

GRAY MATTERS

News of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute | Sonoma State University

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2001 - 2021

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OLLI INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHT: *Pete Elman*

Pete Elman certainly has a following with the OLLI@SSU crowd and thoroughly enjoys teaching at Sonoma State. Pete has worn many hats over the years, including musician, sportswriter, and public school teacher. Pete played music in 49 states – every state except Alaska! A favorite show of his was many years back in Cape Cod, Massachusetts where the venue was having a 50-cent Monday beer night. He remembers a crowd of 250 people and a magical night of rock n' roll.

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Pete has lived in Boston, Georgia, Cape Cod, Santa Cruz, Austin, Texas, and San Francisco. He has lived in Oakland since 1985 and is a faithful A's fan.

Pete commented on the consistency of OLLI students. He said that he loves teaching adults, as they are at an age that understands – and were greatly exposed to – the music he is teaching. Pete mentioned that the challenge with teaching is not so much what he leaves in his material, but what he leaves out, as there is often so much to a single topic.

“You have to take the stuff that is most important and fun. It is better to learn a few things well than a hundred things poorly.”

Pete believes rock 'n roll prepared him for teaching. He explained that a band is like a family, with each member expecting the others to show up and put everything they have out there. He looks at teaching in a similar light, where there is something to share with the audience, and that creates an exchange between teacher and student.

Pete highlighted that he always looks forward to classes at Sonoma State, so much so that he never minded the commute from Oakland. He feels the OLLI community is very engaged, generous, and appreciative.

Check out Pete's books:

Seasons: Rhymes in Time

In the Shadow of Obscurity: Toiling in a Reluctant Society

OLLI STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: *Berni Altman*

Meet Berni Altman, participating in OLLI at 97 years young!

This may be a familiar smile to many of you, as we are so inspired by her dedication to learning in her later years. Berni first came to OLLI in 2010 and has been consistently enjoying classes for the past 11 years! She has found a wonderful community at OLLI and often enjoys lunch with fellow Ambassadors who have become very close friends. Some of Berni's go to restaurants include Simmer, China Village and Art's Place, all located near Sonoma State.

Berni is originally from Brooklyn, New York. Her young adult journey began in the Navy, where she was stationed in Key West and worked in hospitals. Berni and her husband spent sixteen years in Columbus, Ohio before settling on the West Coast. Her daughter paved the way to California and she and her husband moved out here in their early sixties to be closer to their daughter. At this time, Berni landed a position managing a sales office.

Berni went on "The Grand Circle Tour" years back with fellow OLLI folks, where she was roommates with her good friend Joanne. She has traveled to France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Spain. The three weeks in Spain was one of her favorite trips. In her senior years, she worked part time at the Rohnert Park Senior Center, serving with them for eighteen years and retiring at age eighty-six.

Berni stays young at heart by spending time with her good friends and doing Zumba over Zoom twice a week. This spring, Berni will be taking "Volcanic Cataclysms," "Genre Films," "Before the Storm," and "BLM, Racial Justice, and the Black Vernacular." Nicole Myers and Mick Chantler are two of her favorite OLLI Instructors.

Berni, we are inspired by your passion for learning and all the adventures you have had!



OLLI HAPPENINGS

COMING THIS SUMMER: *Around the World in Eight Days with OLLI*

Enjoy a summer of virtual travels around the globe, across the U.S., to art and music destinations around the world, and to the solar system and beyond.

Summer 2021 // Eight Tuesdays // June 22 - August 17, 2021

OLLI À La Carte classes - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Summer course details available in May. Summer Registration opens on June 2, 2021.



JOIN OLLI AT A VIRTUAL GATHERING

Spring OLLI Virtual Coffee Hour Chat:

Tuesday, April 27 at 10:00 a.m. Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Zoom Link to Coffee Hour:

<https://SonomaState.zoom.us/j/83097835837>



Spring OLLI Virtual After Hours Chat:

Thursday, May 13 at 4:00 p.m.

Zoom Link to After Hours available May 7-13

at: <http://olli.sonoma.edu> under "Announcements"

Thursday, April 29 - Sonoma State University Giving Day

SSU Giving Day is a 24-hour online fundraising event when alumni, donors, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends come together to make a difference for Sonoma State.



OLLI will also be a part of the inaugural SSU Giving Day.

Support OLLI by giving \$20 for our 20th year on Thursday, April 29 at

<http://givingday.sonoma.edu>

LIFELONG FRIENDS OF FILM: OPEN TO ALL WHO LOVE MOVIES

By Barbara Spear

Lifelong Friends of Film has recently been holding meetings on Zoom on the last Friday of each month after members independently stream a film of our choosing.

We currently alternate between classic Hollywood films and contemporary movies with a positive message. **Our next meeting will be on Friday, April 30 when we'll discuss *Swing Time* (1936)**, the sixth collaboration of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, perhaps the greatest dancing team in film history. The movie has a phenomenal score by Jerome Kern and Dorothy Fields, including "A Fine Romance" and "Never Gonna Dance," as well as the Oscar-winning best song "The Way You Look Tonight." For more information about our meetings contact Barbara Spear (spearb@sonoma.edu).



SONOMA COUNTY HAPPENINGS

April 25, 2021, 3:00 p.m. – Santa Rosa Symphony

For info: <https://www.srsymphony.org> for upcoming Santa Rosa Symphony events

April 23 – May 2, 2021 – Alexander Valley Film Festival

Alexander Valley Film Festival Celebrates its seventh year during spring 2021, with a virtual format.

For Info: <https://www.avfilmsociety.org/alexander-valley-film-festival/>

April 29-30, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – SSU Virtual Spring Dance

Featuring an evening of dance, experiments, responses, and art for our new hybrid world.

For Info: <https://theatreartsanddance.sonoma.edu/stage/spring-2021/spring-dance>

May 1, 2021, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Makers Market in Sebastopol Plaza

Local makers and purveyors set up on the plaza in downtown Sebastopol.

May 6-9, 2021 – Sonoma State University Senior Project Dance Festival

Join SSU's Department of Theatre Arts & Dance for its newly envisioned Festival for 2021.

Info at: <https://theatreartsanddance.sonoma.edu/stage/spring-2020/senior-projects>

May Concerts and Events – SSU Department of Music

- **May 14 at 7:30 p.m.** – Virtual Jazz Concert: SSU Jazz Orchestra & SSU Women's Jazz Ensemble
- **May 20 at 7:30 p.m.** – Opera Scenes: Project Pauline-Cendrillon and the Magical Life of Pauline Viardot

For Info: <https://music.sonoma.edu/events>

Dig into Nature Events – Center for Environmental Inquiry at SSU

Virtual workshops with artists, scientists, educators, community leaders, and land managers.

For Info: <https://cei.sonoma.edu/calendar>

OLLI ART CLUB NEWS

By Linda Reid

The Art Club had its first meeting since the pandemic began and was honored to have Leslie Brutocao, OLLI Director, in attendance. It was exciting to discuss various art venues that are opening back up. This includes the major museums and the Sonoma County Museum of Art.

Don't miss *Art at the Source* in June, an open studio event sponsored by Sebastopol Center for the Arts. It will include both a virtual and in-gallery exhibit, and, of course, visits to local artists' studios.

The Art Club is planning to celebrate the Judy Chicago Exhibit (SFMOMA) by sponsoring a lecture by our wonderful Heidi Chretien, followed by a field trip.

You can catch all the Art Club's news at [OLLI's Facebook site](#). Notices of events will be emailed to members as we progress towards summer and a post-COVID world.

To join the Art Club, send an email to LindaLReid100@gmail.com





IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Brunner

Tom Brunner passed away on February 6, 2021 at age 92 from COVID-19. Tom was educated in Jersey City public schools, earned a B.S. degree in management from Rutgers University, and an MBA from Michigan State University. Additionally, he taught part-time at University of California Extension and at St. Mary's College.

Tom held such positions as executive vice-president of a small firm, as well as various analytical positions, including industrial engineer and management consultant.

Tom firmly believed that "life is a smorgasbord." He was a fan of telling jokes, current events, sports, jazz, Broadway Musicals, reading, movies, and being involved in life. He was a member of the first class of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Sonoma State University and attended classes there for over 18 consecutive years, deriving much pleasure from the experience. Tom was an inveterate writer of letters to the editor at the *Press Democrat* and hoped he stirred up some controversy among readers. Tom will be greatly missed by his friends at OLLI.

SHARE YOUR STORY!

We want to know more about you, our OLLI members. Share your story: tell us about a unique experience in your life by emailing olli@sonoma.edu.



ARE YOU TECH SAVVY AND GOOD WITH ZOOM?



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