



APRIL 2025

THE ORACLE

A Biannual Newsletter of the
Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning



Our American Roots

Part 3 - Season 3

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Historic Grove Theatre in Oak Ridge
123 Randolph Road

6:00 p.m. : Reception with light refreshments

7:00 p.m. : Program

FREE TO THE PUBLIC, NO RESERVED SEATING

The "Our American Roots" series is produced by
ORICL in partnership with the Oak Ridge Breakfast
Rotary Club.

Roots and Rhythm: An American Dance Journey

FEATURING:

The West African Dance Team from Vine
Middle School (Knox County)

KPDA, a Korean Pop Dance Team from the
University of Tennessee

Bharatanatyam Dancer, Ramya S. Kapadia

The event is made possible by grants from
Rotary District 6780 and CNS, LLC. Periodic
Tables of Oak Ridge, Altrusa International of
Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Inc. and Graphic
Creations are sponsors.

Message from the President

Several ORICL members have recently expressed concern about the future of ORICL and what its leadership is doing to promote ORICL and increase membership. Prior to the pandemic, total membership (cumulative for all three semesters) was in the low 500s, peaking at 558 for the summer of 2019. Since then, total membership was as follows.

2020: 493
2021: 356
2022: 363
2023: 376
2024: 378
2025: 377 (as of 4/17/25)

ORICL membership has marginally (but steadily) increased since its post-pandemic low in spite of losing around 20 members per year due to death and relocation.

ORICL leadership has increased efforts to promote ORICL to people living outside of Oak Ridge, or considering moving to the area. These efforts include:

- Membership Promotion Reception at RSCC, 1/14/25;
- Presentations and literature drops at area Senior Centers (West Knox Co., Karns, Anderson Co., Oak Ridge);
- Articles in the Oak Ridger (by Carolyn Krauss);
- Literature drops at Oak Ridge Public Library, Oak Ridge Art Center, Oak Ridge Senior Center, K-25 Employees Reunion
- Catalogs included in ORNL's retiree packages;
- Partnering with Oak Ridge Breakfast Rotary Club to produce Our American Roots series of presentations and performances;
- Inclusion on visitor and relocation websites (adventureanderson.com, ExploreOakRidge.com, ThePreserveAtOakRidge.com, themainstreetlofts.com, visitknoxville.com);
- Inclusion in area events (WUOT Community Calendar, Cars for Canines, Atomic Fall Festival).

Additional efforts being considered include:

- Enhancing our presence on social media (facebook, etc.) where it makes sense, and if we find a volunteer to do this;
- Presentation/interview on bbbtv12.com;
- Marketing to other area retirement communities

Attracting new members is only part of the equation; retention is the other. The breadth and quality of our courses and instructors are key to the success of the program and member retention. Nearly 20 volunteers serve on our Curriculum Committee and produce three catalogs per year—each with 60+ unique courses and excursions.

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Over 100 instructors, (with impressive credentials and experience), prepare and conduct the high quality courses we have come to expect. These remarkable volunteers are unsung heroes.

Another important contributor to retention is ensuring that ORICL classes are welcoming and enjoyable for all, and that ORICL maintains an unbiased reputation in the community. To address this, the board recently adopted the following Positive Image Policy.

ORICL shall endeavor to promote and maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment in the classroom, and a positive image in the community. To achieve this goal:

- 1) instructors shall be advised against overt promotion of products or services to ORICL members;*
- 2) instructors shall be advised to be sensitive to the diversity of students' backgrounds and perspectives during the preparation and conduct of their class(s); and,*
- 3) ORICL shall be mindful of potential negative impacts on public image when considering partnering with or supporting other groups and events, and whether such agreements/endorsements promote ORICL's mission and reputation.*

I hope this message shows how important membership growth is to the ORICL leadership, and what we are doing about it. If you have other suggestions to promote ORICL, or increase membership or retention, we would like to hear them. Please email them to oricl@roanestate.edu.

ORICL Board Members

Pat Bryan, President
 Jim Palmer, Vice President
 Lois McKeever, Treasurer
 Becky Rushton,
 Curriculum Committee Chair
 Nancy Burwell
 Betty Anne Domm
 Benito Gonzalez
 Judi Gray
 Jim Knox
 Carolyn Krause
 Ruby Miller
 Jackie Rylander

STAFF

Susan Perry, Office Administrator and Secretary to the Board
 Melanie Neal, Assistant Office Administrator

ORICL Office

Room F-111 - Roane State Community College
 701 Briarcliff Avenue
 Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Hours: M-Th, 9 am-Noon
 Closed Fridays

Phone: (865) 481-8222

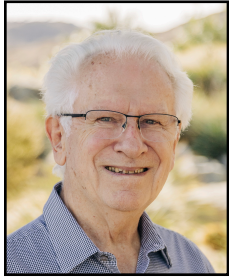
Website:

www.roanestate.edu/oricl

Facebook: @ORICLRSCC

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

Tuesday, April 15	Registration for summer term opens
Monday, May 26	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Monday, June 2	Summer classes begin
Thursday, June 5	Deadline for fall class submissions
Thursday, June 19	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Friday, July 4	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Friday, August 1	Summer classes end
Tuesday, August 5	Registration for fall term opens
Monday, September 1	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Monday, September 8	Fall classes begin
Thursday, October 2	Deadline for winter/spring class submissions



Jim Palmer - ORICL Vice President

Jim Palmer has been elected as Vice President of ORICL. Jim is a retired U.S. Patent Agent, and he has been a member of the ORICL Board of Directors since Nov. 2020. As a member of the Board, he has been instrumental in promoting diversity in the organization, and along with Board Member Ruby Miller he has co-chaired the Our American Roots project since its inception three years ago. In addition to his role in ORICL, he chairs the Roane County Industrial Development Board and is a Board Member of the Oak Ridge Housing Authority. He is also an active member of the Oak Ridge Breakfast Rotary Club where he co-founded and continues as a leader of “Career Pathways,” which provides mentoring and part-time jobs to help boost the achievement of Oak Ridge High School students facing academic and personal challenges.

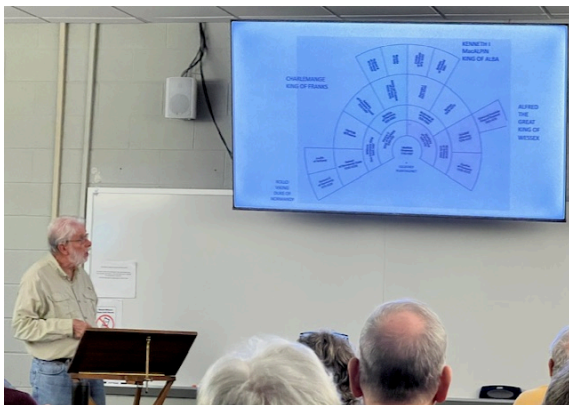
Betty Anne Domm - ORICL Board Member

I owe my membership in ORICL to the persistence of Becky Rushton, who never gave up on encouraging me to become an ORICL member. The first few times she gave me a catalog, I had conflicts with the classes I most wanted to take, so I never signed up. I retired as a full-time school counselor in the Knox County Schools in 2012. However, for several years I was asked to come back and work part-time - thus the ongoing conflicts with ORICL classes. Eventually, I said “no” to continuing to work and “yes” to ORICL. It has been a good trade. I immediately found many classes that were interesting. Becky encouraged me to get even more involved. I have been a member of the curriculum committee for several years. This in turn led to me serving on the ORICL Board. Someone asked me recently about my favorite classes. That’s a hard question because I have wide-ranging interests. The best classes are whatever I am currently taking. Having majored in history in college, history classes remain a primary interest. Additionally, classes on travel, music, religion, self-help, and genealogy are also notable. My brain challenge is Cryptic Crosswords!



ORICL has a very impressive spectrum of class offerings. As a board member, I want to help the organization attract people who need extra encouragement to attend these classes. I am seeking strategies to reach a broader audience to share the exceptional lifelong learning opportunities available in Oak Ridge.

My husband and I moved to Oak Ridge in 1972. I grew up in South Carolina, Virginia and Georgia with brief stays in Alabama and Maryland. Prior to moving here, I had never lived anywhere longer than seven years. Oak Ridge was a wonderful place to put down roots and raise my two children. In addition to ORICL, I am involved in Altrusa, PEO, Community Mediation Services, and my church as well as two book clubs and Silver Sneakers (for my health.) I love traveling, hiking, reading, playing bridge, and researching genealogy.



A special note of thanks to Mayme Crowell, who has volunteered to organize and consolidate ORICL's history information files. "The eventual final product will be a notebook 'History of ORICL.'"

About her experience with ORICL, she says, "In 1997 I attended the initial 'interested in an adult learning' event at RSCC on the Turnpike. After retiring from ORAU in 1998, I began taking ORICL classes. I have served on the ORICL board and in 2007 was ORICL President responsible for organizing the Ten Year Celebration. Over time I have taken numerous classes in history, music, and religion as well as enjoying several trips. ORICL is a valuable Oak

Ridge asset."

From RSCC -- April 21: An Evening with Pinchas Gutter, Holocaust Survivor

We are planning a virtual event in honor of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, on April 21. Please join us at 7 p.m. ET via Zoom to hear guest speaker Pinchas Gutter share his experience surviving the Warsaw Ghetto, multiple concentration camps, and a forced death march. This special presentation is a partnership with the Tennessee Holocaust Commission and Mississippi State. Attendees must register at tnholcom.org to receive a link to the event.

From RSCC -- April 24: Arts & Lectures presents local author Linda Holmes (ORICL member)

On behalf of the Arts and Lectures Committee at Roane State, please join us April 24 in the Oak Ridge Campus City Room (A-111) for a lecture and reading by local author and Oak Ridge resident Linda Culp Holmes as she discusses her most recent book *If I Am So Lucky: A Portrait of a Man in Perilous Times, 1862-1865*. Based on the letters and diaries of Corporal Nathan Allen, Company K, 142nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Army of the Potomac, written during his 29 months serving in the Union Army, Holmes has not only mined his surviving 52 letters and two diaries for information about his life, circumstances, and experiences during the Civil War, but has taken a thematic approach to her research, interpreting who Allen was not only as a soldier, but more importantly as a person. The lecture starts at 6 p.m. ET, and there will be baked goods onsite for attendees while supplies last. Admission is free to the public.

Brain Food! – Thank you for the donations for the RSCC food pantry – Items needed are snacks (protein bars, peanut butter crackers), shelf-stable drinks (juice or non-dairy); kitchen basics (spices, oils, jam, condiments); and toiletries (soap, shampoo, lotion, tissues, deodorant, toothbrushes, floss, diapers, etc.). Donations may be dropped off at the front desk in the Coffey-McNally building (just inside the entrance nearest the flagpole) or contact Mariella Akers at AkersM@roanestate.edu.