YEAR-ROUND LIFELONG LEARNING AT BOLLI

by Bonnie Alpert

One of the many advantages of BOLLI’s being part of Brandeis University is having our own dedicated space and a full-time staff, which enable our program to operate year-round. This arrangement is fortunate because, as lifelong learners, we appreciate opportunities to enrich our lives in all seasons.

Reflecting our year-round operation, BOLLI membership has taken on new significance, as winter and summer evolved from being “intersession” times to being full-fledged winter and summer “terms.”

In acknowledging the importance of winter and summer terms, BOLLI now offers members complimentary, multi-week faculty lecture courses right here in our BOLLI location. These offerings are in addition to our traditional winter and summer week-long faculty seminars and an increasing number of peer-organized learning opportunities.

As a result, the recent December, January, and February months found several hundred BOLLI members enjoying a fully scheduled winter term. Among them were Bobbe Vernon, who says: “BOLLI courses are great in the spring and fall, but the extra activities in winter term…are frosting on the cake. They give us something great to look forward to besides snow!”

Some highlights from the recent winter term:
• Week-long faculty seminars—Macbeth with Prof. Billy Flesch and Opera Through the Ages with Prof. Gil Harel
• Multi-week lecture courses—American Revolution with faculty member Craig Bruce Smith and Exploring Musical Spaces by Ph.D. candidate Jared Redmond
• New Yorker fiction salon—weekly discussions of short stories from the popular magazine
• Current events discussions—lively consideration of topics in the news
• Play readings—works by BOLLI member Verne Vance and The Odd Couple by Neil Simon
• Film viewing—Now Voyager with discussion led by BOLLI’s Marc Schwarz
• Presentation—How to Avoid Identity Theft by Century Bank’s Tony Daniels
• BOLLI Reads: an all-BOLLI book discussion—Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline, moderated by BOLLI’s Becky and Marty Norman [snowed out; rescheduled for March 13]
• Scholarly discussions—Israeli Poet Avraham Schlonsky, led by Prof. Ari Ofengenden, and The Crow Nation and Cultural Devastation, led by BOLLI’s Quinn Rosefsky and Director Bernstein.
This past fall, I participated in the BOLLI Sages and Seekers program, the experiential learning component of Professor Sarah Lamb’s anthropology class, *Aging in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Eleven of my classmates and I arrived on the first day, apprehensive and a little hesitant. We set down our backpacks and walked over to join the BOLLI members, who were equally anxious.

Margie Nesson, the program director, began by posing generic questions. What was our high school experience? What is our earliest childhood memory? Hands were raised slowly at first, but soon both BOLLI members and Brandeis students opened up, and the conversation became increasingly animated. We spoke candidly, sharing laughter and nods of recognition. Nervousness subsided, and we developed a common understanding and comfort as a group: we—Seekers and Sages alike—had all elected to participate in the program to reveal our stories, listen to those of others, and embrace vulnerability. By doing so, we hoped to satisfy our desire for powerful human connection. This first session set the rhythm for the next six weeks, and we left BOLLI feeling energized and expectant.

After a subsequent session of “speed-dating” with BOLLI members, each Seeker was paired with a Sage. The speed-dating worked well, for each duo seemed remarkably compatible. At the end of every weekly session, the love and care in the air were palpable. I am beyond fortunate to have been matched with Helen Kolsky. Each week, we sat together in our corner room, rolled our eyes about the lack of dark chocolate in the snack selection, and delved into conversation. In our candid, unstructured conversations, Helen detailed her past honestly and openly. She spoke eloquently about both good and hard times while maintaining an endearing level of wry self-deprecation. She’s tough. She’s resilient. She’s intelligent, talented, quick-witted, and warm. Getting to know Helen and opening up to her myself proved to be an absolute delight.

In our final session, Seekers read aloud tributes to their Sages. During the reception that followed, each Sage looked at his or her Seeker with pride and appreciation. As we walked around the room, Helen gripped my arm, her happiness and our closeness unspoken.
HIGH-ENERGY CLASSROOM

by Joan Kleinman

As a Study Group Leader, David Moskowitz hopes that participants complete his classes “having had a good time and having learned something.” To that end, David prepares intensely and thoroughly, bringing to the classroom a broad understanding of the subject matter, lots of supplementary material, and a prodigious capacity for remembering facts and details. In turn, he encourages students to complete assignments, engage in discussions, and ask good questions; he says he is fueled by the energy of the class. David acknowledges that he works hard and also maintains that he is, and always has been, demanding of himself. The reward, he notes, is tremendous self-gratification from a job well done. “I never want to be called boring,” he asserts.

Over the years, David has created a sizable and eclectic list of courses, including:

- Early Television in America: Much More than Memories
- The Fundamental Fifties: The Light Side
- Great Writers Writing About Sports
- War May Be Hell But It Makes for Intriguing Literature
- Tales of Five Cities: A Literary Exploration

Students remark on his well-structured course design, energy and enthusiasm, fast-paced, information-packed sessions, and thought-provoking study questions. “You’ll never, ever fall asleep in David’s classes,” quips one of his students.

David retired young and, at his wife’s behest, joined BOLLI when he was only 56. He became intrigued with the idea of becoming an SGL when leading some sessions of the New Yorker fiction salon. He recently served on the Lunch and Learn Committee and is currently on the Curriculum Committee. David is an avid sports enthusiast and admits he engages in “fantasy leagues.” He plays poker weekly with two different groups and interviews prospective students for the University of Pennsylvania.

David was born in Brooklyn, the younger of two children, and grew up in Fair Lawn, N.J. His father worked in the clothing business and as a stage-hand for NBC and his mother was the granddaughter of an Orthodox rabbi.

“You’ll never, ever fall asleep in David’s classes.”

He grew up in a Conservative and kosher home that adhered to the custom of keeping Shabbat as a day of rest, a practice that informed his chosen life style. Even when working full time, David reflects, he was willing to work “ten hours Monday through Thursday and nine on Friday,” but was not interested in working on the weekend, valuing it as time for his family.

Originally intending to be an accountant, David graduated from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania; in fact he met his wife, Ellen, at an accounting firm where he worked between his junior and senior years. Shifting professions, he graduated instead from Harvard Law School. He was the general counsel at Brandeis from 1976 to 1987 and at the Krupp Companies from 1987 to 1996, and held several other positions before retirement.

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Call in the morning (781-647-7060) on class days, pay by credit card, and they will deliver your order, freshly made, at noon. See menus on the Turner St. bulletin boards.

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**GOING STRONG AT 92**

*by Phil Radoff*

How do you plan to spend your 93rd birthday? If you were Sam Ansell, you’d probably find yourself writing an amusing short story, sketching a cartoon for a friend’s book, chattering in Italian to fellow Italian book club members, re-reading a Shakespeare play, or listening to a Verdi or Mozart opera. These are a few of Sam’s favorite things, and they have kept him occupied for most of his adult life.

The son of a businessman and a Hadassah regional president, Sam was born in Canada but grew up in Newton, graduated from Harvard University (Class of ‘44), served on a troop transport ship in the Navy during World War II, and received a masters degree in Journalism from Columbia. With a perpetual twinkle in his eye, Sam has always savored the humorous side of life. His writing and drawing skills enabled him to write for the Harvard Lampoon and later led to positions as a professional publicist for the Metropolitan Opera and several New York ad agencies.

A course at Harvard introduced Sam to the fine arts, in which he has maintained a lifelong interest. After he married Na’ama, his wife of 62 years, Sam proposed that they vacation in Florence, Italy, and Na’ama readily agreed. Once they had seen the wonders of Italy, they were hooked. They developed a passion for all things Italian and decided to rent an apartment in Gubbio, an Umbrian hill town midway between Rome and Florence. A few years later, they gave up the apartment and had a house built. After Sam sold the family business and retired in 1988, he and Na’ama were more easily able to divide their time between Wayland and Gubbio.

Life in Italy afforded Sam new material for his writing. His delightful articles on the frustrations of trying to score tickets to the opera at La Scala and other travails of daily life in Italy served as the subjects of a pair of articles that were published in Opera News and the Boston Globe. His credits also include several drawings that appeared in Colliers and Argosy.

With a perpetual twinkle in his eye, Sam has always savored the humorous side of life.

The Ansell’s sold their house in Gubbio in 2010 and took up full-time residence in Waltham. Since then they have added BOLLI to their list of activities and have become familiar figures at 60 Turner Street, actively participating in a variety of courses and seminars. Sam and Na’ama love their courses and the friends they’ve made at BOLLI.

In addition to reveling in the art, literature, and music of the old-world, Sam recently entered the very new world of blogging. For the past several months he has invited visitors to “Indulge your fancy for fantasy” by visiting his blog (samansell204.blogspot.com) and enjoying the amusing short stories he has written for the benefit of grandchildren Addie, Ivan, and Leya.
MOSES AND AARON
by Peter Schmidt

This is a story of Moses and Aaron.

It’s also a story of Nathalie Tinguery from Burkina Faso in a two-year program of Brandeis’ Heller School for Social Policy and Management, and of Elaine Dohan and husband Larry who, like other BOLLI families, supported a student from a distant land.

If your geography is a little rusty, Burkina Faso is a landlocked nation in the eastern part of North Africa. Nathalie, a student at the university in its capital, Ouagadougou, sought to enhance her education with graduate study abroad. Although she knew little of Brandeis and English was not her primary language, she applied to the Heller School and was accepted with a scholarship.

To come to Brandeis she would have to leave two young daughters behind. Her husband, Salif, was in the military and subject to being stationed away from home, so Nathalie’s father and extended family signed up to look after the children.

Nathalie arrived in 2004 to begin her studies in Sustainable International Development. The Doans, as first-time volunteers in the International Friends Program, were matched with Nathalie and began their support by preparing her for the New England winter, finding a bicycle for campus transportation, and offering the friendship of dinners at their home.

After the first year, Nathalie continued with a summer internship in Africa, with a chance to see her husband during that time. The second year at Brandeis found her not only pregnant, but facing a difficult delivery of twin boys. Fortunately, the Brigham and Women’s Center for high-risk births provided superb medical care toward a successful birth. The Doans and friends pitched in with clothing and cribs for the babies.

The Heller School helped through health insurance and an extension of

Nathalie’s stipend, but in the end there remained a sizeable medical bill, one that she could not see herself ever being able to repay. With letters and phone calls over several months, Larry Dohan, a physician, was able to get the charges removed.

Why then is this a story of Moses and Aaron? Having known nothing of Jewish people, Nathalie, a Catholic with a Muslim husband, was so overwhelmed by the generosity of the Doans, their friends, and the Brandeis community that she chose to honor them with the boys’ names. And so the world was made just a little smaller through kindness and caring.
The BOLLI Lectureship

by Arlene Bernstein

The BOLLI Lectureship is one of many programs that give members an opportunity to interface with Brandeis. This program combines two aspects of life at BOLLI: intergenerational learning and teaching and collaborative connections with the University. It involves doctoral candidates from across the academic spectrum who are selected to teach an entire course at BOLLI, provided there is room in the curriculum. BOLLI Lectureships thus differ from the BOLLI Scholars program in which graduate students teach only one or two sessions under the supervision of SGLs. BOLLI Scholars have occasionally also substituted for an SGL unable to give a course after it was scheduled in the catalogue.

The process for selecting a BOLLI Lecturer is initiated by the Curriculum Committee. Once the Committee knows there will be space in the coming semester for an additional course, the committee chair informs BOLLI Director Avi Bernstein, who contacts his colleagues and department heads at the University for references. Avi conducts the initial interview with the candidate to evaluate the candidate’s qualifications and the appropriateness for BOLLI of the proposed subject matter and makes a recommendation to the Curriculum Committee. The awarding of the Lectureship is contingent upon the approval of the Committee of the course proposal and the syllabus in the same manner as SGL proposals are approved. Avi continues to mentor and supervise the Lecturer during the semester.

As a pilot program in the Fall 2014 term, two BOLLI Lecturers were chosen: Kendra Yarbor and Bronson Brown-deVost, both doctoral candidates in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. Kendra’s course was titled Jews and Race in American History, and Bronson taught How to Make a Language: The Development of Language Over Time and Space. At the end of the term both Lecturers received excellent evaluations from their class members. The Curriculum Committee voted unanimously to continue the Lectureship program to enhance the curriculum as needed. In the Spring 2015 term, Phil Wight, a doctoral candidate in History, will present a course titled Heating Up: A History of the Climate-Change Debate, and Kendra Yarbor will return with a course on Black Jews in America.

Comments from class members and the Lecturers themselves have been favorable. A member of Brown-deVost’s class was impressed by his vast knowledge of languages and his “approachable” teaching style that enabled interesting discussions among class members who spoke a variety of languages. Kendra Yarbor commented that for a junior scholar, the study group provided a “comfortable place and space” for her to learn as well as to teach. She noted that the students were both “challenging and nurturing” as they brought their life experiences to bear on the subject.

NEW YORKER FICTION SALON

During the Spring 2015 term, we meet Wednesdays at 3:15-4:45 P.M. (4th period) in the Purple Room. See the weekly BOLLI Bulletin for story selections.

Join us anytime to enjoy iconic literature, delightful discussions, and lots of laughs. New members are always welcome!

Contact: sandyharristraiger@verizon.net or call 781-862-5318

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BOLLI ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

by Myrna Cohen

The BOLLI Enhancement Committee invites BOLLI members to bring guests to the many events offered this spring semester. The programs provide attendees an opportunity to meet the BOLLI community in a variety of settings.

We continue the Fridays with Friends programs, which will begin March 10 and continue through the ten-week spring term. Study group leaders and other BOLLI members present different topics of interest to the membership and then participate in a question-and-answer session. Many of these topics are drawn from the SGLs’ classes and from the members’ own experiences. Some programs feature presentations by Brandeis faculty and others.

BOLLI Reads is presented twice a year before our spring and fall programs begin. This is an opportunity for participants to join in a book discussion moderated by BOLLI members. Your suggestions are welcome.

The Enhancement Committee is composed of BOLLI members whose responsibilities are to seek out potential speakers and discussion topics and to guide the speakers as they prepare for their presentations. We also ask members of the BOLLI community to offer their suggestions for enhancement events.

Information about our programs can be found in the BOLLI Bulletin and on the Turner St. bulletin board.

We hope you will attend the Enhancement Committee’s programs, which are intended to educate, enrich the mind, and entertain BOLLI members who participate.

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Summer Enhancement Events

Two current events discussion sessions, like those that took place during January and February, will again be held during July and August, on Wednesdays from 12:30 to 2 P.M. at Turner Street. The format will feature 45 minutes of discussion devoted to international news and 45 minutes devoted to national domestic news. We welcome all points of view at this drop-in program open to all BOLLI members.

We also look forward to having you join us for camaraderie and popcorn at our Summer Film Festival during July and August. Approximate screening time is two hours, which will be followed by discussions and a Q&A. You are welcome to bring your own lunch; beverages will be provided.

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Introducing BORMA

As you noticed when you registered for spring term, we have a new online registration and database management system, fully customized for the needs of BOLLI members. The BOLLI Online Registration Management Application, or BORMA for short, is a grand improvement in our ability to manage course, seminar, and event registration, personal information updates, and payment. For the first time, you receive notification of your courses promptly after course assignment occurs. Online payment makes your financial transactions quick, easy, and secure. You can update your own personal details at any point. Finally, you may use BORMA to register and RSVP for faculty seminars and special gatherings for members. If you have feedback on your user experience, please email the office. We expect BORMA to improve with each registration period.

— Ilana Levine
SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER
(all concerts in this venue are $15 for BOLLI members with ID)

Sat., Mar. 14  (8 P.M.)
Trans-Atlantic: Sonatas for Cello and Piano via Brazil, France, and Norway
Cellist Joshua Gordon (Lydian String Quartet) and pianist Randall Hodgkinson perform sonatas by
Koechlin, Villa-Lobos, and Grieg

Sat., Apr. 18  (8 P.M., pre-concert lecture 7 P.M.)
Lydian String Quartet: It’s About Time (Part 2)
Ben Johnston, String Quartet No. 4, variations on “Amazing Grace”
Charles Ives, String Quartet No. 2
Evan Ziporyn, Sulvasutra, with guest artists Sandeep Das, tabla, and Yihan Chen, pipa
Free preview of this concert, followed by a free box lunch, on Apr. 15 at noon, in the Mandel Atrium

SPINGOLD THEATER CENTER
Presented by the Brandeis Theater Company

Thur., Mar. 12  (8 P.M.)  Sat., Mar. 14  (2 P.M. and 8 P.M.)
Fri., Mar. 13  (8 P.M.)  Sun., Mar. 15  (2 P.M.)

The Way with Water
While the headlines have faded, the effects of the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico still run
deep. Explore this crisis through the lives of two couples fighting valiantly to survive in the spill's
aftermath. OBIE Award-winning playwright Caridad Svich has woven a subtle and personal journey
that effortlessly evokes the larger disaster and its subsequent impact.
Tickets $15 for BOLLI members with ID.

Fri., Apr. 24  (8 P.M.)  Sat., Apr. 25  (4 P.M. and 8 P.M.)

A Night on the Clowns
Conceived and directed by Kenny Raskin, ’74
Enjoy an unforgettable program of comedy, music, magic, and silliness featuring some of
the best physical comedians and variety artists working today. These entertainers have
performed on Broadway, with Cirque du Soleil, on television and on assorted stages in
Germany, Australia, England, France, Chile, Israel, Turkey, and the United States.

What do you get when you put a troupe of clowns on the Brandeis stage? While there is nothing
“inappropriate,” it’s really an evening of adults, young and old. So leave the kids at home, and bring
your silly self! Tickets free through Brandeis Tickets (at the box office or by phone at 781-736-3400)