

BOLLI Banner

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

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis

November 2005

FAMILY LEARNING

by Katherine Raskin



Leo and Kate Poverman have the distinction of being the only father and daughter members of BOLLI.

Leo helped form the original BOLLI program, and he has remained active since. Several years ago when his daughter moved back

to Boston and gave up her job as an attorney with the Securities and Exchange Commission to be an at-home mother, they decided that it would be fun to take a course together.

They agreed to talk about their BOLLI experiences for the Banner.

Have you always been interested in studying?

Leo: After graduating City College of New York, I enrolled at the University of Chicago and took courses in the “Great Ideas in Western Civilization”. I have always been an avid reader interested in broad issues, and I discovered that my daughter Kate also shares this interest. Our relationship has been very good, and I have always been inspired by her “spunkiness”. She is not aggressive, not overly confident, but very much her own person. We have a relationship of great respect and considerable love.



Leo and Kate Poverman

How does it feel to be in the same class with your daughter? Are there feelings of competition?

Leo: The first literature course we took together was taught by Nancy Sack. Not being shy, I commented on the reading. Kate felt comfortable enough to say, “I hate to disagree with the esteemed gentleman” and offered her opinion. I did not feel threatened—instead I felt very proud of her.

Have you always had intellectual conversations with Kate and other members of your family?

Leo: There were many wonderful discussions that took place at the dinner table at home. It was always “adult-centered”; but the children were never excluded. Everyone was required to participate. These conversations were very stimulating and challenging. We have a yearly family tradition that takes place every summer at the Cape: a competitive game of *Trivial Pursuit*.

Why did you decide to join BOLLI?

Kate: When I heard my father talk about BOLLI, I was excited about taking courses with him because he has always been a man of ideas. This was a chance to study with my father and maximize the time I could spend with him in an intellectual activity.

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FIRST JANUARY INTENSIVE PROGRAM

by Sharon Sokoloff

BOLLI implemented its “Intensive Programs” in June 2004. The idea of the Intensives is two-fold:

- to respond to members’ requests for programming when Fall and Spring semesters are not in session
- to further develop the relationship between BOLLI and Brandeis.

The Intensives meet five mornings in one week, for three hours each day, and are led by Brandeis faculty. We plan the programs for quiet weeks on campus when students are not around. To date, we’ve done three, all in June. In 2004, Prof. Bob Art and Prof. Dan Kryder, both of the Political Science Dept., led a course on the then up-coming 2004 presidential elections. Last June, we offered two courses, one by Prof. Nancy Scott, *Art of the 21st Century: What’s it all About?* and one by Prof. Mike Socolow, *The Culture of Journalism*.

This year we are planning three programs, one for January 2006, and as in past years, two for June 2006. Again, we are responding to members’ requests for programming during the winter break.

Consider this article a “Save the Date” notice. The program will be held from Monday, January 9th

through Friday, January 13th from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. in Hassenfeld.

The title of the course is *King Lear—the Personal and the Political*. Shakespeare’s play will be treated from these two points of view:

1. What we can learn from Shakespeare about today’s political world
2. What we can learn from today’s political world about Shakespeare.

The leader will be William (Billy) Flesch, Associate Professor of English and American Literature at Brandeis, a favorite speaker on the Brandeis University National Women’s Committee speaker circuit. Billy is the recipient of three teaching awards at Brandeis and Cornell, a National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship, and the author of *Generosity and Limits of Authority: Shakespeare, Herbert, Milton*, Cornell University Press, 1992.



Mark your calendars. Space will be limited. “Be not afraid of greatness...”

Upcoming Excursions from the Brandeis University Travel Program

- ★ Alumni Campus Abroad: Adriatic Riviera (including Slovenia, Croatia, Italy) June 20-28, 2006
- ★ Treasures of Peru (with Machu Picchu & Lake Titicaca) with President Jehuda Reinharz, and Professor Shulamit Reinharz, June 26-July 6, 2006

For more information, the itinerary, and registration details, go to www.alumni.brandeis.edu

The **BOLLI Banner** is published by the Banner Editorial Committee:

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Next deadline:
1/20/06

FAMILY LEARNING *[continued from page 1]*

How does it feel to be in the same class with your father? Do you always agree about the issues being discussed? Do you ever feel competitive?

Kate: My father is very competitive, but it doesn't interfere with our relationship. We have many differences of opinion, but I feel very comfortable debating topics with him. We both enjoy discussing many broad ideas, particularly about ethics and government. As successful as my father was in his career as a salesman, I had always wished he would have gone to law school as he would have made a great attorney.

How does it feel to be learning with so many seniors?

Kate: I really like exchanging ideas with seniors and seeing how engaged they are in learning about everything. I also recognize what "life experience" brings to my classmates and what knowledge we can bring to each other. Once last year, I brought my young children to the program. Their experience has always been visiting frail seniors in nursing homes or hospitals. Now they have a different attitude about seniors, who can be alert, bright, and continue to have a lifelong love of learning. It was good for them to see that side of aging.

Would you do this again?

Kate: Absolutely! I have made friends and want to continue learning with multi-aged groups.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

by Judy Cohen

On Friday evening, November 4th, the Sustainable International Development (SID) students from Southeast Asia invited their host BOLLI families to a magnificent evening of cultural exchange. These young adults from countries such as Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam treated us to a homemade dinner of typical fare from their countries.



photos by SID students



The students wore the dress of their native lands and capped the evening with a demonstration of dance from their countries.

Hammad Masood from Pakistan expressed the feelings of the group when he introduced a fellow student from India with these words: "Our countries have not always had the best relations; but here at Brandeis, we work together to make it better."

MAKING DIFFICULT HEALTH CARE DECISIONS: HOSPICE CARE

by Theodore L. Saxe, M.D.



During 61 years of active medical practice, I made many medical decisions; but the most difficult one was when I agreed to have my wife placed in hospice care.

An active, productive dynamo, late one night she complained “my head feels like it’s exploding.” A CT scan at an emergency room confirmed that she had a

cerebral aneurysm—a small vessel in her brain had bled. The next day a new, non-invasive procedure was performed to repair the vessel.

Although the procedure was successful, post-operative complications appeared almost immediately. A series of infections kept her in intensive care for nearly two months, followed by eight months in rehabilitation, nursing, and acute care hospitals. No combination of antibiotics seemed effective and, after ten months, we had run out of treatment options. She was comatose, and there was little prospect of recovery.

Like most family members of a terminally ill patient, it was exceedingly difficult to accept the fact that no treatment was possible. Perhaps being a physician made it more difficult. My training and experience focused on applying treatments to prolong life.

The idea of a hospice—to provide palliative care to ease a death—seems both sensible and irrational. It makes sense to ease pain. Yet, the idea of prolonging life—even if the quality is not good—seems only human.

Hospice care can be given when a patient is terminal and life expectancy is less than six months. Health insurance rules change for hospice patients. Medicare covers home care and, with a few exceptions, no treatment or hospital care can be given.

In my wife’s case, we were able to take advantage of a Medicare provision that allowed brief inpatient hospice care. As she made the transition off antibiotics, she had the benefit of 24 hour/day nursing care.

When put on hospice status, it was not believed that my wife could survive more than two weeks. But she survived; and after a brief time in the inpatient hospice, we took her home, where we cared for her for more than three months. The hospice provided a practical nurse for several hours each day and an every-other-day registered nurse.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Experts believe that families wait too long to accept hospice care. The right time to make the decision is one that each patient and family has to make, with input from their medical providers.

My advice is to learn about hospice care well before you need it. And be sure that you communicate your preferences to your loved ones. No amount of discussion will fully prepare you to make the decision, but knowing your options will ease the way.

For more information on hospice care go to the web site of the Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of MA at www.hospicefed.org/ where you will find locations of hospices in MA. They also provide an overview of hospice care, including programs and services, financial considerations, health care proxy forms and directives, and many links to other useful sites.

Pilot Plan to Notify BOLLI Members of a Death in Our Community

If you know of a death of a BOLLI member or of the member's spouse or child, please contact Lenore Goldstein or Sharon Sokoloff. We'll call the bereaved family to express our condolences and to ask if we may notify the BOLLI community of the death. If we may, an email will be sent to our membership.

OUT OF SIGHT; OUT OF POCKET

by Frank Benjamin

If you haven't touched your bank account for three years, the next time you check the balance, you will find it to be zero.

Under Massachusetts law, financial assets that have not exhibited any activity by the owner for three years are considered abandoned property and must be turned over to the Commonwealth. Examples of such assets are:

- checking accounts
- savings accounts
- CDs
- safe deposit boxes
- uncashed checks for refunds, dividends, benefits, wages, and commissions
- uncashed money orders
- paid-up life insurance policies

Credit balances and real estate do not fall under the abandoned property statute.

Of course, the holder of the inactive account must make a sincere effort to contact the owner; but if the owner has moved or fails to reply to an inquiry from the account holder, the funds are transferred to the Commonwealth.

MONEY TALK

The abandoned funds are placed into the Massachusetts General Fund. The contents of abandoned safe deposit boxes are sold at auction, and the proceeds are also placed in the General Fund.

At this point, the Commonwealth attempts to contact the owner at the last known address and twice a year publishes the owners' names in newspapers across the State. If you missed such notices, you can click on this URL to see the current list:

<http://abpweb.tre.state.ma.us/abp/abp.htm>

Look for names other than your own. A simple misspelling of your name or mailing address might be the reason your account was deemed abandoned. I found my son's name on the list—he had moved to New York and forgotten about a bank account in Massachusetts.

You can always get your money back, with interest. The Commonwealth holds abandoned funds in perpetuity for rightful owners. Nonetheless, it is prudent to keep each of your accounts active, even if it means cashing that 33-cent dividend check or making a one dollar deposit.

SID Students Take the Freedom Trail



photo by Richard Glantz

Front: Gul Shamim (Pakistan), Judy Cohen, Lois Silver, Hammad Masood (Pakistan), Emmy Rado (Uganda), Kunchok Gelek (Tibet)

Back: Mary Klatt, Bulelwa Mshumpela (S. Africa), Irwin Silver.

Other SID students and BOLLI hosts on the tour are not shown.



Cartoon by Bob Russo

"You can't go out to play until you do your homework!"

LEARN AND LEAD

by Naomi Schmidt



Imagine 24 individuals in a classroom eagerly generating ideas, providing feedback to each other, and at the same time contributing to the future of BOLLI. This semester a new kind of study group, titled *Learn and Lead: How to Become a Study Group Leader*, is being led by

Sharon Sokoloff and Myrna Cohen, and one can feel the energy and enthusiasm that are emanating from each session of the class.

The aim of this course is to supply the “pipeline” of topics that will feed the BOLLI curriculum in future semesters. Students include those who have well-defined ideas ready to go this spring, as well as those who have only vague thoughts of what they would like to teach. A number of participants have even come into the class with no particular topic in mind, but with a desire to lead a study group and the hope of finding a theme with the help of other class members.

Each participant may be at a different step in the process of creating a course, from generation of the original idea to the organization of a syllabus into ten class sessions, to the submission of a proposal to the curriculum committee. There is no pressure to have a course ready by a specific date, as the goal is to provide a stream of prospective classes that can be added to the curriculum next semester, next year, or even further into the future.

The course is run as a workshop, where members learn as much from each other during small group sessions as they do from Sharon and Myrna, who

act as coaches and facilitate the discussions. In addition to working sessions where members present their ideas, receive feedback, and plan next steps, there are guest lecturers in the form of successful study group leaders. One such guest was Nancy Rawson, who described how she has come up with many topics including those for the four study groups that she has led at BOLLI. Norm Weizer spoke about how the Curriculum Committee selects new courses, and yet another session featured guidelines on how to facilitate class participation through the use of study questions and other techniques.



Myrna Cohen and Sharon Sokoloff

A sampling of ideas that are being worked on include:

- Mark Twain
- recent immigrant literature
- a primer on the U.S. economy
- writers of the Beat Generation
- a history of American wine
- building the U.S. Constitution
- three different music courses
- problems of developing nations (presented by SID students).

Learn and Lead is an experiment this semester, but based on the feedback from the current participants, it appears that the experiment is succeeding. It will likely be given again as new potential study group leaders come forward.

One thing is certain: there will be some exciting new BOLLI courses coming into the curriculum during the next few semesters, with *Learn and Lead* as a major catalyst in their creation.

CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

“Being at BOLLI is like having a new grandchild. You can't explain the joy.”

—Eleanor Pearlman, new BOLLI member

OFF THE EATEN PATH

by Richard Glantz

[Previously, the Banner reviewed on-campus restaurants and Waltham restaurants. If you'd like a reprint, contact the Banner at BALIBanner@aol.com. With this issue, we cover some unusual, hidden restaurants in the wider Boston area.]

Fife and Drum is run by the students of Minuteman Regional High School, who both cook and serve. I had the Friday buffet, which offered corn chowder, mostly iceberg salad, chicken cacciatore, baked ham, lasagna with meat sauce, London broil, baked fresh haddock, Delmonico potatoes, and sliced squash (\$7.50). The London broil was the best I have ever tasted, carved to my specifications by the student chef. The non-Friday menu lists eight entrée choices (\$5.50 - \$7.50). 10% Senior discount on Tues. and Wed.

There is a single seating, at 11:30 A.M., Tuesday through Friday. Reservations are suggested, and they are required for the popular Friday buffet. Telephone 781-861-0500, x270.

Directions: off Rte. 128 in Lexington. www.minuteman.org/about/directions.html

Fife and Drum II is staffed by uniformed inmates of the Northeastern Correctional Center. Yes, actual prison inmates take your order, cook your food, and serve it to you. It is not considered good form to ask your waiter, "What are you in for?" These men may indeed have committed a crime of violence, but they are incarcerated here to serve out the remaining three years or so of their sentences. This is a minimum security prison: no tin cups, no orange jumpsuits, no handcuffs or shackles. My fixed-price meal was cream of broccoli soup, a generous helping of Italian sausage over rice (from a choice of four entrées), garden salad, coffee, and a brownie—all for \$1.35. Pay before sitting down; and of course, no tipping. Ambiance is strictly prison—walls and tables are bare, a television set is always on, and knives are plastic.

There is a single seating, at 11:30 A.M., on weekdays. The place is so popular, it is wise to arrive early and allow time to sign in with a picture ID at the guard desk.

Directions: off Penitentiary Circle in Concord. Take Barretts Mill Rd. off the circle, then left up the white-fence-lined driveway to the prison. The fence serves only to keep the cows from wandering out. Upon your departure, remember that the cows, unlike the human inmates, are serving a life sentence.

The Elegant Chef is run by the students of the Nashoba Valley Technical High School. The menu is similar to Fife and Drum. However, there are two seatings, at 11:30 and 12:15, Tuesday through Friday. Telephone 978-692-9958 for reservations for the Friday buffet.

Directions: off Rte. 110 in Westford. www.nashobatech.mec.edu/general/driving.htm

Nancy's Airfield Cafe is a real treat. Nancy prides herself on fresh ingredients from local farms. I had char-broiled lamb burger with Persian spices, topped with cucumber yogurt sauce (\$9.25). My companion enjoyed a salad with grated goat cheese and caramelized chipotle walnuts, dressed with a maple-balsamic vinaigrette (\$9.50). On a return visit, I had carrot-ginger pancakes for breakfast, topped with ginger-butter sauce and real maple syrup—a true eye-opener! The ambiance, especially if you manage to wangle a coveted table adjacent to the runway, provides an up-close view of airport activity. I watched an ultralight aircraft take off—essentially a lawn chair with a propeller.

Open Monday and Wednesday, 8 to 3, and Thursday through Sunday, 8 to 7:30. Reservations are suggested for the popular Sunday brunch, served from 8 to 3. Telephone 978-897-3934. Credit cards accepted.

Directions: off Rte. 117 in Stow. www.nancysairfieldcafe.com/directions.pdf

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

CALENDAR OF CAMPUS EVENTS

compiled by Charles Raskin

SLOSBERG RECITAL HALL

781-736-3400, option 5

Admission: \$5 for BOLLI members, except as noted

Dec. 3 (8 P.M.)

Brandeis Jazz Ensemble

Bob Nieske, director

Works by Duke Ellington, Old King Dooji, Harlem Airshaft, and Jack The Bear

Dec. 4 (3 P.M.)

Brandeis Wind Ensemble

Tom Souza, conductor

Symphonic band repertoire for brass and winds

Dec. 10 (8 P.M.)

To Drive the Cold Winter Away: Music for a Frosty Evening

Brandeis Early Music Ensemble

Sarah Mead, director

Dec. 11 (3 P.M.)

An Immigrant's Journey

The Complete Works for Cello and Piano by Leo Ornstein (1892-2000)

Joshua Gordon, cello and Randall Hodgkinson, piano

Admission: \$10 for BOLLI members

WEDNESDAY CONCERTS AT NOON

Rapaporte Treasure Hall, Goldfarb Library

Dec. 7

Free mini-concert by the **Lydian String Quartet**

HANDEL'S MESSIAH COMMUNITY SING-ALONG

Atrium, Shapiro Campus Center

Dec. 13 (5 P.M.)

Hallelujah! Join the Chorus, Chamber Choir, Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra, and other music lovers. Free and open to the public. No experience necessary.

SPINGOLD THEATER

781-736-3400, option 5

Dec. 1-11 (various times and prices – contact box office; BOLLI members half-price)

The Two Orphans

World premiere musical by Brandeis alumna Theresa Rebeck. Adapted from the 19th century melodrama of the same title, *The Two Orphans* traces the story of two African-American sisters who struggle with survival in a hostile world in the aftermath of the Civil War and their recent liberation from slavery. The atmosphere of Reconstruction New Orleans is evoked by a rich variety of music drawn from the traditional songs as well as the original melodies and rhythms of the American South..

MEET THE AUTHOR

Atrium, Shapiro Campus Center

Dec. 7 (4 P.M.)

David Cunningham

The Brandeis author will discuss his book *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, The Klan, and The FBI*.