A New Life Far from Home

By Na’ama Ansell

Arrests, blockades, curfews, killings, university closings. That was 1986 when Sergio Aguilar, a first year university student in San Salvador, decided to leave the country and seek asylum in the United States. His country’s civil war made life so perilous that his mother, fearful that he would be conscripted into the ruling regime’s army, urged him to leave as soon as possible. Now, the genial, smiling man who greets you in the BOLLI gathering space or on the elevator is an American citizen who has been working at Brandeis since 1995.

Sergio was an illegal immigrant when he landed in Boston. His girlfriend was already here, and they were married shortly after his arrival, which allowed him to stay in the country. He worked a number of odd jobs until he landed a position at Polaroid, but it was only part-time and he was looking for full-time work. In 1995, a friend told him about an opening at Brandeis. He was interviewed and got a full-time job as chief custodian for three Brandeis buildings, one of which is the building in which BOLLI is housed.

This past Christmas, Sergio went back to El Salvador to visit his 88-year-old mother. While his younger brother lives nearby in Hudson, his older brother, who is a dermatologist, still lives in El Salvador along with a number of his cousins. Because so many young people fled El Salvador, Sergio has many friends scattered all over the United States and abroad.

Before Sergio revisited San Salvador, he contacted some of his far-flung friends, asking if any would like to meet at a favorite restaurant in San Salvador. Friends turned up from Florida, Tennessee, and Utah. They were joined by his brother and his brother’s friends, combining to fill a dinner table with ten people spanning four generations. Sergio calls it a “real brotherhood.”

When he lived in El Salvador, Sergio belonged to a closely knit community where people were known mostly by their nicknames. While our American San Salvadoran neighborhood all of the buildings are identified by letters of the alphabet. He and his family lived in building “J,” a letter he identified with so closely that he and his wife, Yolanda, have named their three daughters Jessica, Jennifer, and Jamie.

If you don’t see Sergio frequently, it’s because his day begins at 5 a.m. and ends at 1:30 p.m., just in time to pick up his children at school. But should you run into him, he’ll be delighted to help you brush up your Spanish or tell you stories about his family and his 88-year-old mother, still living in San Salvador.
By Jack Curley

On March 7, a panel of experts gathered at the Goldfarb Library to discuss “Citizenship and the Economy: Labor, Inequality and Bigness.” This event, one in a series commemorating the 100th anniversary of the appointment of Louis D. Brandeis to the U.S. Supreme Court, was moderated by Daniel Terris, director of the Brandeis International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life.

Has Louis Brandeis’s “hour come round at last,” with his legacy capable of serving as a “bipartisan vision for our polarized age”? This was but one of many questions discussed regarding Justice Brandeis’s legal opinions, vision, and legacy. Lauded by one speaker as the “Jewish Jefferson,” Brandeis was a foe of both big business and big government, though panelists agreed that he was a “cautious legislator” who preferred decentralized solutions to those requiring formation of large regulatory agencies.

Justice Brandeis took on the American banking system in his book, Other People’s Money and How the Bankers Use It, the primary target of which was his avowed enemy, banker J. P. Morgan (whose namesake institution is now the largest bank in the United States). Panelists cited the Citizens United decision and climate change as contemporary issues on which Brandeis might have focused, since his belief in “the curse of bigness” would certainly have called his attention to the activities of both fossil fuel companies and corporate political donors.

For Brandeis 100 event information, visit http://www.brandeis.edu/ldb-100/community-events.html

Welcome, New Members

We welcome 44 new members from 19 communities to our spring term total BOLLI membership of 353.

Andover: Irv Heifetz  
Arlington: Elizabeth Dickinson, Daniel Leclerc, Linnea Olsson, Diane Winkelman  
Bedford: Bill Schoendorff  
Boston: Jill Shulman, Susan Yohalem  
Brookline: Jan Hilley  
Chestnut Hill: Judith Server, Phyllis and Bob Shulman, Sheila Vernick, Phyllis and Richard Wilker  
Framingham: Diane and Mel Markowitz  
Lexington: Paul Dratch, Sheila Landsman, Debbie Seaward  
Marlborough: Larry Dohan  
Melrose: Susan Hollingshead  
Methuen: Bernice Wolk  
Milford: Anne McNevin  
Natick: Dan Tarsy  
Needham: Carol Denker, Estherann Grace, Norm Rosin, Irene Spector  
Newton: Howard Barnstone, Vince Canzoneri, Arthur Gerstenfeld, Marty Kafka, Van Lanckton, Bonnie Westfall  
North Grafton: Lydia Bogar  
Waltham: Barbara Jordan, Clara Sandler, Kate Seideman  
Wellesley: Judy Inker, Peter Marx  
Weston: Amy Gerson, Karen Novakoff, Larry Roth

The BOLLI BANNER is published by The Banner Committee: Phil Radoff, Managing Editor/Articles Co-Editor  
Nancy Alimansky, Archivist  
Na’ama Ansell, Secretary  
Sam Ansell, Cartoonist  
Jack Curley, Articles Co-Editor  
Sue Wurster, Production Editor

BANNER ARCHIVE: www.brandeis.edu/bolli/publications/banner/index.html

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Hidden Treasure at the Goldfarb Library

by Sue Wurster

During a recent session of Nancy Alimansky’s art course, she mentioned that Brandeis has one of the world’s largest collections of lithographs by Honoré Daumier (over 4,000 items, in fact). An hour later, during his Lunch and Learn talk, Professor Jonathan Sarna showed a slide of Solomon Nunes Carvalho’s painting of Abraham Lincoln. Also housed in Brandeis’s collection, it is the only known portrait of Lincoln by a Jewish artist. These are just two of the gems that can be unearthed at Brandeis’s Goldfarb Library. Other hidden treasures include the following:

**The Carl Van Vechten Photograph Collection**—Van Vechten, described in *The New Yorker* as “a hipster and literary gadabout” from the deep Midwest, was the music and dance critic for *The New York Times* as well as a novelist. He turned to photography in 1932, and this collection features 1,689 of his black and white portraits of artists, musicians, dancers, writers, and other notables. Included are such luminaries as Truman Capote, Isadora Duncan, and Gertrude Stein as well as a stunning host of figures from the Harlem Renaissance. Especially compelling are a number of images of Langston Hughes, who was Van Vechten’s close friend for over 40 years.

**The World War I and II Propaganda Posters Collection**—Nearly one hundred posters in the library’s holdings reflect themes such as “Depictions of Women,” “Enlist or Invest,” “The Homefront,” “Save Food,” “Win the War,” and “Demonizing the Enemy.” Produced by a number of different government agencies, these fragile items provide a striking look at the fears of a nation during wartime.

**The Dime Novel Collection**—The collection features “wily detectives and sharpshooting ladies! Marvelous inventions and athletic glory! Daring outlaws and heroic rescues!” One of the most extensive collections of sensational popular literature in the United States from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Brandeis’s holdings include *Beadle’s Dime Novel, New York Detective Library, Nick Carter Weekly*, and over 900 more.

**The Joseph Heller Collection**—This collection includes manuscripts of the author’s novels, television and screen plays, correspondence, and reviews, but the centerpiece is its set of yellow legal pads bearing the author’s handwritten working manuscript of *Catch-22*.

**The Shakespeare Collection**—Perhaps the greatest hidden treasure of all is the Brandeis Bibliophiles Collection which includes a First Folio edition of the Bard’s works from 1623, of which fewer than 240 copies are known to exist in the world today. The entire collection, according to the library’s website, also includes a Second and two Fourth Folios, 74 copies of single plays, 119 editions of “complete works” (several of which were edited by Alexander Pope), 13 works of poetry, and multiple critical, analytical, descriptive, and illustrative pieces. It is truly a Shakespearean treasure trove.

The University Archives and Special Collections division of the Goldfarb Library also includes the Gorham Collection of Early Music Imprints from 1501 to 1650; the Civil War letters of Michael Lally, an Irish immigrant to Massachusetts who fought for the Union army; and the trial materials in the case of Leo Frank, who was wrongly convicted of murder in 1913 and killed by an angry mob, the only Jew lynched in America for over 70 years.

It is possible to access these remarkable collections (and more) by calling 781-736-4622 to arrange an appointment. The University Archives and Special Collections can be found on Level 2 (one floor down from the main level) of the Goldfarb Library building.
Winter Seminar and Lecture Series

Lear Redux
by Phil Radoff

Brandeis Professor of English Billy Flesch is a favorite among students of all ages. In fact, he was chosen as one of “Four Great College Professors” profiled in a 2009 Newsweek article.

Is it possible that Lear went to his death believing that his beloved daughter, Cordelia, was alive? With that intriguing--and unanswerable--question, Brandeis professor of English Billy Flesch concluded a reprise of his King Lear seminar, first presented to a BOLLI group during a mid-winter intersession 10 years ago.

Many of the 30-odd BOLLI members who attended this seminar were at least somewhat familiar with Shakespeare’s consummate tragedy, but Billy revealed subtleties that most of us had not previously considered. We were aware of the parallels between the subplot of Gloucester and his two sons--one good, one evil--and the principal plot of Lear and his three daughters--one good, two evil. What Billy pointed out, however, was the playwright’s skill in alternating scenes between plot and subplot, so that the unfolding of the tragic events and the cruelty of the villains in each enhanced those in the other. Billy also illustrated Shakespeare’s supreme craftsmanship by showing how the sequence of scenes leading up to Lear’s dramatic rage against the storm in Act 3 was paralleled in many cases by corresponding scenes in the remainder of the play.

We came to appreciate how difficult a task Shakespeare had set himself--and how well he executed it--by beginning the play at what would seem to be its finale: an old king’s foolish decision to give away his possessions and relinquish his power “while we unburdened crawl toward death.”

We watched Lear grow and transform from a self-absorbed, thoroughly unsympathetic ruler, cruelly rejecting his only honorable daughter, to a tragic, sympathetic, and even ennobled figure in the end.

Drawing frequently on his broad knowledge of a diversity of subjects--film, Freudian psychiatry, poetry--Billy Flesch once again brought Shakespeare to life at BOLLI as he has done on so many occasions in the past.

BILLY’S NEXT OFFERING?
In February, Dr. Craig Bruce Smith took us on a four-part journey back in time to explore Abigail and John Adams: A Revolutionary Marriage. Craig gave two reasons for his title choice. First, the marriage took place during the American Revolution; second, unlike typical colonial marriages, theirs was a true partnership. Adams valued his wife’s opinions and sought her advice in both domestic and political matters. She was his unofficial advisor.

During the turmoil leading up to the Declaration of Independence, Abigail was a dutiful wife who was pregnant every two years. Like their fellow Americans, John and Abigail had to deal with the rigors of new taxes and boycotts. The Boston Massacre in 1770 had a major impact on Adams’s career. He agreed to defend the British soldiers accused of killing five colonists and won acquittal by successfully arguing that the Brits had acted in self-defense. Adams was admired as a man of honor who defended legal principles in an unpopular and high-profile case.

Adams took a more active role in politics as the Revolution moved forward. He joined the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and left Abigail in Braintree with the children. This began years of separation that are chronicled in more than 1200 letters that the two exchanged. Abigail had to function as a single parent but rarely complained. Indeed, Craig emphasized her heroic qualities. During a smallpox epidemic, she struggled with whether to have her children inoculated, knowing that the vaccine could prove fatal. She finally decided to make the dangerous trip to Boston (often under attack) for the procedure. Her courageous decision almost certainly saved her family.

John and Abigail were finally reunited when Adams was elected President. He proved to be very unpopular and served only one term. When Abigail became desperately ill in 1799, John actually moved the presidency from Washington to Quincy, saying, “Now is the time to take care of Abigail.” Perhaps he felt remorse for the many years he had been away from home. Abigail recovered and lived another 19 years until 1818. Adams died eight years after her death on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Dr. Smith concluded the seminar by discussing why Adams is not revered for his contributions in comparison to his fellow patriots, Washington and Jefferson. Some of the reasons Craig offered were Adams’s imperious manner, the scheming of Jefferson and Hamilton, the disappearance of the Federalist party, and the fact that the press downplayed Adams’s role in the Revolution. It is an interesting question to ponder.

At the end of the seminar, Craig announced that he will be leaving Brandeis in June to take a position at another institution. He will be missed.
The Membership Committee has undergone an exciting evolution over the past year as we change to fit BOLLI’s current needs. The committee is now working to create opportunities for both long-standing and new members to get to know one another beyond the classrooms. Our goals are reflected in our mission statement: “to create educational community at BOLLI with special attention to the integration of new and returning members into the many facets of BOLLI life.”

One of our first actions was to recruit new members to the committee while encouraging our long-standing members to remain, thus creating a vibrant mix of participants. We now have a total of six new and seven continuing members.

Our expanded committee is now taking advantage of BOLLI’s new four-day schedule to introduce new programs to engage BOLLI members. In almost every week during the spring term, we have reserved one lunch period for alternative programming. The day of the week on which this occurs will vary, so that members can enjoy both traditional Lunch and Learn presentations and some of the innovative Membership Committee programming on the day(s) they attend classes. The BOLLI website includes the week-by-week lunch program schedule under the heading “Lunchtime Presentations” and lists both Lunch and Learn speakers and some new program titles and descriptions. The Membership Committee is now sponsoring three new types of lunchtime programming:

**A TASTE OF BOLLI** programs highlight Special Interest Groups. Some SIGs have chosen to hold open meetings with all SIG members present, while others have opted to demonstrate the way their meetings are conducted. Still other SIGs have elected to invite guest panels or individuals to lead discussions related to their groups’ interests.

These programs provide members with a chance to learn more about some of BOLLI’S SIGs and perhaps decide to join.

“**CHAT & CHEW**” events are opportunities for the members of regularly scheduled second period classes to eat lunch together in their classrooms. There, they might choose to continue their class discussion or to get to know one another better. The Membership Committee provides “BOLLI Revealed” information sessions following these lunches to answer questions about our program as a whole.

**CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS** include both familiar and new events. On March 14 we hosted NPR’s popular “Says You” game show. Later in the term, we will hold a party to celebrate the publication of the new edition of *The BOLLI Journal*, present a live Brandeis radio show hosted by two BOLLI members, and present the popular year-end performance by the BOLLI Scene-riors.

The Membership Committee is excited about these new lunchtime programs as a way of fulfilling our mission to integrate new BOLLI members into our community. We continue to look for new ideas and welcome suggestions. Please contact either Susan Bradford (nysue44@gmail.com) or Megan Curtis (mcurtis@brandeis.edu) if you have ideas to share.

![BOLLI’s own “Says You” panelist Francine Achbar at the March 14 NPR taping of the show (photo by Sue Wurster)](image)
Back to School Brunch

From L-R: Myrna Cohen, Avi Bernstein, Steve Messinger; Charlie Raskin; Judy Messinger and Marie Danziger (photos by Joanne Fortunato)

Sherry Glass and Naomi Schmidt (photos by Helen Abrams)

Bernice Rose

Ricky Ezrin and Fran Tidor

Phil Radoff, Brenda Gleckman, and Arlene Weintraub; Sandy Miller-Jacobs; Diane and Mel Markowitz (photos by Joanne Fortunato)

Helen Abrams and Ellen Moskowitz; Matt Medeiros and Megan Curtis; Susan Bradford and Harriet Gould (photos by Joanne Fortunato)
CAMPUS CULTURAL CALENDAR
Compiled by Nancy Alimansky

All Events Free to BOLLI Members, Except Where Noted

Music Department Concert

The Embodiment of Voice: Concert & Salon with Tony Arnold
Wednesday, April 13, 7 p.m. at Berlin Chapel

Soprano Tony Arnold continues to explore voice and identity with guest artists Josh Levine, composer; and Aiyun Huang, percussion. Brandeis University has renewed its Creative Arts Award and named soprano Tony Arnold the first winner of the honor in over 20 years.

ROSE ART MUSEUM - Now through May 23, 2016

Generating Environments
Farber Library Mezzanine, Goldfarb Library

The Generating Environments exhibit, organized by the museum’s curatorial interns, addresses the intersection of modern society and technology using a variety of media, including photography, video, and sculpture.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN FESTIVAL OF THE CREATIVE ARTS

April 14-17

Shoes On, Shoes Off
Friday, April 15, 8 p.m./Saturday, April 16, 2 p.m. & 8 p.m/Sunday, April 17, 2 p.m. at Spingold Mainstage Theater

Inspiration can come from anywhere. For Professor Susan Dibble, a renowned Shakespeare & Company resident choreographer and master teacher, it came in the form of a local store. Shoes On, Shoes Off follows a shoe salesman and his clientele as they get swept away in the purpose and energy of the shoes they try on. There is a message just waiting to be passed on as they slip on one pair after another.

Fafali: Music and Dance from Ghana
Friday, April 15, 8 p.m at Slosberg Music Center

Experience the irresistible rhythms of Brandeis's Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble who perform music, song, and dance of the Ewe and Ashanti peoples. They are joined by Ghanaian guest artists Attah Poku, Patricia Afriyie, and Kohlavi Victor. Ben Paulding, director.

Calendar photos are Brandeis arts publicity images

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