

BOLLI Banner

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis

Vol. 8 Number 7 May 2008

“O” IS FOR OSHER

by Ron Levy



Sharon Sokoloff and I attended the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes’ conference in Phoenix AZ in early April. (In case you are wondering, the “O” in *BOLLI* stands for *Osher*.) I want to tell you a little about the work of the Osher Foundation and a few of my outtakes from the conference.

You can Google Bernard Osher’s business and family background, but suffice it to say that he is known as the “quiet philanthropist”—a patron of education, integrated medicine, and the arts. He supports numerous cultural, educational, and Jewish projects in North America. The Osher network of LLIs has grown to 119 of over 500 LLIs in the U.S. By my estimate, since 1977 Mr. Osher has donated about \$100 million to these schools and to the OLLI National Research Center, through grants, endowments, and other funding. The network of schools is in 48 states and has about 70,000 members. To date, BOLLI and over forty others have each received a \$1 million endowment; eight, with 1,000+ students, have each received \$2 million.

The values of conferences such as this one is to learn from formal sessions, to network, and to explore how other schools are handling issues similar to ours. Osher pays 100% of all travel and attendance costs for two people, which they suggest be a staff person and a member leader. I attended seven of the eight formal sessions (and sat by the pool for

the eighth). Sharon and a colleague gave an excellent presentation on dealing with growing pains. Other sessions covered financial strategies, AARP, leveraging member volunteers, and a session that dealt with managing emergencies and behavioral problems.

But the greatest value came from the informal discussions in the breaks and at meal times. A real eye-opener was realizing that only 32 schools in the OLLI network are private, with the remainder state schools. How do the state-sponsored schools differ? While only some private schools have dedicated classrooms with built-in A/V equipment, many state schools do. Other differences—some profound—include revenue sources, significantly lower fees at state schools, different fee structures, access to faculty to teach and lecture, multiple locations, subsidies of salaries, and space. A local example is U. Mass-Boston, with campuses at Columbia Point and in Plymouth. It is similar in en-rollment to BOLLI, and it has an Osher endowment. However, this makes it eligible to receive a 50% matching grant from the state, which can grow to \$1 million if membership increases to 1,000 and it is awarded a second Osher endowment. In addition, 35% of salaries are subsidized.

I was particularly interested, on behalf of BOLLI, in learning about different member-leadership models, the nominating process to the governing body, and relationships with the host universities. I found no model that mirrored BOLLI, but I brought back much information that will help us as we go into developing Chapter 3 of our existence.

THE STRUCTURE OF OSHER

by Sharon Sokoloff



photo by Richard Glantz

Ron Levy, Council Chair, and I, as Director, represented our program at the 2008 Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Annual Conference in Litchfield AZ.

The Osher Network is made up of three parts:

- The Osher Foundation itself
- The National Resource Center (NRC) at the University of Southern Maine (USM) in Portland
- The 119 OLLIs from all but two states.

The focus of this article is the NRC, headed up by Executive Director Kali Lightfoot. The NRC, in its three years of existence, has created infrastructure such as databases and communication mechanisms (website, OLLI blog), and the annual conference. Using the blog, OLLI Directors query and answer each other on a range of topics. The NRC has published two editions of a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, *LLI Review*, the only professional journal on the topic of lifelong learning.

The NRC is in new and exciting developmental territory. It is identifying and seeking funding for national collaborations within the network and with other organizations that will extend the reach of the Osher Network and benefit our programs and members in a variety of ways. Here are three examples:

- 1. Science:** The NRC submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) this past year. It was turned down *but* with a great deal of encouragement and specific input about how to resubmit. The purpose of the proposed program is to benefit school-age children utilizing members' expertise and passion for science. If the NSF funds the project, OLLIs will be encouraged to submit a proposal to the NRC to be one of ten programs in the pilot project.
- 2. Civic Engagement:** The NRC is also working on a proposal to create "OLLI member consultants" who will work with managers of volunteers in non-profit organizations to help the managers understand how to use older volunteers. Collaborating with the Muskie School for Public Service at USM, they are seeking funding from a variety of sources including Atlantic Philanthropies. The project will begin with New England and spread nationwide in Phase II.
- 3. Distance Education:** The NRC is also working with the Muskie School on a project to survey all OLLIs to establish a baseline of what is being done in OLLIs with online and/or distance education. One possible outcome of the survey is a national OLLI initiative in online or distance learning.

Being part of the Osher Network is not about the money—it is about being part of an unprecedented learning community of mature adults throughout our nation. Stay tuned.

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MEMBERS OPEN FORUM

by Tamara Chernow



The April Open Forum began with an announcement by Council Chair Ron Levy that the membership figures for this year were over the acceptable number of registrants and that current members would be interviewed and asked to justify

their place at BOLLI. A gasp was followed by silence until Ron asked, "What is today's date?" Laughter followed as we all realized it was April 1.

Spring 2008 membership is slightly less than membership in Spring 2007. We are at capacity, and the admissions policy adopted last year is on the BOLLI Web site. In brief, after September 1, 2008, associate members cannot convert to full membership. After that date they can stay on as associate members but will have to apply as a new member for full membership. New applicants will get priority if they are related to a current member as a spouse or significant other.

Ron pointed out that we do not have a numerical limit at this time, and there were spaces available in some of the classes; but there are two other controlling factors to growth. One is the capacity of the Lunch and Learn room (Napoli), which is alleviated somewhat by closed circuit television in the adjoining room (Nessel). The second is the space in the Gathering Place, which has also been manageable because some people eat on the balcony and others in Nessel or Napoli.

Some questions and responses from the Forum follow:

- What thoughts have been given to expansion?

We will not get more space or time in Gosman and the only classes at the BOLLI house are the computer courses, so there are no plans for expansion at this time.

- Can we have early morning classes start later and late afternoon classes end earlier, making them each a little shorter?

That would be impractical as most people prefer longer classes, but the Curriculum Committee is encouraging SGLs to offer popular classes in the early or late periods.

- What progress is the task force on grants making?

Three BOLLI members with grant writing experience have come forward, and the task force has been working to identify grant sources. The task force is in the process of filling out applications to these grant sources. The task force would appreciate receiving any information members have of a family foundation or an organization that they worked for which gives grants.

Suggestions from members included:

- Brandeis athletes (with whom we share Gosman) would like greater attendance at their local meets, so check the schedule on the Web site and come out and root for the home team!
- Don't save more than one seat in Napoli for friends attending Lunch and Learn.
- If you see someone sitting alone, usually a new member, introduce yourself and be welcoming.
- Respect the line for the shuttle to J lot and don't push ahead of those waiting longer..

BOLLI Calendar for Fall Classes

Classes begin on September 16 and end on December 10

No classes the weeks of September 30, October 7, and November 25

ENDOWMENT FUND PROGRESS

by Ron Levy

We are having a gratifying response to the BOLLI Endowment Fund campaign. Over 175 donations have been received as of early April, of which 66 were tribute donations and the remaining 109, un-named gifts to sustain BOLLI into the future. We are especially grateful to the following recent and generous donors, whom we list among the “Friends” in the BOLLI Boosters Society:

Diane and Stuart Altman
Barry and Elizabeth David
Beth and Michael Davis
John and Audrey Frank
Evelyn and John Neumeyer

Bob and Bobbie Palter
Bob and Cynthia Pill
Bob and Lotte Russo
Renata and Ed Selig
Arlene and Howard Weintraub

Anonymous

The Fund balance, excluding the Osher endowment, stands at about \$100,000. Please consider making a new or additional gift to the fund before the end of our fiscal year in June. You can download a contribution form from the top right hand corner of the BOLLI Web site. If you wish to discuss the donation of appreciated shares, a multi-year pledge, or setting up a charitable gift annuity, please call Les Blicher, 617-244-5465, or Ron Levy, 617-964-6740.

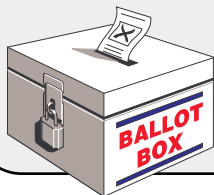
Results of Council Election

Three new members were elected to the Council:

Neil Bernstein
Beth Davis
Bob Pill

Outgoing members are:

Renée Fine
Joel Freedman
Esther Scharfman
Carol Shedd



Summer Intensives

The Press and Politics: Campaign 2008
Prof. Eileen McNamara

Different and In-Depth Look at 2 Classic Films
Prof. Paul Morrison

9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M., Monday-Friday, June 9-13
Hassenfeld Conference Center

These courses fill up quickly. Register soon.

Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 8th, 1 to 3 P.M.
Hassenfeld Conference Center

• Members Art Show precedes the meeting at noon

- ◊ Presentation by Susan Wawrzaszek, Chief University Librarian, on the libraries of the future
- ◊ Reports by the Standing Committee Chairs
- ◊ Recognition of our SGLs, committee members, and other volunteers
- ◊ Presentations by our Director and our Financial Liaison
- ◊ Introduction of newly elected Council members and officers

Light refreshments served.

WOMEN'S STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER

WHERE RESEARCH, ART, AND ACTIVISM CONVERGE

by *Phyllis Pressman Cohen*



The next time you travel up to BOLLI from the J parking lot, look to your left after you go over the railroad tracks and you will see a modest, red brick building with the main entrance at the back. This is the *Women's Studies Research Center* [WSRC] which was deliberately oriented this way so that the natural light

would be optimum to view the many wonderful and inspiring painting, sculptural, photographic, and other creative arts exhibits which fill the continually evolving space.

Prof. Shulamit (Shula) Reinharz, director of the Center, founded the WSRC in 2001 after ten years as head of the Women's Studies Program on campus, in order to have a supportive environment where research and art could be integrated for the purpose of activism. To realize this goal, space had to be devoted to art. Shula is justifiably proud of the fact that the construction of the center involved the adaptive re-use of 10,000 square feet of industrial warehouse space in a gateway building to the Brandeis campus. An outdoor garden and sculpture area greet you when you approach this facility and alert you to the fact that something special awaits you inside.

Every aspect of the interior was carefully planned and executed to maximize areas for multidisciplinary research, artistic display, and social interaction, and to foster a sense of community. Besides the exhibit areas there are multiple offices which line the perimeter, conference rooms, a lecture/film hall, a working art studio and three [soon to be four] libraries which reflect the fields of interest pursued at the center. There is also a

grand piano for concerts and other performances. Even a kitchen and a play area for children are included.

As I toured the building with Shula, a sophomore woman's photographic exhibit was being hung in preparation for the Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts. Being one of the Festival's venues illustrates how well the WSRC is integrated into the Brandeis community. Integration of all aspects of campus activity—social, educational, and cultural—is one of the guiding principles of the University.

There are three distinct but decidedly equal elements of the WSRC:

- (1) The *ART Program* utilizes art in all its forms to promote dialogue about women and gender
- (2) The *Hadassah-Brandeis Institute* develops fresh ways of thinking about Jews and gender worldwide by producing and promoting scholarly research and artistic projects
- (3) The *Scholars Program* is an innovative and supportive community of scholars whose mission is to focus on questions related to women's lives and gender dynamics. An essential part of this program is the Student-Scholar Partnership where talented undergrads are given the opportunity to develop serious, productive, and engaging relationships

with scholars and faculty, spanning diverse areas of intellectual inquiry and professional development.

BOLLI members receive email invitations to attend exhibits, lectures, and concerts, which are free and open to the public. To learn more about this component of the Brandeis community, visit:

www.brandeis.edu/centers/wsrc/



Michael Price
"Woman Seated"

gift of Philip and Muriel Berman

BOLLI IS MORE THAN TUESDAY OR WEDNESDAY

by Elaine Dohan



One wonderful bonus I discovered when I joined BOLLI was that I could always find someone who wanted to do things that had been on my list for a long time, discover new places to explore, and meet new people to learn from. For me those first “someones” were Eileen Mitchell and Tamara Chernow.

Tackling our long list of “to do’s” was easy and fun. Finding new places to investigate was also not difficult in this culturally rich area. But getting people to instruct and enrich our experiences was more difficult. Not many groups wanted to arrange a lecture or a tour for three people. And not many organizations wanted to provide the three of us with special “extras” like the archives at WGBH, the greenhouses at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, or a lecture by author Matthew Pearl at the Longfellow house.

Undaunted, we formed *OLLI@Brandeis Adventures*. We did some research, signed up a docent or two, found a reasonable place to eat, and sent out fliers. The rest is history. It turned out that lots of

folks at BOLLI wanted to do the things on our list. Many had lists of their own, which they shared with us. And BOLLI members are social as well as curious. The lunch times have been almost as much fun as the event part of the trip.

Some of the 28 adventures we have enjoyed with friends new and old include the Mt. Auburn Cemetery (our first trip), the Armenian Library and Museum, Trinity Church and the Boston Public Library, the Fogg Museum with lunch at the M.I.T. Faculty Club, Fruitlands, and the De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Garden.

We have tried to keep it simple. We take people on a first-come basis. We try to keep a waiting list but are finding that BOLLI members are too busy to be able to wait. As soon as we have reached our numerical limit we notify those who are “in”. The checks from those who didn’t get their registrations in fast enough are destroyed. We preview restaurants and locations. We make certain the docents are prepared to deal with our physical limitations. Then we just cross our fingers and hope for another successful adventure. So far, Eileen, Tamara, and I have enjoyed both providing and participating in these value-added events.



INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS TOUR THE NORTH END



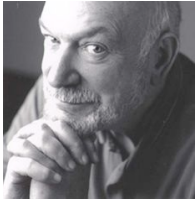
photo by Judith Cohen

BOLLI member Mary Klatt, along with her business partner Sue Cnudde (not shown), experienced guides and teachers, led a tour of 19 BOLLI International Friends and their foreign graduate students on a tour of Boston’s North End on one cold and windy day, April 5th. For most of the students, this was their first time in the United States and certainly their first time seeing where this country began to discuss separation from England.

FOUR WIDE-RANGING SGLs

by Joan Kleinman and Naomi Schmidt

Among the growing cadre of study group leaders, a few teach not only in their professional areas but also in diametrically opposite subjects. Four such SGLs discussed what inspires them to venture across the academic spectrum and what their experience is like.



Richard Glantz always wondered what motivated people to invent things. A manager in 20th century computer technology, he was intrigued by how past technologies such as the printing press, the plow, the clock, and written language influenced history and society. Convinced that the best way to learn something is to teach it, he wrote a proposal centered around the book *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. Later, he moved from the technological to the arts with the course *The Art of Photography: Images that Speak to Us* co-led with Bud Elliot. In both types of courses, Richard's aim is to create a demanding curriculum and require full participation of class members.



What lured Peter Schmidt to BOLLI was the opportunity to suggest that contemporary classical music *can* be enjoyable by co-teaching *Who's Afraid of 20th Century Music* with Naomi Schmidt. Peter claims no formal musical expertise, rather a lifetime exposure to and love for modern music. Approaching the subject from the point of view of a typical concert-goer, he felt that he was on a plane with class members. Now Peter has turned to a course closely related to one phase of his professional life, when he was on the Brandeis Physics faculty. In *Five Physicists Who Changed the World View*, he imparts complex scientific concepts, a challenge he finds similar to presenting somewhat difficult music to a group, many of whom initially had some apprehension toward such material.



Maurie Stiefel's eclectic course offerings reflect that he enjoys "starting out on a path of one's own." For him, an authentic interest and some personal experience are key ingredients in creating a course. Wearing his lawyer's hat, he taught *Brown vs. Board of Education* with Arnold Messing and then *Justice, Psychology and the Law*. Maurie's direct knowledge of the McCarthy era generated *Mass Hysteria*, and his interest in psychology and a lifelong devotion to chess spawned *The Royal Game and the Game of Life*. Describing himself as "moderately musical," Maurie now highlights the music he grew up with—the music he feels really *is* the best—in *Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Ellington*.



"BOLLI gives people a second life," Arnold Messing noted, and "being a SGL makes that real." Also a lawyer, Arnold followed *Brown vs. Board of Education* with *The Impossible Quest for Perfect Supreme Court Justices*. His newest course, *Irish Poetry*, encapsulates a love of poetry that began even before he was an undergraduate English major. Arnold had liked the work of Irish poets but when his son spent a year in Ireland, Arnold became enmeshed in Irish culture and music as well. He has visited Ireland many times and currently takes a graduate course in Yeats. He states that teaching any course is a challenge and hard work. His goal is to maintain the same standards of excellence whether in or out of his field of expertise.

While acknowledging some feelings of nervousness and vulnerability, these SGL's report tremendous satisfaction from sharing their interests. If you, too, harbor an idea for a topic or theme, the Curriculum Committee can help you develop it into a course of your own.

CALENDAR OF CAMPUS EVENTS

compiled by Charles Raskin

SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER

Lydian Summer Music Festival

Jun. 7 and Jun. 14 (8 P.M.)

Daniel Stepner, violin
Judith Eissenberg, violin
Mary Ruth Ray, viola
Joshua Gordon, cello

\$10 for BOLLI members with i.d., in advance

\$15 for BOLLI members with i.d., at the door

WOMEN'S STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER

Epstein Building, 515 South St.

Mother's Day Event

May 8 (12:30-2:00 P.M.)

Working While Mother: What They Don't Tell You ... and Should

Moderated by E.J. Graff, senior researcher at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism.

The mainstream media loves to talk about *work-family balance*, but only to tell personal stories about how hard it is to juggle deadlines and suppertimes. Rarely does the media ask: why is that balance so hard and how can it be changed?

Motherhood is, often, when today's young women first face serious job discrimination...and the biases against mothers built into American culture, family policy, and many marriages. Consider that:

- All countries in the world offer paid maternity leave—except Lesotho, Swaziland, Papua New Guinea, and the United States
- Mothers in the United States are hired later, fired earlier, paid less, and promoted more slowly than non-mothers (whether that's women without children, men with children, or men without children)
- When men have children, their pay goes up, in what researchers call a *daddy bonus*, while the pay of women who have children gets hit with a *mommy penalty*
- U.S. women working part-time earn 21% less per hour than full-timers.

Come have an inter-generational discussion about American attitudes toward working women who have children and what you can do about it.

ROSE ART MUSEUM

May 8 - Jul. 27

The Weight Of Air

Alexis Rockman, artist
Intricately crafted and often surreal depictions of the relationship between natural and human culture.

The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation

Works by sixteen American artists who raise important questions about cultural, ethnic, and religious identity in the United States today.

Paper Trail II

Odili Donald Odita, curator
Artists integrate their own work with pieces they select from the museum's works-on-paper