

Community Comment  
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### The OLLI Program

There is an ongoing program of unique and diverse classes being offered in Eureka thru the auspices of Humboldt State University. This is not unusual; Universities offer classes. In fact, that is what they do. What is unusual is that this program is offered to those fifty and older, or better as they say. The classes offered are taught by many former faculty members from the University as well as people in our area that have developed an interest in a specific subject and would like to share their interest.

This program is known as the OLLI courses; short for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. It's grant funded and, as far as I can tell, has no agenda except to offer classes of interest by those willing to teach them. Prices vary but are generally a bargain.

The range of topics covered is impressive. Going thru this semester's catalog you will find classes in science, the arts, writing, history, natural resources, crafts, and community issues. They also offer talks of about an hour in length that feature a history of Humboldt State, Conversations on Creative Living, Highlights on Humboldt State, and Creating Community Assets. These are a brown bag lunch session and offered on Wednesday at noon at the Aquatics Center and they are free.

I mention this because of all the benefits we all receive from having a very good University in our area, this type of community service for this growing number of people over fifty is incredibly valuable. A program like this not only offers interesting topics for people to learn about, more importantly, they offer an easy and fun way to keep the mind sharp. We learn more every day how important this is for this age group.

My wife has been teaching classes of interest to her for a few years now. Her topics include memoir writing, forgiveness, and aging. These are topics she has spent a lot of time researching and thinking about and is quite good at sharing her knowledge. Even though I taught for over a decade, so far I haven't been interested in teaching a course. I was asked and this week was a presenter for one of the brown bag lunch series on Creative Aging and Living Life Beyond 50. To prepare for this it seems that most people want to know how you came to be the person you are and what the future looks like for you. I chose to tell my simplified life story trying to pinpoint certain events and relationships that seemed to be important in how my life has gone so far.

I would recommend this as an exercise to any of you, especially if you have children or grandchildren. To clearly identify people and events that were meaningful to you takes some introspection. It was a good exercise for me and one which I may not have given much thought to had it not been for this opportunity. Maybe I can pass that along to someone else if I recognize an opportunity in someone else's life.

Humboldt State brings many benefits to the North Coast. The OLLI program is a gem of an opportunity that is just for the older generation. Take a look at a catalog. You just might find a class that lights up your life in some significant way.

This has been Sam pennisi for community comment.