OLLI - Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

SPRINGFIELD

Winter/Spring 2020 (January-May)

Programs are held at 2 pm Tuesday afternoons at the Nolin Murray Center, next to St. Mary’s Catholic Church, 40 Pleasant St., Springfield, Vermont 05156

*For weather related schedule changes, check the website www.learn.uvm.edu/olli (Springfield site) and SAPA TV 802-885-6248 Comcast Channels 8 & 10 — VTel Cable Channels 1160 & 1161

January 28 —————————————————————

The Family Farm in the Connecticut Valley: More Decline or a Turning Point?

Steve Taylor, Farmer, Writer, Lifelong Scholar of Rural New England Culture

Family farms in the Connecticut Valley have been under extreme stress for generations, and understand that they have an array of challenges today leading many observers to hold little hope for their future. But others see signs of reversal of fortunes and cite forces that can lead to a brighter prospect for family farmers. Plan to assess the negative and the positive of the current situation.

February 11 —————————————————————

Everything You Need to Know About the Birds and the Bees: Good Plants to Support Them

Henry Homeyer, Garden Writer
Co-Sponsored by Springfield Garden Club

Join ‘Gardening Guy’ Henry Homeyer, author of The Vermont Gardener’s Companion and 3 other books, for a slide show and talk about good plants for supporting birds and pollinators. Hear tips on how to successfully grow attractive flowers that please not only our wildlife, but look good in your garden.

February 25 —————————————————————

Vermont’s Year With No Summer – 1816

Howard Coffin, Author, Historian

Coffin has researched the history of 1816, a year in Vermont very much without a summer. Listen to anecdotes from the 12 months ever after known as “1800 and froze to death.”
Vermont, indeed much of the Northern Hemisphere, struggled against the cold as a volcanic eruption in the Pacific darkened the world. Not knowing the cause, fears of the vengeance of a higher power were rampant. Also hear information on New Hampshire during the cold year.

March 10

“Our Best Endeavors:” Temperance and Prohibition in the Champlain Valley

Susan Evans McClure, Executive Director, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

When you think about “Prohibition,” most people imagine gangsters and bootleggers with tommy guns and fancy cars in the 1920s. To truly understand federal Prohibition in the Champlain Valley, you have to start earlier than the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1919. Vermont actually had statewide prohibition from 1853-1904! Join us to examine how the Champlain Valley went from being a major producer and consumer of alcohol in the early 1800s to a hotbed of temperance sentiment by the mid-19th century. Learn what caused the members of the Westport Sons of Temperance to proclaim in 1853 that they would “use our best endeavors to procure and sustain a stringent prohibitory law”? Ultimately try to understand the tension between regulation and personal freedom that plays out in our society today.

March 24

North Chester: It’s More Than Just the “Stone Village”

Hugh Henry, Architectural Historian

Discover North Chester, an exemplary stagecoach-era village with a split personality. Its early development with wood-framed buildings from the 1780s onward was eclipsed during the later 1830s-1840s by a partial renewal with the distinctive stone buildings that now define its public identity. Learn about the three Clark brothers who were the primary masons – and later the subject of mythical treatment in the popular literature. Despite its valley location, discover how North Chester shared the fate of numerous hill villages in Vermont, and abruptly ceased to expand after being bypassed by the railroad in 1849.

April 7

Gershwin, By George!

Robert Wyatt, Concert Pianist, Music Historian

Although Gershwin’s career covered less than two decades, and ended with his tragic death in 1937, his music endures. Join pianist and Gershwin-authority, Robert Wyatt, co-editor of Oxford University Press’ The George Gershwin Reader, in this lively lecture exploring Gershwin’s life and legacy. Learn about the chronology of the composer’s meteoric life. Hear his 1924 recording of the Rhapsody in Blue and other samples of early and unpublished music. View footage from the Gershwin brothers’ four Hollywood films.

April 21

Bessie’s Story: Watching the Lights Go Out

Tom Farmen, Retired Educator, Author, Outdoor Enthusiast, Dog Lover

Co-Sponsored by the Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society

Hear the inspiring story about a charming, brave, unpretentious chocolate Lab who gradually loses her eyesight. The author chronologically leads the reader from the original diagnosis of terminal blindness for his beloved four-year-old pet through the two-and-a-half year transition to sightlessness. Witness how Bessie unwittingly becomes an expert mentor and teacher for the high-wire act of growing older with grace and optimism.

April 28

Why Vermont Is What America Wants to Be

Chris Graff, Vermont Historian, Journalist and Analyst

Why is it that Vermont leaders touch a nerve with America? Jim Jeffords’ declaration of independence and the presidential campaigns of Howard Dean and Bernie Sanders show that Vermont leaders have an outsized appeal in the country. Hear Chris Graff explain why Vermont is what America wants to be.

May 5

The History and Art of Vintage Buttons

Martha Welch, Retired Educator, Historian, Button Collector and Jewelry Artist

Learn about vintage buttons and button materials through photographs and actual examples from our speaker’s collection. Hear personal stories describing the historical significance of the uses and fashions of buttons. Audience members are encouraged to bring some of their own special vintage buttons for her to examine and discuss.

Thanks to our local benefactor: Barbara Sanderson