

# BOLLI Banner

A Brandeis University Program  
www.brandeis.edu/bali  
781-736-2992

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis

December 2004

## LIFELONG LEARNING, COAST TO COAST

by Sy Raboy



Lifelong Learning is alive and vigorous at BOLLI and around the country. This semester at Brandeis has been our best, as measured by course quality and member attendance. The enrollment is at its highest ever. Demographic trends portend an increasing number of seniors, and that means more participants

and supporters for BOLLI in the future. Of course, growth will create both opportunities and challenges.

During October, along with Sharon and others, I had the privilege of representing our program at conferences in California and Maine devoted to Lifelong Learning. The first was sponsored by the Osher Foundation and attended by representatives from 48 institutions around the country. The meeting offered an excellent opportunity to share ideas, compare organizational issues and discuss “best practices”.

Many of the breakout sessions were concerned with the recruitment of members, development of study group leaders, and the “hottest courses”. A website will be hosted at the University of Southern Maine for the exchange of course listings and other topics of mutual interest. This will be a treasure trove of information to stimulate thinking towards improvement and excellence.

A highlight of the conference was meeting the Executive Director of the Osher foundation, Dr. Mary Bitterman. She has a Ph.D. in history and is a former president of KQED in San Francisco. The future plans for the Foundation are exciting.

This meeting reaffirmed my belief that we have done a superb job, especially considering we are only five years old. By talking through some of our processes and governance we could work towards an even better program.

I had further reinforcement at the second meeting held in Portland, Maine. Program attendees came from all over New England and Canada; several came from Ohio, Iowa, and Louisiana. Here too we had the opportunity to hear about other programs, how they are structured and managed, what they offer, and what relationship they have with their host institution. This has motivated us to maintain our momentum and improve our program, wherever we can.

Our model of “member-run” is a successful one, and it has proven to work well over long periods of time by programs at Harvard, Duke, and Northwestern. That means we need you to participate. Not everyone can be a study group leader but everyone can serve on a committee and add value to the entire organization through participation. We must continue to improve and grow and to do so we ask for your involvement. Simply, *we need you*.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve you.

# HOLLYWOOD AND HISTORY

## CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

by Frank Davis



You peer into the classroom and find yourself before a black and white, grainy, *film noir* that portrays a frightening time, when spies and counter-spies were thought to be around every corner. It brings to mind the period when Americans feared an atom bomb attack and it seemed our only responses were to “duck and cover” or have a personal bomb shelter. You have not dropped into some film retrospective but rather you have come across a remarkable teaching tool which, in the hands of Bob Palter, makes the past come alive.

Bob’s course, *A Moviegoer Looks at the Red Scare*, is an historical perspective of the post WWII – Korean War era. But it is hardly a typical history course. Starting with well-chosen texts, supplemented by fine handouts, and culminating with videos of documentaries and old Hollywood feature films, Bob weaves the words and visuals to bring the period to life. The text provides background of the tumultuous period from WWI through WWII when the seeds of future problems were sown and then details the period of The Red Scare. The videos show how Hollywood portrayed this time, using footage of actual news events and the many Congressional hearings looking into possible communist infiltration. We read about and see those spies that aided in the development of the Soviet atomic bomb and stole military secrets. We learn about new facts released in the 1990’s about the Rosenbergs and others.



**Bob Palter**

Questions are raised and old myths explored:

- Was Ethel Rosenberg guilty of the crimes she was accused and convicted of?
- Who coached the Hollywood Ten about their testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee?
- How high up in the U.S. government did communist spies penetrate?
- How were the cold war and the search for “commies” portrayed in the films and on TV?

These questions and more are explored through what Bob calls “the double lens” — the lens of the time in which the events took place, as well as the lens of present-day knowledge. We see that some Hollywood productions of that time were simply American propaganda and some were made by the studio heads to appease the House Un-American Activities Committee.

We are led by the urbane, bow-tie-wearing Bob Palter, who combines a deep knowledge of the subject and a joy of teaching with a keen wit. His love of history took him late in life to the University of Massachusetts Boston for a degree in history that followed much earlier degrees from MIT and Harvard and a successful insurance industry career. In his courses, Bob combines an appreciation of films developed during his youth in New York and Miami with this interest in history.

The reception to the first course Bob taught, *World War Two Goes to the Movies*, prompted him to develop this current topic. The format of combining film with text is proving to be a popular one. In fact, the current course is going on the road — Bob will be teaching it in Florida this winter.

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# PLAYING BALL

by Sharon Sokoloff



This semester we've opened a dialogue with administrators of the Gosman Athletic Facility with the goals of: 1) becoming increasingly good citizens as BOLLI and Gosman folks share space and 2) creating relationships and activities to benefit Gosman, BOLLI, and Brandeis. This article is an introduction into this process.

In BOLLI's planning year, Bernie Reisman, BOLLI's Founding Director, and Jeff Cohen, Gosman former Director, made a deal for BOLLI to use Gosman. We are grateful for that "handshake", for without it there would have been no BOLLI as we know it. No one really knew what the deal meant, however. How much space would we need the first year and over time? Would BOLLI actually survive, not to mention thrive? How long would we use the space? There were no explicit parameters and no contract. In fact, while we assumed we would use Gosman indefinitely, the Gosman staff and coaches assumed the arrangement was temporary.

Now in our fifth year, Gosman and BOLLI leaders are talking about how to "live" and work together. Six primary players are involved in the conversations. Sheryl Sousa (Gosman Director), Lynne Dempsey (Associate Director), and Robin Seidman (Assistant Director) represent Gosman. Sy Raboy (Council President), Leona Curhan (Council

member), and I represent BOLLI. All six of us are Brandeis alumni, a meaningful thread that ties us together. In addition, we have a collaborative investment to create mutually beneficial and harmonious relationships. We are discussing two broad topics: logistics, and relationships and activities.

At our first meeting, Gosman leaders told us the way we set up our administrative tables across from The Gathering Place (the Gosman concession area) is inconvenient to others who use the facility. Sy immediately said we would move those tables to the corner where you've seen them the past few weeks. One logistic problem corrected. We are working on other practical issues related to sharing equipment and identifying ideal times for BOLLI to meet while considering the goals of the athletic department.

I'm most excited about activities and relationships we are exploring. Three examples follow:

- BOLLI "sponsoring" a Brandeis athletic team, e.g., the Women's Basketball Team that won its division last year for the first time
- Becoming part of FOBA ("Friends of Brandeis Athletics") and co-sponsoring events to honor and benefit Brandeis athletes
- Connecting BOLLI members and Brandeis athletes in mentoring relationships.

All good relationships require work. We are happy to be working with our Gosman friends to create a winning formula. Thanks, in advance, for joining us.

## Osher Update

Since my article in the September issue of the BOLLI Banner, several BOLLI members have asked questions about the broader history of the relationship between the Osher Foundation and Brandeis. For those interested, the total commitment from the Bernard Osher Foundation to Brandeis, to date, is well in excess of two million dollars. Most of it is for undergraduate students and the \$100,000 grant to BOLLI. We will keep you posted as the details change. Ask the Council or me for more details if you are interested. — Sharon

# PRESBYACUSIS: AGE-RELATED SENSORINEURAL HEARING LOSS

by Rhoda Sapers, RN, MSN

“If you’d stop mumbling, then I could hear.”  
“It’s not my problem but yours, my dear.”  
A daunting issue we all share;  
Whichever side, there’s much despair.

“Speak up; speak up, the music’s too loud



I can’t hear in such a crowd.”  
Hearing aids, are they enough?  
Extraneous noise can be very  
tough.

Hair cells in the inner chamber  
start to go  
Like so many other parts we  
know.  
By 65, 40% we’ve lost.  
Deafness in one or both ears  
the cost.

High pitched sounds the first to go:  
*Sh, K, P, F*, then the low.  
Hardest to hear, the wife or kid;  
Don’t blame them, keep tight your lid.

Difficulty deciphering similar sounds,  
“Please repeat”, a frequent comment found.

Funny noises in our ears heard often  
Likely from aging, not from coughin’!

## **TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH**

How to know if your symptoms fit  
Loss from aging or another culprit.  
Audiologist’s diagnoses is the best.

Finally determined with test after test.

Then to decide on a direction to take,  
Here are suggestions for adjustments to make.  
Ask others to speak slow and clear.  
Watch facial expressions, you’ll think you hear.

Speak directly to the person affected.  
If you don’t you will be rejected.  
Try lip reading, which we do all the time.  
You could be practicing to be a mime.

Keep your perspective, check possibilities out.  
It’s not life-threatening but what life’s about.  
The Google topics that are listed below  
Won’t help your hearing but you’ll be in the  
know.

- National Institute on Deafness
- Causes of Hearing Loss

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## **THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS**

by Leona Curhan

The Council has been trying to find a way over the last four semesters to increase the space available for courses. The University has agreed to the plan to put a sound-proof divider in the large general purpose classroom which will allow the number of courses offerings to increase from twenty-four to thirty per semester. A date of completion will be announced as soon as we know it!

A large pull-down screen has been purchased for the Napoli Room to improve visual presentations during Lunch and Learn.

Reminders: BOLLI information is at [www.brandeis.edu/programs/bali](http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/bali)  
If you have information for the Banner, send it to [BALIBanner@aol.com](mailto:BALIBanner@aol.com)



# BOLLI IN THE WINTER

We hold no formal classes during the winter intersession, but BOLLI affinity groups are active. All BOLLI members are welcome.

During January and February 2005, there will be two weekly *New Yorker* group discussions for those BOLLI members who spend most of their winters close to home.

## New Yorker Fiction

This discussion group, which began last winter and has continued throughout the year, will discuss the story published in the magazine the previous week.

The contact people are Elaine Dohan and Lenore Goldstein. The group will meet on Thursdays from 10:55 A.M. to 12:25 P.M.

- For both groups, a reminder and Internet link to the story and article will be sent out each week via email
- Both groups meet at the Shapiro Campus Center, conference room C
- Participants may park in the T-lot behind Spingold
- The groups begin on January 6th and continue for the next 7 weeks



## New Yorker Non-Fiction

This is a new affinity group, also discussing articles published in the *New Yorker*, but devoted to non-fiction pieces in the magazine.

The group will be led by Charlie Allen, who has had careers in diplomacy, international business, and education. He has been an officer in the U.S. Department of State, president of Itek International Corporation, and has taught at Stanford, the Fordham Graduate School of Business, and Harvard Learning in Retirement, where he has led courses on U.S. Foreign Policy, The American Empire, Globalization, Rising China, and The New Yorker. The participants will use a *New Yorker* article to examine and discuss the culture clashes between liberals and conservatives in the U.S., between Europe and America, and between the West and radical Islam.

The group will meet on Thursdays from 9:10 A.M. to 10:40 A.M..

## Computer Day Camp



A Senior Computer Day Camp program will run for six weeks (one 2-hour period per week on Wednesday mornings) in January and February at one of the Brandeis computer labs. This program will be for members who are experienced using the Internet. There will be a different topic, chosen by participants, each week. For more information, contact either Camp counselor:

Len Heier [lheier@rcn.com](mailto:lheier@rcn.com)  
Sherm Okun [skokun@post.harvard.edu](mailto:skokun@post.harvard.edu)

## Shutterbugs



We begin the winter season with the not-to-be-missed photography exhibit at the Worcester Art Museum on Wednesday, December 22nd. [“deeply satisfying show...choice, comprehensive, surprising”– *Boston Globe*]. Two docents will guide us through the exhibit, and then we will do lunch in a nearby restaurant. Limited to 24.

Museum admission for seniors is \$6.  
(Spouses are welcome to join us.)

Richard Glantz [Glantz@alum.mit.edu](mailto:Glantz@alum.mit.edu)

# CURRICULUM COMMITTEE NEEDS A FEW GOOD PEOPLE

*by Norm Weizer*

The Curriculum Committee is looking for a few energetic people to join its happy band. The major responsibilities of our group are to encourage BOLLI members to volunteer to lead courses and to select the best of these course to make up the BOLLI curriculum.

Volunteers should have the following qualifications:

1. Sufficient spare time to spend up to 7 hours per week on BOLLI business during the four intensive months of choosing the next semester's curriculum
2. An outgoing personality to allow them to easily reach out to find potential SGLs and to encourage them to lead a class
3. Optionally, a history of leading classes either at BOLLI or similar programs
4. Preferably two-years membership in BOLLI or a similar ILR
5. Comfortable using email and an eBoard

If you are interested, please contact the chair by email at [nweizer@yahoo.com](mailto:nweizer@yahoo.com).

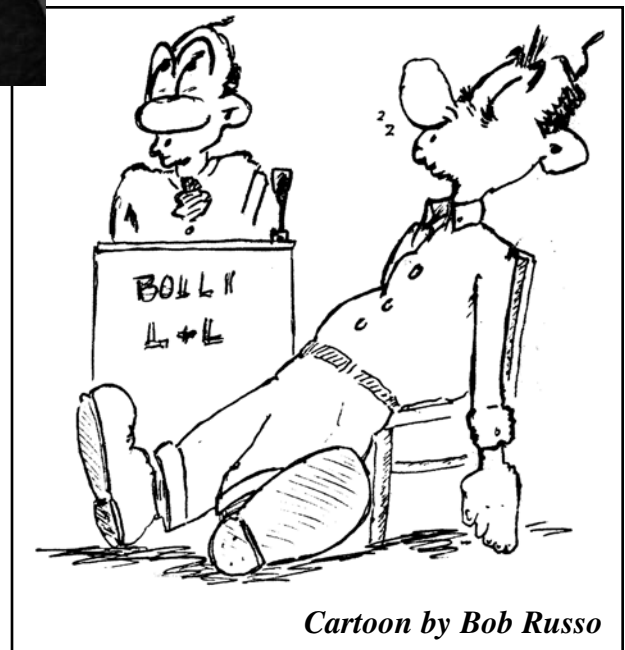


41 LIRs attended the New England Lifelong Learning Institute Conference, in Portland ME on October 24-26. Representing BOLLI were, left-to-right: Judy Pastore, Sharon Sokoloff, Lenore Goldstein, Len Heier, Sherm Okun, Nancy Rawson, Sy Raboy, Bernie Reisman, Eileen Reisman. Not shown is Carol Morton.



*photo by Eileen Mitchell*

The BOLLI Adventurers visit Gore Place in Waltham  
Carole Grossman, Benje Freedman, Elaine Dohan, Ann Walker, Nancy Rawson, Claire Rourke, Kay Sackman, Ed Goldberg, Tamara Chernow.



*Cartoon by Bob Russo*

"Now what did they say this was — Lunch & Lounge or Lunch & Learn?"

# LIFELONG LEARNING CONFERENCE SETS BRAINS BUZZING

by Ruth Baden



*Dendrites keep creeping when brain cells are nourished.  
Food for the mind helps your energy flourish.*

On November 8th, BOLLI@Brandeis stepped into new directions by singing this ditty at its first conference, Lifelong Learning in Theory and Practice.

Carol Shedd, chair of the Study Group Leaders Resource Committee, welcomed the group leaders and potential leaders. She introduced Sharon Sokoloff, BOLLI's Director and chief initiator of the conference. The keynote speaker, Ronald J. Manheimer, led us in the song quoted above, whose lyrics have scientific basis, and were sung to the tune of *My Favorite Things*. Then he gave us some riddles to solve in small groups. An example: "Nietzsche and George Shaw idealized this mensch." This taught us how groups working together can combine our different areas of knowledge to solve problems and gain insight and knowledge. (The answer is "Superman.") And this was only the first twenty minutes.

Dr. Manheimer is head of the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement, UNC Asheville. His professional life has been dedicated to education and now, especially, to education for the older and wiser. His knowledge on the subject fills many books, but we were treated to it from the source. (Sociologic fact: in China, where they figured out years ago that continuing to learn is good for your mental health, it is your sacred duty to teach other seniors.)

Dr. Manheimer's excellent address, "Lifelong Learning in Theory and Practice" covered theories of aging. First came "disengagement" in the 1950s, meaning that after retirement you just faded away like an old soldier. From the '60s to 2000, theorists noted that we "golden-agers", as we were then dubbed, could continue to get an education. So the government told colleges to open their classes to seniors; but most institutions didn't advertise this opportunity because senior tuition was free.

Not only did we want to keep learning, but some preferred doing it in groups of our peers. When did younger students (including ourselves) ever ask

questions such as "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" "What is this world really all about?" "Is there more?" In the '90's, new rationales for why we should keep learning included emancipation, self-re-invention, and post-retirement careers education.

Now we are in the "culture of aging." All the rationales for doing what we're doing at BOLLI are valid. The goal is to make age irrelevant when creating many social policies.

After Dr. Manheimer's talk, there were very practical questions about "how to do it" from the audience. After lunch we heard the personal perspectives of five Study Group Leaders: Maurie Stiefel, Ed Goldberg, Elaine Reisman, Bill Rachlin, and Jim Robbins. They gave us their thoughts and tips; e.g., "Create the expectation right from the start: this is a study group, a collaborative endeavor." Or, "Leading a study group is like a game of cards: everyone throws in their chips." They all agreed that it was hard work but well — very well — worth it. "You learn things." "You feel very alive." "I feel more fulfilled than at any time in my life". "Was I surprised!"

## The BOLLI Journal

Submissions for the next edition of the *BOLLI Journal* are now being accepted. Poetry, essays, fiction, reviews, photographs, and art work are needed. Call or email Renée Fine, 781-862-8107 or [realfine2@earthlink.net](mailto:realfine2@earthlink.net), for guidelines and further information.

# CALENDAR OF CAMPUS EVENTS

compiled by Charles Raskin

## SLOSBERG RECITAL HALL

781-736-3400, option 5

Dec. 4 (8 P.M.)

### Early Music Ensemble

Sarah Mead, director  
Glorious vocal and instrumental works of  
15th-17th century Europe.  
Admission: \$5 for BOLLI members

Dec. 7 (8 P.M.)

### Chamber Music Ensemble

Judith Eissenberg, director  
Ensemble works for strings, winds, and piano  
Admission: free

Dec. 11 (8 P.M.)

### Jazz Ensemble

Robert Nieske, conductor  
Jumpin' jazz and big band favorites  
Admission: \$5 for BOLLI members

Jan. 29 (8 P.M.)

### Lydian String Quartet

Haydn: Quartet in *Eb* Major, Op. 33, No. 2 ("The Joke")  
Persichetti: Parable X (Quartet #4)  
Beethoven: Quartet in *Eb* Major, Op. 127  
Admission: \$10 for BOLLI members

Feb. 15 (8 P.M.)

### Voice of the Turtle

Compelling musical heritage of Spanish Jews by Boston's finest Sephardic music ensemble. Admission: \$10.

## WEDNESDAY CONCERTS AT NOON

Rapaporte Treasure Hall, Goldfarb Building

Dec. 1 and Feb. 2

Lunchtime concerts by the **Lydian String Quartet**

## SPINGOLD THEATER

781-736-3400, option 5

Dec. 2-12 (various times and prices – contact box office; BOLLI members half-price)

### Tommy

The most influential rock opera ever produced, The Who's *Tommy* is a thrill ride for all the senses. Eight-year-old Tommy is rendered deaf, dumb, and blind after witnessing his father murder his mother's lover. For the next 14 years, he is used, abused, and emotionally abandoned—until his pinball wizardry transforms him into a superstar. Through Pete Townsend's landmark music and lyrics, *Tommy* dramatizes an amazing journey of personal freedom, celebrity culture, and spiritual transcendence.

## ROSE ART MUSEUM

781-736-3434

Nov. 1 – Dec. 12

### Tantoori Satori & Commonplace

28 paintings and 40 watercolors by Italian painter Francesco Clemente. His work combines symbols of mysticism and folklore with images of everyday experiences from both his native Italy and his adopted homes in India and New York.

### Tide Table

Recently acquired by The Rose, South African artist William Kentridge contemplates for the first time the devastating impact HIV and AIDS have had on his country.

Admission: \$3.

### The Empty City

Artist Yun-Fei Ji presents his view of the displaced inhabitants and environmental destruction of China's Three Gorges Dam project, which will be completed in 2009. The artist employs traditional Chinese ink-painting techniques in 10 paintings and 25 preparatory sketches.