

BLOODY THOUGHTS AND VENGEFUL DEEDS AT THE WINTER INTENSIVE

by Anne L. Walker



Dr. William Flesch loves “wheels within wheels.” This explains why he finds Shakespeare endlessly fascinating. He seeks out “elegant and complex plotting—stories where things come back and turn out to matter when you least expect it.” During one tremendously satisfying week with thirty BOLLI students, the themes, characterizations, and language of *Hamlet* were under scrutiny. Flesch also provided us with insights into the relevance of Shakespeare to a contemporary audience.

For example, screen writers still follow Shakespeare’s lead in plot development. Anything can happen in the first ten minutes, but what follows a chaotic beginning must build toward a resolution by the end. Flesch also cites the technique of “convergence” which is often seen in American movies. This technique allows for all or most characters to be in the last scene. Often “window characters” in Shakespeare allow the audience to better understand the main character. The window character may also be the antagonist or have another combined role in the drama.

Shakespeare is famous for developing the revenge motif plot that is popular today. In television and film, the abused protagonist vows to “get even” and by the end of the show, he is victorious. *The Sopranos* and *The Godfather* follow this model. We care about the protagonist and feel satisfaction at his triumph even if he is not totally “nice”.

Shakespearean dramas stress well-roundedness of characterization. Shakespeare’s memorable characters have great interiority and complexity. As Hamlet soliloquizes we become aware of the conflict that he is weighing between justice and loyalty, pride and revenge, passion and inaction. Indeed, Shakespeare was the first writer to feature several of these well rounded characters in one play. These characters resonate with readers universally.

Flesch feels that Shakespeare would enjoy contemporary series like *Deadwood* and *The Wire* because of the complex plots, the amazing characters, and the colorful language used. The Bard would appreciate the complexity of Ingmar Bergman and most probably would enjoy the new James Bond version of *Casino Royale* with its complex and satisfying plot.



William Flesch

The 49-year-old Flesch, who earned his Ph.D. from Cornell, also teaches Spenser, Milton, adolescent literature, and film noir at Brandeis. His forthcoming book, *Comeuppance*, uses game theory and evolutionary psychology to explain why people have powerful emotional reactions to fiction.

Prof. Flesch banters easily with his students and enjoys their savvy questions and insightful comments. He believes *Hamlet* is “wasted on the young,” so he was delighted to be sharing it with his BOLLI class. Every day was packed with humor, literary analysis, and thoughtful insights by this professor, whose scholarship, coupled with his intense enthusiasm for his subject, were infectious.

OLLI IN THE SUN

by Joan Kleinman

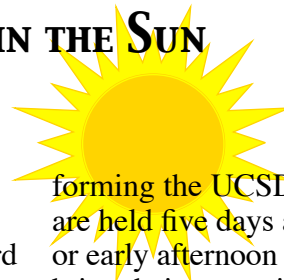


“East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,” wrote Rudyard Kipling. But East Coast Osher did encounter West Coast Osher when I attended classes at OLLI UCSD (University of California at San Diego) this winter on a trip to La Jolla, CA.

With over 30 courses and more than 20 lectures available for the winter term, you may attend any and all classes you’d like. Yes, you read that correctly. It’s Tuesday and you’re in a literary mood, join the *Best Short Stories* class. Fascinated with world politics, come to Friday’s *Great Decisions and Foreign Policy* class on the Middle East. Right side of your brain need a workout? Attend Wednesday’s session of *Western Music from the Baroque to the 20th Century*. The word “lottery” is unknown here.

Easy? Not quite. While a course does convene regularly for five two-hour sessions in a term, it meets *every other week*. So you have to know if it’s an A week or a B week. Confuse the two and your short story class will have morphed into *The U.S. in World War Two*.

Begun as The Institute for Continued Learning in 1974, it changed its name upon receipt of an Osher grant in 2004. Home is a small one-story wooden building, nestled in a cluster of such structures



forming the UCSD Extension Department. Classes are held five days a week, year-round, in a morning or early afternoon time block. For lunch, folks can bring their own, visit a kiosk café adjacent to the Osher building, or go to a nearby student cafeteria. Most eat and socialize at patio-style tables on the outdoor courtyard, even in January (sigh!).

With its balmy California climate, OLLI UCSD attracts a species rarely, if ever, seen at BOLLI: the snowbird. Many seasonal residents populate the winter term. Familiar BOLLI faces this winter were Steve and Bernice Baran, Eileen Mitchell and Ed Goldberg, and my husband, Allan, and myself.

My backpack stayed light. No multi-page syllabi or weighty handouts, just a notation in the catalogue of the required book (if any) and what pages to read for each session.

Most courses are peer-facilitated, ranging from the smaller discussion-oriented to the larger, pure lecture-type courses that may have no homework at all. Class size varies hugely; and because of the flexible attendance policy, the feeling in each class is not as intimate as I am used to. Augmenting the program, a “Distinguished Lecturer” series draws experts from many fields as guest presenters.

But, despite logistical differences, the two OLLIs share the most essential ingredient for a successful program: a group of lively, interesting, and inquisitive people eager to learn in a friendly, stimulating atmosphere.

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

Richard Glantz, *Publisher*

Tamara Chernow, *Co-Editor*

Carole Grossman, *Co-Editor*

Carol Shedd, *Secretary*

Charles Raskin

Katherine Raskin

Naomi Schmidt

Len Heier, *Photographer*

Email us at:
BALIBanner@aol.com
Next deadline:
3/2/07

Banner archive: www.brandeis.edu/programs/bali/Banner%20Archive/index.html

WHO'S ON FIRST

by Katherine Raskin

In the 2006 Fall semester a course was offered entitled *New Voices—Looking at Recent Immigration Through Fiction*.



This interesting course was developed jointly by six new SGLs: Bernice Baran, Elaine Dohan, Carole Grossman, Dianne Hoaglin, Sandy Traiger, and Anne Walker. Teaching an interesting subject through literature was a creative approach, and the course turned out to be exceptional.

All of the SGLs are lovers of literature. They had been in classes together but not all knew each other well before working on the curriculum for this course. The six members decided that if they could team teach, it would be easier, less intimidating, and much more fun. After agreeing on the timely theme of immigration, they began to read novels and short stories written by contemporary immigrants to the United States. They looked for talented authors of relatively unknown works. Each read many novels and short stories during the one-year planning process, and together they selected four novels and four short stories. They met regularly to write questions and discussion topics for each selection so that the classes would have structure. Each selected the novel or short stories she wanted to

present. All of the facilitators attended every class which was essential to making the classes work so well. They became time-keepers, informed the facilitator when people wanted to speak, engaged in the discussions, and then met to review each session. They were very open to each other's criticisms to learn what worked and what didn't. The classes were well attended, and almost everyone participated in each discussion.

We all learned a great deal about immigration, how difficult it is to assimilate into our culture without the knowledge of English, and how people from different cultures have strong ties to the customs of their countries of origin. The course celebrated the new voices of four Asian-American novelists from Korea, China, Vietnam, and India. The short stories included other immigrant groups from Mexico, Russia, and Africa. Participants presented brief biographical sketches of the authors studied; supplementary readings about immigration were offered on an eBoard.

Not only did we hear about new immigrant voices in literature, but we heard from six new voices from BOLLI who led us into a new experience of a jointly taught course. It was a wonderful adventure for all of us, including the facilitators. Hopefully this course will be offered again in the future so that more BOLLI members will have the opportunity to participate in this successful experiment of a course being led by multiple study group leaders.

CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

BOLLI Adventures for Spring 2007

Sackler Museum at Harvard

Docents will conduct tours of two exhibits: *Cultivating Virtue: Botanical Motifs and Symbols in East Asian Art* and *Classified Documents: The Social Museum of Harvard University, 1903-1931*.

Institute of Contemporary Art

A tour of the exciting new museum on the Boston waterfront including architectural highlights, wonderful views, 21st century art, and the current exhibition *Super Vision*.

Broadmoor Audubon Sanctuary

Walk outdoors with a naturalist on trails through wildlife habitats. We may see wildflowers and bluebirds in the meadow, nesting herons by the marsh, migrating spring warblers in the woods.

March 22th, Thursday

April 12th, Thursday

May 8th, Tuesday



MEMORY LANE

by Elaine Reisman



Alzheimer's Disease, a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain, has "come out of the closet." It has become an acceptable subject for discussion, not only in the area of health, but in government and social planning as well. It is important to be informed and to recognize signs of Alzheimer's in ourselves and in others. Early detection makes possible interventions which may slow

down the progression of the disease.

Over 4 million people in the U.S. have the disease. One in 10 people over 65 and nearly half of those over 85 have Alzheimer's. While memory loss is the hallmark of the disease, sporadic and short incidents of forgetfulness do not necessarily signify Alzheimer's. We all have had experiences of walking into a room to get something and suddenly finding that we don't know what we were looking for, or driving along and feeling as though we don't know where we are.

Generally, changes in the brain begin 20 years prior to appearance of symptoms. Indications of Alzheimer's Disease may be subtle and vary in magnitude. The precursor condition to Alzheimer's is referred to as *mild cognitive impairment*. Most of the people who have this condition will develop Alzheimer's within five years. When symptoms appear, or if there is suspicion of dementia, it is important to get an evaluation from a neurologist. Behavioral and neurological testing are important although there still is no definitive diagnosis for Alzheimer's short of an autopsy of the brain.

Alzheimer's can show up in loss of cognitive ability or emotional changes, and it is characterized by a consistent pattern of several of the following symptoms:

- memory loss, especially short-term memory
- frequent repetition of questions or statements
- difficulty performing tasks
- problems with language affecting articulation or word retrieval
- disorientation to time or place
- poor or decreased judgment
- problems with abstract thinking
- misplacing things or putting them in illogical places
- changes in personality, mood, and behavior
- loss of initiative
- wandering.

These same symptoms may pertain to other forms of dementia. Numerous factors unrelated to dementia may result in similar symptoms. Therefore, a thorough evaluation should include a family and behavioral history, a complete physical with neurological exam, and current assessment for depression, side effects from medication, diabetes, thyroid problems, excessive use of alcohol, poor diet, vitamin deficiencies, or infections.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's, but there is much research on causes, medications, and genetic components. Current medical treatment includes a variety of drugs which can slow the progression of the disease, particularly when started early. However, researchers concur that physical exercise and stimulating mental activity are at the top of their list for preventing or counteracting the effects of the illness. Diet is also emphasized.

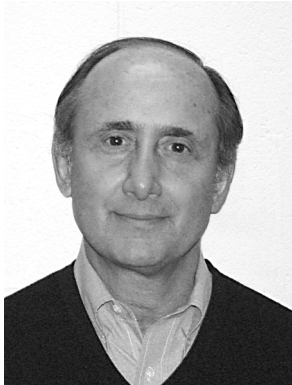
Attention is also being given to stress on the family, particularly the caregiver. Educational programs and support groups are increasing partly because the strain frequently results in death of the caregiver before the death of the afflicted person.

A good resource is the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Association, at www.alzmass.org and at 311 Arsenal St. in Watertown, 617-868-6718. They are committed to providing support services, information, educational programs, research, and advocacy.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

EQUITY VS. FAIRNESS IN ESTATE PLANNING

by Gerald P. Tishler



You have three adult children: Adam, an engineer who is married with four children; Eve, who has already amassed a large net worth from commodities trading and plans to remain single; and Job, a sculptor, whose wife left him to care for their handicapped daughter. You and your spouse are in your early

70s, healthy and well off financially and are preparing to visit your lawyer to revise your estate plans. You both want to do the right thing by your children and grandchildren, but what's "right?"

This is one of the few areas of estate planning that is not primarily tax-driven. There is no right or wrong. It should be entirely your decision, with your lawyer simply outlining the options, not directing you. Here are some of the alternatives, putting aside the technical structure of trusts and the like. You could provide that your estate would be divided *per capita* among your children and grandchildren, which means that each of them that survives you takes an equal share, 1/8th in the example above. This is mathematically symmetrical but treats all generations alike. Alternatively, you could provide that your estate be divided *per stirpes*, which means that each of your children take an equal share. For example, if Adam doesn't survive you, each of his four children take a 1/12th share (one quarter of one third). This disposition is quite common, but doesn't take into account the special circumstances of Job's daughter, or Adam's large family, in relation to Eve's financial independence. So, while *per capita* and *per stirpes* distributions may be equitable, are they fair?

There is another way, and that is the so-called "spray" trust. That enables your trustee to allocate both income and principal where it's needed, in accordance with some ascertainable standard, even if it's only a general one, such as the "health, education, comfort and welfare" of the beneficiary. In that way, the needs of Job's daughter can take financial precedence over Eve, who doesn't need any income from her parents' trusts. It's a great solution, but it does generate its own problems. Adam, for example, may perceive himself to be much more industrious than his sculptor brother, and deserving of support to send his four kids to private colleges. Or Eve, insecure without a pile of money, may feel that she is *entitled* to a third of everything and would rather receive it and then help out her nieces and nephews at her discretion. What's more, Job might resent a trustee making these allocations. So, what does a conscientious grandparent do to achieve the right result without precipitating internecine warfare?

ELDER LAW

The answer is to talk it through with your children before you see your lawyer to obtain their buy-in to the concept, and to also obtain their suggestion on who would be a good trustee. Maybe there won't be agreement among them, so you could discuss a "Plan B", perhaps dividing the income equally among the three children, but giving the trustee discretion to spray a small proportion of the principal each year to where it's needed. There are other variations; but if your kids support the concept, you will have left them a greater legacy than the trust funds.

[Note: this marks the appearance of a new column devoted to elder law. This article was written by a new member, Gerry Tishler, recently retired from Brown Rudnick. Please let the Banner know if you would like to see more articles of this nature.]

"How do I look?" "Is my hair OK?" "Smile!"

This was the chatter in the Gathering Place last November when 180 members stepped up to be photographed for the forthcoming BOLLI Face Book. Thanks to photographers Barry David, Charlie Raskin, and Harry Veron for their cheerful, tireless work. For those not yet photographed, another opportunity will be scheduled during the middle of the Spring term.



STEPPING UP FOR A COLLEAGUE

by Sandie Bernstein

When Bernie Reisman was retiring as Director of the Hornstein Program of Jewish Communal Service, he envisioned the creation of a life-long learning program held, above all, in a supportive communal setting. This fall when Bill Rachlin became ill after the first session of his BOLLI anatomy and physiology course, *You: the Owner's Manual*, the system was tested.

Without hesitation, fellow physician Ed Goldberg, appeared that very morning to substitute for Bill. He was succeeded by BOLLI members Dr. Peter Brem, Dr. Michael Berger, Dr. Bernie Geffen, and by Brandeis graduate student Tracey Seier. Each one stepped up to the plate to teach, aided by Bill's prepared readings and slides.

When Ed Goldberg returned to teach the Endocrine System he said, "In substituting, I felt that I had benefited the most through my preparation. I learned an unbelievable amount about the complexity of this feedback mechanism, the newest data, and how it relates to our daily lives." He shared his enthusiasm with the class through fascinating analogies and real life cases.

As he awaited surgery some eight weeks later, Bill noted, "Special thanks are due to Myrna Cohen, whose idea it was to find substitute leaders, to Sharon and Carol, who performed with their usual efficiency, and to the students who stuck with it when we were so rudely interrupted."

Hail to the BOLLI spirit that lives and its system that works when tested. We all benefited.

SID STUDENTS ENJOY AMERICAN THANKSGIVING

by Judy Cohen

The Friday after Thanksgiving was a special experience for my family and for six SID students. We shared our tradition of *Shabbos*, and the students shared stories of their families and their faraway homes. Our understanding and respect for each other grows and is precious.



photo by Judy Cohen

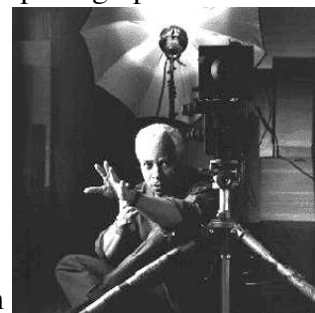
Top row: Uttam Babu Shrestha (Nepal), Shamila Daluwatte (Sri Lanka), Maria Nandago (Uganda)
Middle row: Lucy Njagi (Kenya), Sujata Shrestha (Nepal)
Bottom row: Gul Shamim (Pakistan), Judy Cohen

SHUTTERBUGS SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

by Richard Glantz

Lou Jones captivated thirteen BOLLI members with his tales of how a commercial photographer makes a living.

It is more than equipment—Lou shoots both film and digital in large, medium, and 35mm. formats. It is more than the studio—the doors to his high-ceilinged Roxbury studio open so wide a car can pull in to have its picture



Lou Jones taken. It is more than creativity and attention to detail—his near-abstract rendering of window shades for a forthcoming magazine ad will stop any casual page-flipper. In my opinion, Lou's success derives from his absolute *devotion* to his craft—Lou lives and sleeps in his studio. Indeed, we were never sure whether the living room and the kitchen in Lou's studio were props or his actual living room and kitchen.

4-CLASS PILOT TASK FORCE REPORT

by Nancy Rawson and Ron Levy

At the December meeting of the BOLLI Council, Nancy Rawson presented the 4-Class Pilot Task Force report and the results of its survey.

Of the 387 active members, 237 responded, a gratifying return of over 60%, with many offering additional useful anecdotal comments. The returns were about evenly divided between those who preferred the 3-class schedule and those who preferred 4 classes. Under the 3-class schedule, over 80% of the respondents said they would be willing to take a first or last period class; under the 4 class schedule, only about 50% expressed such willingness. Additional analysis of Fall 2005 (3 periods) and Fall 2006 (4 periods) attendance showed that in both cases, the first and middle periods were essentially filled and the last periods, particularly the 4th period in Fall 2006, were the least popular.

The two most negative aspects of the new schedule were the difficulties of the early morning and late afternoon commutes (though many found them less difficult than expected, and 77% found their commutes acceptable), and the unacceptably long wait between classes if one ended up with one class in the first period and one in the fourth. On the positive side were the smaller class sizes (average 19 vs. 23) and the greater number of course offerings (36 vs. 30). Some members felt that there was less opportunity for socialization with the new schedule because friends' schedules did not overlap as much as previously. Others felt it gave them more time to socialize between classes.

The comments received included the above concerns, suggestions that a more comfortable waiting

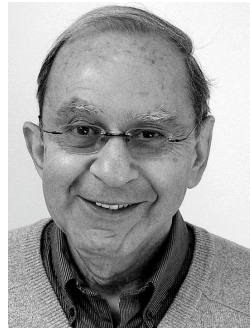
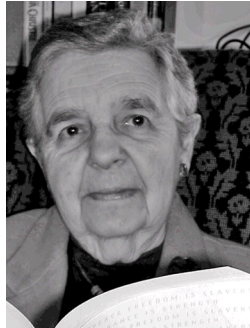
area and a quiet place to study would be nice, and various suggestions for ways of improving the time and activities between classes. It was also suggested that there might be adjustments to the lottery rules which would spread the advantages and disadvantages of the expanded schedule more evenly.

On balance, the Task Force recommended that the new schedule be continued, its advantages out-weighting its disadvantages. The Task Force

made the following recommendations to address some of the issues:

- Run a shuttle bus at appropriate times between Gosman, the upper campus, and the library
- Provide an area devoted to quiet study and reading
- Plan additional activities for the middle periods, including encouraging greater use of Brandeis athletic facilities
- Vary scheduling so individual SGLs and specific courses are assigned different time slots and days from those in a previous semester
- When the lottery is computerized, consider weighting requests according to a member's previous "good" or "bad" luck.

The Council commended the Task Force for its thorough and useful report and will take under consideration its recommendations. It also appreciated the cooperation members showed in completing the survey and making constructive suggestions. Task Force members were Chair Nancy Rawson (*Membership*), Ruth Antonoff (*Resource*), Marty Nichols (*Curriculum*), Sandy Traiger (*Lunch and Learn*), and Carol Allman-Morton (*Asst. Director*).



Incentives to be a Study Group Leader

- First choice of any class you wish to attend
- Membership fee is waived (multiple SGLs leading a course split the one waiver)
The shuttle fee is not waived

CALENDAR OF CAMPUS EVENTS

compiled by Charles Raskin

SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER

Check with the box office (781-736-3400, option 5) for tickets
Remember, BOLLI members receive a substantial discount

Mar. 4 (3 P.M.)

Catch a Rising Star!

Neal Hampton, conductor

Featuring the winners of the 2006 Brandeis and Wellesley concerto competitions:

- (Kate Housman), Strauss *Horn Concerto No. 1*
- (Arum Chun), Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 2 mvt 1*
- (Heather Rich), Strauss *Four Last Songs: Beim Schlafengehn*
- (Aubre Carreon-Aguilar), Mozart aria *Vado, ma dove*

Mar. 10 (8 P.M.)

Graham Patten Violin Recital

- Kreisler *Recitativo and Scherzo, Op. 6*
- Paganini *Caprice 13, Op. 1*
- Bach *Partita no. 2 in D Minor*
- Brahms *Sonata No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78*
- Smetana *Piano trio in G Minor, Op. 15*

Mar. 17 (7 P.M.)

Lydian String Quartet

Joaquin Turina *La Oración del Torero*

Villa-Lobos *Quartet No. 6*

Ravel *String Quartet*

Mar. 24 (8 P.M.)

Lydian String Quartet (and guest artists)

New works by eight Brandeis graduate composers

Mar. 9 (8 P.M.)

Big Wolf Jazz Concert

Bob Nieske, director

Bob's 10-piece Big Wolf Project continues the development of jazz composition for larger groups along the historic path set by composers Gil Evans, George Russell, and Jimmy Giuffre. Bob's compositions are intelligent, challenging, and accessible.

Mar. 16 (8 P.M.)

Evan Hirsch: A Fantastic Journey

Solo recital of evocative music from three centuries

- Haydn *Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:33*
- Schumann *Fantasie, Op. 17*
- Messiaen *Vingt Régards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*

Mar. 18 (7 P.M.)

Brandeis Chamber Choir

James Olesen, director

A cappella music of the ages, from the early 1500s to the present day

Mar. 25 (7 P.M.)

SERP Trio

The Senior Recital and final performance by our outstanding music scholarship string and piano trio: Graham Patten, Sidney Cohen, and Joshua Klein

SPINGOLD THEATER

781-736-3400, option 5

Amazones: The Women Master Drummers of Guinea

Mar. 3 (8 P.M.)

A thrilling evening of dynamic African drumming, song, and dance that has been hailed by critics as "a heavenly outpouring of throbbing jubilation, forceful uplifting beats, and pounding enthusiasm that is hypnotic". West Africa's Les Percussion de Guinee is widely recognized as one of the most extraordinary drumming ensembles in the world. It has been, by custom, all male. Now, for the first time, these famous men share the stage with women master drummers, the Amazones. Admission: \$10 for BOLLI members

ROSE ART MUSEUM

Mar. 1 (7 P.M.)

Clare Rojas (via satellite)

The Museum presents the Clare Rojas catalogue and artist-in-residence award

Mar. 3 (2 P.M.)

Gallery Talk

A talk on the exhibitions with Director Michael Rush

GOLDFARB LIBRARY

Rapaporte Treasure Hall

Mar. 7 (noon)

Lydian String Quartet

Same program as Mar. 17 (Slosberg)
Admission: free