

BOLLI Banner

A Brandeis University Program
www.brandeis.edu/bali
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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis

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KING LEAR A HOWLING SUCCESS

by Richard Glantz and Jerry Kaitz

This past January, William Flesch, Associate Professor of English and American Literature at Brandeis, led a week-long Winter Intensive course on Shakespeare's *King Lear*.



William Flesch

The class was oversubscribed with an enrollment of twenty-eight. The Banner asked two members to summarize their classroom experience.

Richard's take

The first time I read *King Lear* was in high school. It was enough for me then to figure out the plot.



The second time I read *King Lear* was in college. I learned about iambic pentameter; and I learned what some of those Elizabethan words meant. (No, "get thee to a nunnery" was not necessarily a command to join a *convent*; sometimes, it meant a *house of ill repute*.) Subsequently, I saw it both as stage and as video productions. From BOLLI's own Jim Robbins I learned how much more appealing *Lear* was when read aloud.

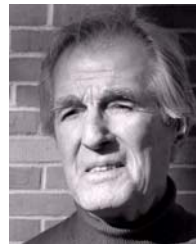
But the seventh reading was the charm. It was Prof. Flesch who took me from the What of Shakespeare to the How. It was Prof. Flesch who revealed the master craftsman Shakespeare was.

I intended to take copious notes so that I could write an extensive summary of the course; but the teacher's lectures were so captivating that I left my pencil on the table, lest I miss a new thought while capturing the previous one.

Prof. Flesch, in turn, was captivated by the students. Used to teaching undergraduates, he was surprised we had actually read the entire play before class; and he was delighted with the depth and breadth of our discussions.

Jerry's take

Prof. Flesch took the class by the hand; and with skillful care and patience, he illuminated the text with little-known details, shedding light on characterizations and important scenes so as to reveal the corners and the shadows. No detail was too small. Why did Shakespeare use the words *more*, *sweet*, *sway*, and *patience*? We learned what the playwright wanted us to feel by his choice and placement of vocabulary.



In Aaron Copland's *What to Listen for in Music*, he asked, "Are you really hearing everything that is going on?" Prof. Flesch might have asked the same question because that is how he taught us about Shakespeare and *King Lear*.

SOCIAL BONDS KEY TO AGING GRACEFULLY

by Sharon Sokoloff



In one of the first issues of the Banner, Bernie Reisman, BOLLI's founding director, wrote about one of his favorite books, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*, by Robert Putnam and Lewis Feldstein. In an insufficient nutshell, it reminds us of the importance of social bonds and community, hallmarks of BOLLI we are always working to enhance. How many times have we heard Bernie speak of the "spirit of conviviality" he envisioned and sparked into being for this program?

In this article I'm taking my turn and sharing an important and inspiring book with you.

The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain by Gene D. Cohen, M.D., Ph.D. was released at the end of 2005 by Basic Books. The book summarizes research findings, many from research Dr. Cohen led and conducted, that demonstrate how: 1) the mind continues to grow and flourish well into the second half of life, 2) the mind gives us what he calls "inner pushes" and enables us to create new opportunities for positive

change throughout adult life, and 3) we can catalyze such growth at any age, under any circumstances, actively building brain reserves and new possibilities for our lives (Cohen).

Among other credentials and professional experiences, Gene Cohen is an internationally pioneering gerontologist and psychiatrist. He is founder and director of the Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University and professor of both psychiatry and health care sciences. He served as the first chief of the Center on Aging at the National Institute of Mental Health and the acting director of the National Institute of Aging. In the spirit of full disclosure, I confess I am a "groupie", having heard Dr. Cohen present at gerontology conferences for over 25 years. He is inspired and inspiring.

We all know our nation and our global village are experiencing a "longevity revolution". Based on demographics and changes in health, health care and other social trends we are living in a new world. We at BOLLI are models of the possibilities. *The Mature Mind* is an evidence-based, realistic, useful, optimistic resource (and in some ways, guide) for all of us striving to learn, grow, contribute, create, and maximize our potential and legacies.

SPRING REGISTRATION

by Carol Allman Morton

At press time, numbers were not final. We have about 280 active members, 20 associate members, and 50 inactive members, giving us a total of at least 350. At the end of early registration, there were five course-lotteries and many courses that were filled. Thanks to the Curriculum and Membership committees and to our office volunteers for helping to make this a successful registration.

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

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CHECK OUT THIS COURSE

by Joan N. Kleinman



Nancy Rawson wears a sweatshirt from Minnesota Public Radio. The slogan on that shirt, “Celebrate Freedom: Read a Banned Book”, inspired the course she taught at BOLLI in the fall. “Focusing the course was challenging”, Nancy reflected, since studying banned

books requires struggling with a broad, complex, and often difficult subject: censorship.

John Stuart Mill’s 1859 essay, *On Liberty*, posed core philosophical questions: Are individuals in a society responsible enough to be given unfettered access to information? Can one know the truth without knowing opposing positions? Questions like these generated thoughtful and provocative discussions from the first class.

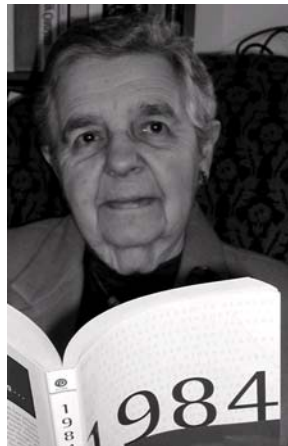
A retired reference librarian, Nancy cited The American Library Association’s “Library Bill of Rights” and “Freedom to Read” statements mandating libraries to provide diverse and even unorthodox or unpopular materials. Yet the class had to acknowledge that there may be justifiable reasons for banning books.

The class read two textbooks for historical background and more than six books censored for political, sexual, social, or religious grounds. Participants constantly found connections to current events and arrived armed with relevant newspaper articles. In Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, for example, citizens reading outlawed books are punished. Extreme? Perhaps. But the USA Patriot Act has allowed the FBI to investigate individuals’ reading habits and Internet usage.

The class found Orwell’s *1984* reflective of today’s political climate. Is censorship a form of mind control, as Mill claimed? For instance, did forbid-

ding pictures of coffins of deceased soldiers influence attitudes toward the war in Iraq? In 1984, the government rewrites history for “Who controls the past controls the future”. Uncannily, while we were reading those words from a book published in 1949, the phrase “rewriting history” was ubiquitous in newspaper stories about the origins of the war in Iraq.

Opinions differed on whether *Oliver Twist* should be read in schools despite the consistently strong negative images of “Fagin, the Jew”. The class argued whether *Huckleberry Finn* should be disallowed because the word “nigger” is offensive in our society. Comparisons were made to a recent, highly publicized case challenging distribution of material about alternative family structures to students in a Lexington elementary school.



Nancy noted that she wanted “not to teach just facts, but to raise consciousness about censorship and to provide tools for forming considered opinions.” Regulation of knowledge and ideas affects us all. If you’ve read *Of Mice and Men* or *Snow Falling on Cedars*, if you’ve read *In the Night Kitchen* or *Harry Potter* to a child, you’ve read a challenged book.

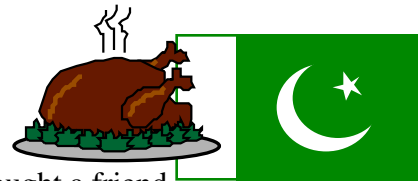
Nancy has taught three other courses at BOLLI: “Classic Mysteries”, “Art in Mysteries, Mysteries in Art”, and “History in Mysteries”. She incorporates themes from many disciplines to stimulate new ways of exploring and savoring the subject. Grateful students find learning in her classes true nourishment for the intellect.

And Nancy provides BOLLI goes with another kind of nourishment: the plate of chocolate chip cookies that appears each week at the Gathering Place.

CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

SHARING THANKSGIVING

by Judith Cohen



There is much to be learned from sharing a holiday. Gul Shamim and I met at the BOLLI-sponsored wine and cheese gathering in October for SID students. Gul is a young woman from Pakistan studying for a graduate degree at the Heller School. Gul spent Thanksgiving Day with my family. We asked her a million questions, and Gul shared with everyone what life was like in a rural Muslim society. We talked and compared cultures and learned from each other. That day, Gul, who calls me “mother”, knew she had gained another family.

Gul comes from the northern mountainous region of Pakistan. Her family lives together in a joint family system—when a daughter marries, she moves into her husband’s family home. Gul has six sisters who live away from her family home. Her brother, his wife, and their five children live in Gul’s parents’ home. Marriages are arranged. Life in rural Pakistan, as Gul describes it, is rich and full of joys, even without cell phones and television.

On Friday, Gul brought a friend, Sadiq, to my home for our “Second Thanksgiving” and for *Shabbat*. My family gathered about the table, lit the *Shabbat* candles, blessed the wine and bread, and welcomed the Muslim students. Jews and Muslims have much in common: both have periods of fasting (*Yom Kippur* and *Ramadan*), both love family, and both share respect for elders.

The students plan to return to Pakistan on completing their graduate studies at Brandeis. I believe they will bring the positive feelings of their “connectedness” with their Brandeis-American families back to Pakistan with them.

As the evening ended with hugs good-bye and tears, we knew we had shared something precious. We felt enriched by our relationship and enlightened by our deepened understanding of different cultures. But what seemed to count the most was our shared humanity.

TAXACHUSETTS

by Frank Benjamin

In late 2002, Massachusetts changed the tax rate for long-term capital gains (0% to 5%, depending on the holding period) to a straight 5.3% for all such gains realized after April 30, 2002. The Supreme Judicial Court (*Peterson v. Commissioner of Revenue*) ruled this law unconstitutional because tax rates must be fixed for the entire year. In response, lawmakers in 2005 changed that tax rate to 5.3% for *all* of 2002. As a result of this new law, some taxpayers were sent a *Notice of Intent to Assess* by the Department of Revenue (DOR). The outcry at this retroactive tax increase was predictable. So the solons changed the law again, making the higher 5.3% rate effective beginning 2003.

Those taxpayers who paid the back tax (and interest!) will receive an automatic refund. Those taxpayers who realized long-term capital gains after 4/30/02 and are due a refund will have to file for an abatement. The DOR has a special on-line abatement procedure at <https://wfb.dor.state.ma.us/webfile/wsi/>. Alternatively, click on <http://www.dor.state.ma.us/Personal/Peterson/TaxmanInstruction.htm> to download printed forms *Form CA-6* and revised *Schedule D*.

MONEY TALK

The deadline to file for a refund is June 30, 2006. Unless the refund is \$1000 or less, your refund will be paid out over 4 years, without any interest. Of course, your accountant may charge for filing the abatement forms. If you used your PC to calculate your 2002 taxes, you should be aware that TurboTax™ told me they will not issue a revised software package.

Is it worth it? You decide. I expect to get back \$1750.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS PROGRAM: EXPANDING OUR FRONTIERS

by Steve Baran and Lyn Weiner



The International Friends Program matches BOLLI members with SID (Sustainable International Development) students from around the world who are studying at the Brandeis Heller School. The Friends Program is expanding in vitality and ideas. Now, in our second year, we have matched over 40 new students with BOLLI members and continue our relationship with most of the students we knew during the first year.

We provide a social anchor to the SID students, all remarkably resilient and resourceful, who visit with our families. We have socialized at “wine and cheese” parties, shopped together, enjoyed a tour of the South End led by our own Mary Klatt, explored museums, gone to concerts and movies, and dined in ethnic restaurants and our homes. Imagination is our guide to what we can do. Our joint experiences and interests serve as points of departure to stimulate friendships. Recognizing that some students might not come fully prepared for the rigors of a New England winter, we have had clothing drives both years turning Brandeis into an extension of Filene’s Bargain Basement!

As we expand, we grow in our appreciation and understanding of the SID students who give back as much as they get:

- SID students have graciously hosted their BOLLI families at Heller School evenings, offering folklore and meals from their native countries
- This spring some SID students will participate in a BOLLI course entitled *Around the World in Ten Weeks: Progress and Problems in Developing Countries*. The students, drawing on their family and cultural backgrounds, will make presentations and discuss with BOLLI members what they are learning about professional development options.
- We are becoming increasingly sensitized to the formidable challenges facing students who have left their families behind thousands of miles away. This email from a student corresponding with one host family gives an inkling: “Thank you for the delicious meal we ate yesterday and for making us feel at home. We enjoyed everyone’s company and are grateful for your love towards us.”

The International Friends Committee looks forward to more success and would be happy to talk with anyone who wants to participate.

BOLLI Members in the News

BOLLI member Arthur Sharenow is having a photographic exhibition of his work displayed in the Pierce Gallery at the Cary Memorial Library in Lexington.

The exhibit features images from India, Mexico, Italy, and Croatia with emphasis on the people and the culture. The exhibit will run the entire month of March from the second of the month to the thirty-first. There will be an opening reception Sunday, March 5 from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.



THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS

by Carol Shedd

The Study Group Leader Resource Committee and the Membership Committee have found that one of the main reasons that people leave BOLLI is their disappointment at not getting into the courses they wanted. With such a large membership and limited space, this has been an unavoidable problem. In the interest of fairness, the course lottery system was reworked so that registrants could only win one course lottery. This additional rule was instituted for the Spring 2006 registration.

A very important change under consideration is the number of elected members to the Council. The Council voted to make the SGL Resource Committee a permanent committee. The Council is also proposing that the chairs of the four permanent committees—Membership, Lunch and Learn, SGL Resource, and Curriculum—become voting members of the Council. This will mean either increasing the size of the Council, temporarily or permanently, or having fewer elected members. This issue and the length of term served by chairpersons will be brought before members in the Spring term.

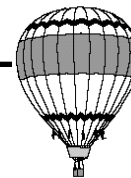
To involve all BOLLI members, the Lunch and Learn Committee has devised a form by which members can suggest speakers who they believe would be of interest to the community. The form will be posted on the BOLLI Website.

Lastly, the Council is considering ways to accommodate the growth of our community since there is no chance of obtaining more classroom space in the near future. The Long Range Planning Committee is recommending extending the hours and shortening the combined lunch time and the Lunch and Learn program so that four sessions could be held each day. They also recommend that courses have twelve sessions rather than ten.

As members we are all interested in seeing BOLLI continue as a vibrant organization, and as our representatives the Council is always open to feedback on these issues.

[The full minutes of all Council meetings can be found on the BOLLI Website]

Upcoming BOLLI Adventures



BOLLI Adventurers will tour the **Armenian Library and Museum of America** in Watertown on Friday, March 3rd. The museum has the most extensive collection of Armenian items in North America, including ancient artifacts, contemporary art, textiles, oriental rugs, oral histories, and rare books. In addition to the museum's permanent collection and exhibits, visitors will see several new exhibits. Permanent exhibits include art work done in prison by Dr. Jack Kevorkian and a history of the Armenian genocide.

The event will start with a slide lecture on the History of Armenian Art and Architecture by Lucy Der Manuelian, Professor of Art History at Tufts University, followed by a docent-led tour of the museum and a buffet lunch. Information and registration forms are on the BOLLI Website and in the Gathering Place.

Additional upcoming trips include a docent-led tour of the **National Heritage Museum** in Lexington on Friday, April 21st. The two special exhibits which we will see at that time are *Picturing What Matters* (photographs from George Eastman House Collection depicting our common American visual history) and *Gershwin to Gillespie*. In May, a trip is planned to **Tower Hill Botanic Garden** in Boylston where the group will have a docent-led tour of their various specialty gardens.

COMMUNITY PLACES OF INTEREST—NEWTON

by Tamara Chernow and Naomi Schmidt

Newton Free Library

330 Homer St., 617-796-1360

www.newtonfreelibrary.net

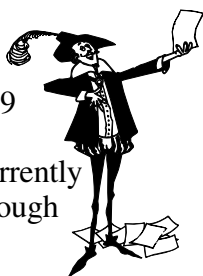
A typical month may include concerts, author talks, lectures, art and photography exhibits, camera club and singing group meetings, plus a variety of literature discussion groups. Also offered are writing workshops for short fiction writers, children's book writers, a support group for beginning writers, and a women's literature workshop. All free.

Turtle Lane Playhouse

283 Melrose St., 617-244-0169

www.turtle-lane.com

A small community theater currently presenting *The Full Monty* through March 12th.



All Newton Music School

321 Chestnut St., 617-527-4553

www.allnewtonmusicschool.com/

Music lessons for adults and children. Concert series include faculty concerts, the Con Brio series (lunch and concert), and free concerts at the Newton Free Library and the Senior Center.

Newton Symphony Orchestra

Rashi Auditorium, 15 Walnut Park
617-965-2555

www.newtonsymphony.org/

Presents concerts, opera, family concerts, and special events. The orchestra's appearances at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall have garnered rave reviews. In celebration of 40 years of great music there will be a benefit concert on March 11th with Garrison Keillor.



The New Art Center

61 Washington Park, 617-964-3424

www.newartcenter.org/

Art classes for children and adults, exhibitions, and performances. At 7 P.M. on the third Thursday of each month there is an evening of arts entertainment, including films, concerts, and performing arts. Wine, beer, and refreshments are available.



Newton History Museum at the Jackson Homestead

527 Washington St., 617-796-1450

www.ci.newton.ma.us/jackson/

Permanent and changing exhibits on a variety of historic topics. Discover what life was like for New England's earliest settlers. Learn about the abolition movement in Newton and how the Jackson family used their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center

333 Nahanton St., 617-558-6522

www.lsjcc.org

Presents drama, music, and comedy performances of the Jewish Theatre of New England, annual Jewish Book Fair with a variety of author events and talks, book club, lectures, enrichment classes, art exhibits and travel club, with some activities aimed specifically at those 55 and older. See the Web site for membership information. Non-members of the JCC are welcome to many of the programs.

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College

Devlin Hall, 140 Commonwealth Ave., 617-552-8100

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/artmuseum/

Multidisciplinary exhibitions that reach far beyond traditional art history. Current special exhibit entitled *Secular/Sacred: 11th to 16th century works from the Boston Public Library and the Museum of Fine Art* will be on display from February 19th to June 4th. Free.

Nominating Committee Needs Your Suggestions for New Council Members

We have begun the process of choosing the slate for the four open Council seats. Your input is important. Suggest your colleague (or even yourself) by contacting one of us before March 2nd: Elaine Dohan (Chair), Dee Burstein, Joel Freedman, Meryl Heier, Bill Rachlin, or Star Zieve.

CALENDAR OF CAMPUS EVENTS

compiled by Charles Raskin

SLOSBERG RECITAL HALL

781-736-3400, option 5

Mar. 11 (8 P.M., talk at 7 P.M.)

Lydian String Quartet

Schoenberg: *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4 (Transfigured Night)

Schubert: *String Quartet in C Major* (with guests Mark Berger, viola, and Andrew Mark, cello)

Admission: \$10 for Seniors and BOLLI members

Mar. 19 (3 P.M.)

An Evening with Madame F

A free musical drama created by WSRC Artist and Scholar Claudia Stevens for her performance as pianist, singer, and actor. Adopting the persona of an elderly concentration camp musician who had performed at Auschwitz, Stevens uses music actually played and sung by women inmates there, as well as first-hand accounts, to depict the physical struggle and ethical dilemma of those who survived through music performance. The daughter of Holocaust survivors, she also meditates on the issue of treating the Holocaust as the subject for artistic expression. One of the most honored Holocaust-related performances before the public, *An Evening with Madame F* was produced for television by PBS affiliates WCVB and WHTJ. It has been programmed in over thirty U.S. cities and has been presented by leading academic institutions across the nation.

WEDNESDAY CONCERTS AT NOON

Rapaporte Treasure Hall, Goldfarb Library

Mar. 1

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

Mar. 29

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

SPINGOLD THEATER

(Laurie Theater)

781-736-3400, option 5

Things Beyond Our Control

by Jesse Kellerman

Mar. 16 -18, 23-26 (8 P.M.) and Mar. 25-26 (2 P.M.)

Lives intersect in strange and unpredictable ways in this award-winning drama (Princess Grace Award) by Brandeis alumnus Jesse Kellerman. When a man on a bike is struck by a taxicab in Dallas, the ripple effect turns relationships upside down and characters find themselves confronting the truth about the past and the possibilities for happiness in the future. Admission: \$8-\$10 for Seniors and BOLLI members.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Atrium, Shapiro Campus Center (4 P.M.)

Mar. 28

Evelyn Murphy

More than 40 years after the Civil Rights Act prohibited gender bias in the workplace, women are still earning 25% less than comparably employed men. In *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men—And What to Do about It* Evelyn Murphy and E.J. Graff, Women's Studies Research Center scholars at Brandeis University, examine recent lawsuits that prove discrimination is still very much a problem. Murphy and Graff analyze five types of discrimination and their affect on women's salaries. Murphy is the former Lt. Governor of Massachusetts.