



THE ORICL ORACLE

November 2018

A Biennial Newsletter of the Oak Ridge
Institute for Continued Learning

ORICL Instructor and Volunteer of the Year Awards Announced

The ORICL Board recently announced the winners of the Instructor and Volunteer of the Year Awards. Bob Olson was named the Volunteer of the Year and, in an unusual outcome, the Instructor of the Year was awarded to not one individual but a pair of committed teachers, Carolyn and Larry Dipboye.

Bob joined ORICL before the Roane State building was completed, and has been an active member ever since. He chairs the Science Curriculum committee, and advises the committee on potential philosophy curriculum. He served on the ORICL board six years, two as president, and has been the moderator of the Gene Hise Philosophical Society since the founder, Gene Hise, died.



From left, Volunteer of the Year Bob Olson and Instructors of the Year Carolyn and Larry Dipboye.

The Dipboyes have collectively enlightened ORICL members on the topic of religion for more than 15 years. Larry began teaching for ORICL in the fall of 2002 with a course he prepared on “20th Century Protestant Theology.” Since then, he has taught classes every year, mostly in the fall and spring. Carolyn taught her first class with Larry in the fall of 2003, focusing on a recently released book “When Religion Turns Evil” by Charles Kimble. The following fall, she taught “An Introduction to Christian Ethics,” and has taught one or two classes most years since then. Since their first joint effort in 2003, the Dipboyes have teamed up to teach classes such as “Separation of Church and State,” and “Human Sexuality.”

All three award winners bring outstanding credentials to ORICL. Bob holds a BS in Nuclear Engineering and MS in Physics from North Carolina State University. After working at Savannah River Laboratory five years, he was lured to UTK, where he earned a PhD in Nuclear Engineering. He then worked for an Architect/Engineering firm in Chicago for ten years, where he learned probabilistic risk assessment and reliability technology. He came to Oak Ridge with SAIC for five years before returning to Savannah River. He retired early when it was offered, and returned to Oak Ridge.

Carolyn holds a BA from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, and an MDiv and PhD in Christian ethics from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. She served as an adjunct professor of courses in ethics and religion at Southern Seminary and Bellarmine College in Louisville and later at Carson-Newman and Tennessee Wesleyan colleges. She has served on the ORICL Curriculum Committee for a number of years and is the co-chair of Women’s Interfaith Dialogue of Oak Ridge.

Larry holds a B.A. from Baylor University and three seminary degrees, including a PhD from Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, where he also served as adjunct professor of theology while pastor of a Louisville church. From 1984-1988 he served on the ecumenical panel for the Louisville weekly television and radio show “The Moral Side of the News” produced by WHAS-TV. He has served on the ORAU /ORNL Oak Ridge Site-Wide Institutional Review Board for human subject research since 1995. Since 1962, Larry has been pastor of six churches in four states. The Dipboyes are currently pastors of Grace Covenant Church.

The ORICL Board solicits nominations for the awards and convenes an ad hoc committee to make selections. The awards will be conferred at the next Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on December 5.

Ijams Naturalist Kicks Off ORICL's 21st Fall Term

ORICL celebrated the kick-off of its 2018 fall term with a lecture by noted writer and humorist Stephen Lyn Bales. Bales who is the Senior Naturalist at Ijams Nature Center in Knoxville entertained an audience of over 100 people on August 23, 2018 in the City Room at Roane State Community College in Oak Ridge with tales of his experiences involving flora and fauna and anecdotes taken primarily from his newest book, *Ephemeral by Nature*.

An artist, local natural historian, “gonzo” naturalist, as well as a consummate story teller, Bales is able to educate his audience in an entertaining way. During his presentation, he shared stories of several of the ephemeral or “short-lived” wonders of our East Tennessee environs. The audience learned about some fascinating phenomena involving red pandas, freshwater jellyfish, ruby throated hummingbirds, pine beetles, Carolina parakeets, 17-year cicadas, and ivory billed woodpeckers.

In addition to *Ephemeral by Nature*, Bales is also the author of *Natural Histories: Stories from the Tennessee Valley*, and *Ghost Birds: Jim Tanner and the Quest for the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, 1935-1941*, all published by UT Press. He has written for *Smithsonian* magazine and is a regular contributor to *The Tennessee Conservationist* magazine. In addition, he is the author of 3 blogs: [nature calling](#), [Ghost Birds](#), and [Ijams Journal](#). Submitted by Katherine Smith



John Byrd enthralls ORICL members with live subjects in his Amphibians and Reptiles class offered in the 2018 Winter/Spring term. Photo by Lee Smalley

ORNL Researcher Shares the World of Nanotechnology

To celebrate National Nanotechnology Day, ORICL joined with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) to sponsor a lecture by ORNL researcher Dr. Hans Christen. Christen presented his lecture, “One Atom at a Time: The Ultimate Frontier of Nanotechnology,” at Roane State on October 9 -- the date now recognized as Nanotechnology Day because its numerical form 10-9 suggests the nanoscale of 10⁻⁹.



Dr. Hans Christen of ORNL takes a question from ORICL member Herb Krause.

Nanoscience, Christen explained, is the attempt to understand how things work when they’re small. To put “small” into the “nano” perspective, Christen compared the level of magnification to looking at an earth the size of a golf ball and being able to see people in their cars.

While nanotechnology has created many products that have enriched our daily lives, the ultimate goal, Christen said, is to develop quantum computers that will be able to solve complex problems much more quickly than traditional computers. The development of these computers depends largely on our ability to move atoms one at a time to where we want them. Christen explained several advancements that have been made toward achieving that goal.

To Pique Your Interest

A sampling of the courses offered for the upcoming Winter/Spring Term (registration opens December 11):

- Beginning Watercolors
- Pilates for Back Care
- The Osborne Brothers: Beyond Rocky Top
- Chinese Language, History and Culture
- Introduction to Short Story Writing
- History of Zionism
- American Slavery: The Moral Blight on Christianity
- Great Women Leaders
- The Siege of Knoxville and the Battle of Fort Sanders
- What Can We Know and How?

Spotlight on ORICL Volunteer Larry Dresner

Larry Dresner, retired from ORNL's Fusion Energy Division, began teaching for ORICL in 2004 and has continued with one eight-hour course each year since. With a PhD in physics and a keen interest in mathematics, Larry has been generous in sharing his expertise with ORICL. Among the courses he has taught are "Math Olympiad Problems" (many times; different problems each time), "Snapshots From the History of Mathematics," "Topology," "Dimensional Analysis," "Cryptography," and "Quantum Mechanics." Here are his thoughts on being an ORICL instructor.



Instructor Larry Dresner and his ORICL class members ponder a challenging problem.

Q. Why do you volunteer for ORICL and what is your philosophy of volunteerism?

A. My volunteering is driven by my love for mathematics (it was my work at ORNL). I love doing mathematics, reading about it, thinking about it, and talking about it. Teaching gives me a chance to come in contact with people who like these same things. Much the same group of people turns out each year to participate in my courses. Furthermore, if I am going to enjoy taking courses that other people prepare, I ought to "pay for my supper," so to speak, by preparing and giving courses of my own.

Q. What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you while volunteering for ORICL?

A. The funniest thing that ever happened was in a Math Olympiad course when I introduced the so-called Monte Hall Problem. This problem appeared on Saturday Night Live, I think: A contestant stands before three doors. Behind two are goats, behind the third, a sports car. The contestant does not know which door is which, but he must choose one. The master-of-ceremonies, who does know what lies behind each door, then opens a door, behind which is a goat. The contestant now has a chance to switch his choice of door. Should he switch or not? The participants then began to debate the issue. Voices got raised, the blackboard got filled with chalk marks, and a good time was had by all. By the way, it really is better to switch.

Q. What is the hardest thing about volunteering for ORICL? The easiest?

A. The hardest thing about teaching is the lengthy preparation I feel it necessary to make before I stand in front of a blackboard. I always prepared a typed document of the course content, usually 25 to 40 pages long, which helped me organize the presentation of the course material. I always distributed it to the participants. This preparation was hard, but it really was a labor of love, and it gave my life in retirement some order and purpose. The easiest thing about teaching the Math Olympiad problems to my ORICL participants came in answer to a question one of them asked me in the first such class, namely, was there any restriction on the methods one could use. Nope," I said, "in this class, anything goes." "Anything goes" has been our motto ever since and has led to some amusing and quite creative methods of solution.

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ORICL is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization in partnership with Roane State Community College.

ORICL Trip Focuses on the Heritage of Upper East Tennessee

Twenty-three ORICL members spent a full day exploring the heritage of upper East Tennessee in late August. The first stop was at East Tennessee State University to visit the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, which includes the Archives of Appalachia and the Reece Museum.

At the Reece Museum, Curator Randall Sanders provided background to the special exhibit "Self-Taught Art by Any of Its Names" which was composed of the work of artists who had not attended art school.

Archivist Laura Smith took the group through the Archives of Appalachia explaining the collection parameters and preservation process. The group was able to enter the climate-controlled vault to view that space to discuss and touch the samples of 19th century photography.

In Jonesborough, the group attended the International Storytelling Center's "Storytelling Live" featuring David Holt. His performance featured music on banjo, spoons, and guitar, along with his tale.

Afterward, a guide from the Heritage Alliance took the group inside the Chester Inn to view an upstairs room furnished with vintage pieces as would have been used in the heyday of the hotel.

Submitted by Becky Rushton



A Heritage guide takes ORICL members on a tour of historic Jonesborough. *Photo by Becky Rushton*

Watch for these exciting trips offered during the Winter/Spring Term: Intro to the New American Museum of Science and Energy; tours of the Manufacturing Demonstration Facility; Historic Rugby; and Sgt. Alvin C. York State Park/HIGHLAND MANOR Winery; and two different trips exploring the Civil War battles that occurred in East Tennessee.

ORICL CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER 2018 THROUGH APRIL 2019

Nov 21-23	Thanksgiving Holidays – ORICL Closed
Nov 30	Fall Classes End
Dec 4	Winter /Spring Catalog Mailing
Dec 5	Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon
Dec 11	Online Registration Opens for Winter/Spring
Dec 15-Jan 1	Holidays – RSCC and ORICL Closed
Jan 16	1 st Curriculum Summer Committee Meeting
Jan 21	Holiday – RSCC and ORICL Closed
Jan 22-23	Winter/Spring Schedule Pick-up
Jan 29	Instructor/Class Assistant Meeting
Feb 4	Winter-Spring Classes Begin
Mar 4-8	Spring Break, No ORICL Evening Classes
April 16	Summer Catalog Mailing
April 19	Holiday – RSCC and ORICL Closed
April 23	Online Registration Opens for Summer
April 24	1 st Meeting Fall Curriculum Committee
April 26	Winter/Spring Classes End

Treasurer's Report

ORICL is non-profit and tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 Internal Revenue Code with a fiscal year beginning August 1 and ending July 31. ORICL's financial position continues to be very good with a total equity of more than \$200,000.

Membership dues have not changed for several years. For income, ORICL depends mainly on membership dues, investments, and contributions. Major expenses are compensation for two part-time Roane State Community College (RSCC) employees; catalog printing, copying, and mailing costs; registration expenses; and the volunteer luncheons.

RSCC provides class and office space, utilities, parking, and security at no cost to ORICL. Numerous instructors and others volunteer their services.

ORICL recently purchased 50 new chairs for room F-110. In the spirit of maintaining a good partnership, ORICL also contributed to the RSCC-sponsored sidewalk chalk art event which benefits the Roane State Foundation. *Submitted by Trygve Myhre*