corps Volunteer and Explorer member*

The political situation in Ukraine is making big headlines this year, and our guest provides a personal insight into the social, cultural and political fabric of day-to-day life among the Ukrainian people. For the past three years she worked in southwestern Ukraine as a Peace Corps volunteer. Fulfilling a lifelong dream of serving in the Peace Corps, she will also reveal what it's like to be an "older" volunteer.

Janet McLaughlin is a former teacher, town councilor, and state representative. She has worked in city planning and state construction oversight departments in Maine. Holding a bachelor's degree in American Civilization from Brown University, she also has two master's degrees from the University of Detroit and from the Conway School of Landscape Design.

## Learning in Retirement at Waukesha University

### *African-American Poetry*

This course features some of the more significant African-American poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, from Paul Laurence Dunbar to Nikki Giovanni. Featured poets will include, among others, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Sterling Brown, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Dudley Randall, Imamu Amiri Baraka and Sonia Sanchez. This course will also focus on relevant African-America history in order to provide a context for the poetry. The instructor will perform a number of selections so that course participants can experience the rhythm and cadence of this uniquely American art form.

### *The Secret Life of Words: English Words and their Origins*

Words have fascinating stories to tell about the history and culture of their speakers, the

human mind and creativity, and the power of language. This course explores the history of English words, tracing back a number of common and uncommon words and phrases through history to get to their origins. The course moves from learned classical words on standardized tests, such as “erinaceous,” to the sports metaphors that permeate everyday talk, such as “you’re off base.” It explores words that have been the source of public concern, from Internet acronyms, such as LOL, to the curse words we write with symbols: #\$.@%.  
Note: Cost for non-members is \$15.00

#### *Fair Trade: Shopping with a Conscience*

The Plowshare Center was the first Fair Trade shop in Wisconsin. Since 1990, Plowshare, a non-profit, has supported talented artisans in more than 30 economical developing countries by providing a marketplace for unique, handcrafted items. In this class you’ll learn the principles of Fair Trade and how this practice is empowering people to provide for their families and transforming communities. View DVD clips showing artisans from a variety of countries using traditional techniques to create beautiful items, and see the finished products that are available at Plowshare.

#### **Lifelong Learning Institute at Harper College**

##### *The Downton Abbey Kitchen*

Join chef Kate Bradely for some traditional English food based on the popular PBS show, *Downton Abbey*. You will delight in deviled eggs, chicken and mushroom pie, pork tenderloin with a port wine sauce, and ginger nut biscuits. Recipes and samples will be provided.

##### *The Downton Tea Time*

Spend the afternoon getting in the mood for the series *Downton Abbey* with Chef Maddox. Learn to make two great finger sandwiches as well as two sweets for your tea party. The sandwiches include smoked salmon and cucumber on a mini-croissant, caramelized onion and bleu cheese on toasted almond, and lavender shortcakes with autumn fruit compote and a lemon curd tart with Italian meringue. You can then have a great tea party when you watch the show.

##### *Germany: Pagans, Princes, Castles, and Crusades*

Lisa Didier will review history and anecdotes about German pagan and Christian dukes, along with their forts and castles as she discusses how the devastation of the crusades changed the future of Germany and the map of Europe.

##### *Henry Ford: Inventor of the Modern World*

Henry Ford was an American industrialist and the founder of the Ford Motor Company. His development of the assembly line led to mass production and a lower cost for his Model T, which also meant higher wages for his employees. In many ways he was the father of the Global economy and many historians believe his vision made America a world power. You will examine the impact Henry Ford had on American industry and technology.

##### *Real of Legends King Arthur and Robin Hood*

We all know the myths that surround King Arthur and Robin Hood. These men are known as heroes who brought adventure, justice and hope to the English landscape. But are these stories real? Did Robin Hood know Little John, and did King Arthur sit at a round table? Michael McCann will introduce you to the real stories behind our greatest heroes and myths. Through video and storytelling, you uncover the historical backgrounds of these epic heroes that resonate to every generation.

## Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Irvine

### *The Pipe Organ: King of Instruments*

Ever wonder what is behind those walls of pipes you see in some churches? Usually many hundreds, even thousands more pipes! And hidden behind those impressive pipes and chamber walls are extensive building materials never seen except in the factory workshop. What we now identify as the classic pipe organ has a history that spans roughly 2,000 years. This one-session class will discuss the evolution and use of magnificent musical instrument from ancient times to present day; from its simple, primitive form to its present, refined magnificence; from Roman Circus to the biggest Christian cathedrals, including movie theaters and assembly halls throughout the world.

Not only are these instruments a musical marvel, they are feats of mechanics and construction, considered by many to be works of art.

Through our musically gifted presenter, we will explore all facets of the instrument, from construction to finish.

### *Illustrating Fancy Nancy: The Art of Robin Preiss Glasser*

Robin Preiss Glasser, famous for her Fancy Nancy illustrations, will discuss how artists must first find a method to work at their best. In addition to Robin's drawing talent, her methods include a copy machine, unorthodox hours and a sense of humor. Robin will explain how she turns a manuscript into a book, the reasons for choosing one story over another, and important trends in children's literature — including how to get published.

Presenter: Robin Preiss Glasser has had two successful careers, the first as a ballet dancer and the second as an award-winning children's book illustrator. Her delightful work can be found in many books, including: *Tea for Ruby* by Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York; *You Can't Take a Balloon into the Metropolitan Museum* and three acclaimed history books by Lynne Cheney; *Daddy's Girl* by Garrison Keillor; and *A Sock is a Pocket for Your Toes* by poet Elizabeth Garton Scanlon. In 2005, she collaborated with author Jane O'Connor for the now classic Fancy Nancy series, some of which have been on the New York Bestseller List. Her books have been translated into 17 languages, including Hebrew and Korean.

### *Geology, Tectonics and Geoengineering Along the Panama Canal*

2014 marks the centennial of the opening of the Panama Canal. This talk will review the geology and tectonic setting of the Isthmus of Panama, including the engineering geology of the Panama Canal area. History of the canal and on-going expansion projects will also be discussed. Mark did his graduate research in this area. Whether you know this area firsthand,

plan to travel there someday, or just love geology and tectonics, join us for an informative class on the region.

### *The 1970s: Politics and Culture*

The 1970s is often remembered as an era of not only ungainly fashion and ridiculous trends (lava lamps, shag carpets, polyester everything), it was also a decade of pervasive disillusionment. Americans lost faith in the country's core institutions and sites of authority. Political and cultural landscapes were transformed. It was a conflicted decade as some sought to accelerate changes begun in the 1960s while others fought to restore a traditional America in spite of these transformations. This course will explore the decade's contradictions through the politics and culture of its time.

### *The World of Coffee*

The fragrant beverage that wakes you in the morning is much more than a drink. In two lectures and a coffee-tasting session, Dr. Steven Topik will track the coffee Arabica to its origins in Africa more than 500 years ago, to the Middle East, Europe, the Americas and Asia. In short — a case study of globalization. We will explore coffee's mass appeal as a drug, a symbol of hospitality, a religious rite, a sign of distinction and, lately, a fashionable drink. Today the world of coffee is involved in debate over free trade and fair trade, over profit and environmental costs.

## **From Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Saginaw Valley State University**

### *A Century of Progress: The 1933 World's Fair*

1933 might easily have been one of the darkest years in the history of mankind. Hitler came to power and the Depression was at its deepest point. Still, hope loomed for a brighter future. Forty million people found the money and the time to visit "A Century of Progress" on the waterfront just south of Navy Pier in Chicago. There, science aided by industry and government predicted a better tomorrow. Our tomorrow was modeled for all to see. Cars would drive themselves, homes would be transformed, pictures would come through the airwaves into every home, and trains would get you from Denver to Chicago in one day.