SCHOOL’S OUT, BUT LEARNING CONTINUES

by Sharon Sokoloff

We just completed the arrangements for our January Brandeis @ BOLLI Seminars, formerly known as “The Intensives.” Once again, we have two programs planned that promise to be exciting learning experiences.

When: Monday through Friday, January 7th through 11th, 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
Where: Hassenfeld at Brandeis

For the third January in a row, Prof. William (Billy) Flesch is leading a course on Shakespeare. He presented King Lear in 2006, Hamlet in 2007, and in 2008 the play will be The Merchant of Venice. Billy comes back each year based on our members’ requests and his joy of teaching students who are so engaged and passionate about learning. Billy is a professor of English at Brandeis where he teaches Shakespeare and other subjects, including the history of poetry. He is the author of two books, Comeuppance and Generosity and the Limits of Authority: Shakespeare, Herbert, Milton, plus articles on Shakespeare and poetry, some of which have appeared in the Ideas section of the Boston Globe. He is the recipient of three teaching awards at Brandeis and Cornell and a National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship.

The other program is The Law of Privacy, from Justice Brandeis to the Right to Die. In this class, members will explore the concept of privacy and how it has worked over the years to shape American thought and law. Two of the many questions on the agenda are:

• Is our understanding of privacy fated to change as technologies make our privacy ever less secure?
• Is there something about our core right to privacy that is so essential to democracy and personal well-being that it must be kept safe and precious at all costs?

In a change of format this year, the law seminar is being co-led by two Brandeis lecturers, Dr. Dan Breen and Dr. Sharon Fray-Witzer, lecturers in the Departments of Philosophy and Legal Studies. Both Dan and Sharon are passionate instructors who, like Billy Flesch, are invigorated by teaching and learning with a mature audience. Please see the flyer available in the Gathering Place for additional information.

To register for either program, print a flyer from our Website www.brandeis.edu/bolli or pick up one in the Gathering Place. For any questions, contact Carol Allman-Morton at callman@brandeis.edu or 781-736-2992.

Registration is limited for these programs which fill up fast, so get your registration in early.
The success of Ed Caldwell’s wine courses has done much to open and demystify the sometimes intimidating world of wine to numerous BOLLI members. Over many years and many, many bottles I too have learned about and enjoyed wines the way that one gets to Carnegie Hall: practice, practice, practice!

Like most of us, I’ve had to set affordability limits and look for good deals. That’s where special offers by wine stores come into play.

One magic word is close-outs. These are remainders of the stores’ inventory, sold off at discounts of at least 25%. It’s a great way to expand your wine horizon as well as your price range. Until these came along, I’d just about given up on ever drinking white burgundies again; suddenly they became affordable once more.

You might be concerned that close-outs are bad wines which are left over because no one would buy them. With very rare exceptions, I’ve found them to range from good to excellent, and at the very least drinkable. Often the stores have done you the favor of aging the wine to its peak as well (although, regretfully, sometimes past it).

Close-outs are usually not advertised, so you have to look for them. The number of bottles of a particular wine will range from only one to several, may-be a case or two, rarely more. For tactics, I’d recommend “try and buy”: get one, try it, and if it’s to your liking go back quickly to snap up more. Why? You’re in competition with other wine lovers.

You’re unlikely to find the famous names on close-out, but then I’ve always advocated drinking the wine rather than the label. You’ll certainly find a grand variety of choices from all over the world and from all wine types. I can guarantee that it’s a great pleasure to discover an unknown wine that’s really good and not that expensive.

Close-outs are only one way to stretch your wine dollar and your wine experience. Most wine stores have monthly specials: often 20% discounts on six bottles from a certain region or of a certain type. They’re usually mix or match, so you can make them all different or all the same. Many stores will also have tastings, generally on Saturday, letting you check out whether a wine meets your taste interest. The only secret here is to stay alert to the stores’ specials and tastings. Then too, there are frequently individual discounts. These are usually marked by yellow price labels instead of white.

With so many ways to save, why ever pay full price? Just buy what’s available, find a place to store your stash, and then enjoy the treasures at your leisure. A final recommendation: keep notes, unless you have a far better memory than I do.

As the bumper sticker says: Life is too short to drink bad wine. L’Chaim! Santé! Prost! Skoal! Salut! Kanpai!
REACHING TOWARD THE GOAL

by Sharon Sokoloff

There are many adult learning programs in the Boston area. But, as you know, there is only one BOLLI.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Brandeis is distinct among its peers, a unique merger of a thought-provoking, stimulating educational program with a vibrant, supportive social network that creates an engaged community of lifelong learners.

“There is a sense of community that wraps around BOLLI people and supports us all,” says Ron Levy, Council Chair, study group leader, and a member since 2004. “It is a place where contemporaries from all different backgrounds meet and make friends.”

Whether BOLLI is offering support to a person who has just lost a loved one, providing a new social network for a recent retiree, or helping transport an individual to medical treatments, members of the BOLLI community forge personal connections that extend well beyond the classroom and the incredible opportunity to continue learning into retirement and beyond.

“At BOLLI, it sounds like a cliché, but everyone is a friend and everyone is interested in helping each other,” said Les Blicher, Endowment Committee Chair and a member since 2004. “That community is what makes BOLLI what it is.”

As we approach our 10th birthday, BOLLI has reached a critical juncture in its development — and we are asking for your help.

To ensure BOLLI’s long-term viability and continue to keep membership rates affordable, in Spring ’06 we launched a fund-raising drive: the BOLLI Endowment Fund, the brainchild of Sy Raboy, former Council Chair and a Brandeis alum.

“Obviously, many of us have multiple charities we support,” said Ron. “At most of those organizations, our money has very little influence; but BOLLI is a place where we can make a significant difference through our support.”

“If we all do our part and give to our capacity, we will be able to sustain BOLLI,” said Les. He and Ron each made gifts using the financial-planning techniques of Planned Gifts and Rollover IRAs.

Thanks to the generous support of 130 BOLLI members so far, the Fund has $80,000 toward our goal of $2M. Members who have made leadership gifts of at least $1,000 to the BOLLI Endowment Fund include:

Patron: Les & Beverly Blicher, Ron & Sandi Levy, and Sy & Debbie Raboy
Supporter: Joe & Hope Albert

To donate or obtain more information, please contact Ron Levy or Les Blicher.

The BOLLI Endowment Fund Committee presents an evening of music and community

Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra
Neal Hampton, conductor
Beethoven Symphony #3 (Eroica)
Nov. 29 (7:30 P.M., light refreshments) in Slosberg Recital Hall
Tickets are $15 and may be obtained at Gosman Tuesdays and Wednesdays or at the BOLLI Office
Cancer in the Oral Cavity

by Jeff Becker, DMD

About 34,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral or pharyngeal (back of the throat) cancer this year. It likely will cause over 8,000 deaths, killing roughly one person per hour, 24 hours per day. Of those 34,000 newly diagnosed individuals, only half will be alive in five years. This is a number which has not significantly improved in decades. The death rate for oral cancer is higher than that of cervical cancer, Hodgkin’s disease, cancer of the brain, liver, testes, kidney, or skin cancer (malignant melanoma). Of course, as we age the statistics get worse.

One of the real dangers is that in its early stages, the cancer can go unnoticed. The key to survival is early detection. The death rate associated with this cancer is particularly high due to the cancer being routinely discovered late in its development after it has metastasized. Thus one can understand why it is so important to learn the signs of oral cancer. It can be painless, and little in the way of physical changes may be obvious. The good news is, however, that your dentist or doctor can see or feel the precursor tissue changes or the actual cancer while it is still very small or in its earliest stages. Visiting your dentist for routine screenings at least every six months is of utmost importance. If this is not part of your oral checkup visit, you should question your dentist.

What everyday things can we do for prevention?

- You can be the first line of defense through daily oral screening. Look for a white or red patch of tissue in the mouth, or a small indurated (red, inflamed, thickened, and tender) ulcer which looks like a common canker sore. Be sure to check your lips, tongue, and the floor of the mouth. Please note that there are many benign tissue changes that occur normally in your mouth and some things as simple as a bite on the inside of your cheek may mimic the look of a dangerous tissue change. Thus it is important to have your dentist check any sore or discolored area of your mouth which does not heal within 14 days.

- Numerous studies have shown that diet plays a role in oral cancer. In particular, there is strengthening evidence that fruits and vegetables appear to be helpful in prevention.

- Lifestyle choices still remain the biggest factors. It is likely that the accumulative damage from factors such as tobacco use, high alcohol consumption, and persistent viral infections such as HPV (human papilloma virus), are the real culprits. Tobacco use in many forms (smokeless, pipe, cigars, and cigarettes) has been linked as a causative agent.

Should your health professional suspect a problem, most likely a biopsy will be utilized. The good news is that you can help dramatically increase your chances of better health and survival by following the above guidelines.

I found the following sites to be very helpful: oralcancerfoundation.org cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/oral

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If, indeed, all the world’s a stage, then Michael Kaufman’s starring role is that of educator. With respect, humor, and probing feedback, his teaching embodies the essence of the word: to educate is to bring out. In BOLLI courses, including Drama of the Family, Shakespeare’s Tragic World, Moral of the Story, and Meditations on Aging, Michael’s skills as an expert facilitator enable participants to gain insights and meaning about themselves and their world.

Michael’s epiphany into the value of facilitative teaching came at Cornell. Early in his career he was asked to teach an honors seminar in modern theatre, a subject far removed from his field of expertise in Shakespearean and Renaissance drama. Accustomed to lecturing in class, he revealed to his students that they would be learning together. The success of the seminar convinced him that lecturing, the sage-on-the-stage model of teaching, is not effective. Thus began an ongoing process of fine tuning the art of facilitation, balancing how much of his knowledge to contribute with what students can discover themselves. He rarely plots out a class in complete detail; the flexibility “allows me to hear better,” he observes. He likes the unpredictability, the surprise of where students may take a text.

Michael has taught graduate courses at Tufts University for about 20 years. Despite the quality of his students, they are young; they “stay in the text” and relate abstractly or academically to it. In comparison, BOLLI students bring to the literature “life experience and a rich matured wisdom,” he says enthusiastically. They have a “capacious view of life and the world”; they find rich subtexts.

Michael’s particular interests in older learners, interactive education, and theme-based courses have led him to varied endeavors. At Brandeis, he created Humanities and the Professions, a program gearing literature to various professional groups including judges, teachers, doctors, priests, and social workers. He taught in Changing Lives through Literature a groundbreaking program to reduce recidivism among criminal offenders. Young parolees, the sentencing judge, and a probation officer all attended his class. And in a leadership course for engineers, he exposed his technically-trained students to literature’s relevance in their careers and personal affairs.

Michael sits on the board of Discovering What’s Next, a Newton-based organization serving the over-50 population. His seminar, Transition Talk, examines ways to make retirement productive and rewarding. He is also on that organization’s housing subcommittee, which advocates the intergenerational exchange of services to enable seniors to remain longer in their own homes.

Despite what he describes as a “fierce dedication” to teaching, Michael realized that the profession has one downside: there is no tangible and immediate product. In frustration, he took a ceramics course and loved constructing an actual object. Now, he continues to work with his hands whenever he can: pottery, house repairs, and furniture restoration.

Henry Adams, an American writer and historian, wrote “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” But, in the present, Michael can know that his students are certainly enriched for having shared the stage with him.
MEMBER OPEN FORUMS

by Tamara Chernow and Naomi Schmidt

BOLLI members gathered on October 30 and 31 to ask questions of the Council and to voice ideas and opinions. Arnold Messing, Financial Liaison of the Council, reported that the budget will be facing a serious dilemma in the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years because the grants from the Osher and Werner-Dannheiser foundations are decreasing; by 2010, we will face a grant shortfall of $100,000. For that reason, membership fees were increased by $15 per semester this year and the fee-waiver for SGLs who take BOLLI classes will be cut 50% in the Spring 2008 semester. Arnold’s list of income and expenses for the current and the subsequent fiscal year is shown in the table at the right.

The Council’s role is just advisory to the University on legal and financial matters. We will be working with the University administration on finding a financial solution, including external grant money.

Below are some of the pertinent answers to members’ questions, presented in bulleted form:

- 130 contributions have been made to the Endowment Fund so far, ranging from small amounts to $10,000, all totalling to $80,000.
- We will raise $11,000 by having SGLs who are active members pay half the membership fee.
- Members who face financial hardship can apply privately to the Director for relief.
- Grant money for the BOLLI Scholar program runs out in FY 2009.
- Arnold Messing is chairing a grant-writing committee, with guidance from the University.
- Bob Cohen is chairing a planning committee which will examine the future of BOLLI on a three-year horizon. Its report will be ready in time for discussion at the annual meeting in May.
- We have reached floor space capacity at Brandeis; however, we continue to talk to the University.
- We have not reached membership capacity—a function of class size set by health and safety rules and by each SGL—but we are close.
- The Lottery was computerized for the first time this semester, with only a few minor glitches. The application form for the Spring semester will explain the system in more detail and will clarify how course choices should be listed for optimal outcome. No auditing of lotteried classes will be allowed.

On the topic of ways to provide input to the Council before they make important decisions, the following were suggested:

1. The Council should publish the agenda before each meeting so that members can see when specific issues will be brought up.
2. Take ten minutes of the Lunch and Learn time to inform the members about important questions and give them an opportunity to submit written questions or input.
3. Recommendations of the Council committees should be made available to the membership.
Fifteen Brandeis graduate students have been designated BOLLI Scholars this semester. Each Scholar is paired with a Study Group Leader and is responsible for one or two class presentations, for which they are paid. Two Scholars have enjoyed the BOLLI classes so much they have continued to attend their courses with no additional payment. I interviewed these Scholars and their SGLs.

Zachary Matusheski is in his second year of Brandeis’s American History Ph.D. program. He is the Scholar in Ed Goldberg’s course, Medical History of the U.S. as Viewed Through the Lives of the Presidents and in Peter and Barbara Benfield’s course, Building the U.S. Constitution.

Amit Pinjani will be receiving his MBA in International Business and Finance in 2008. He is the Scholar in Alden Carpenter’s class, The End of Oil.

Alden considers Amit a great addition to the class. He brings an area of expertise which is not Alden’s area. In addition to his excellent class presentations, Amit contributes a great deal to class discussions. He’s also a big help with the audio-visual equipment.

Amit knew nothing about BOLLI when he received an email recruiting BOLLI Scholars. He checked out BOLLI on the Internet and was interested. Amit has always appreciated the wisdom and experience of older people. He loved spending time listening to and talking with his Grandfather.

Amit describes his classroom experience as “amazing.” The BOLLI students are welcoming and encourage him to participate in class discussions. He is learning so much from the interaction and is very enthusiastic about the program. He’d like to be a Scholar next semester too, and he’d like to have the opportunity to socialize with the BOLLI community outside of the classroom setting.

Each of these BOLLI Scholars has established a relationship of mutual respect and regard with his SGL and with his class, a relationship that enhances the experiences of all involved.
Calendar of Campus Events
compiled by Charles Raskin

Slosberg Music Center

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>Irving Fine Society</td>
<td>Nicholas Alexander Brown, music director&lt;br&gt;• Britten <em>Ceremony of Carols</em>&lt;br&gt;• Britten <em>Friday Afternoons</em>&lt;br&gt;• Britten <em>Holiday Diaries, Suite for Piano</em>&lt;br&gt;Program features the Irving Fine Singers, Jaekyo Han (piano), Katharine Roller and L. Aimée Birnbaum (sopranos), Nicholas Alexander Brown and Matthew Stern (baritones)&lt;br&gt;Free admission</td>
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<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>Brandeis Early Music Ensemble</td>
<td>Sarah Mead, director&lt;br&gt;Program (to be announced) of Renaissance and Baroque eras&lt;br&gt;$5 for BOLLI members with I.D.</td>
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<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Brandeis University Chorus</td>
<td>James Olesin, director&lt;br&gt;Program of American and German classics&lt;br&gt;$5 for BOLLI members</td>
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<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Katherine Schram Recital</td>
<td>Katherine Schram '09 (soprano)</td>
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<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Dan Stepner with Sally Pinkas</td>
<td>• Harold Shepero <em>Sonata for Violin and Piano</em>&lt;br&gt;• David Rakowski <em>Pied à Terre</em>&lt;br&gt;• Gabriel Faure <em>Violin Sonata in A Major</em>&lt;br&gt;$10 for BOLLI members with I.D., in advance&lt;br&gt;$15 for BOLLI members with I.D., at the door</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Greg Wall’s Later Prophets</td>
<td>The prophetic visions of Ezekiel are some of the most fascinating and vivid of all ancient texts. The traditional melodies used to chant them in the synagogue have been with us for ages, and serve as the inspiration for saxophonist Greg Wall’s <em>Later Prophets</em>. Featuring master percussionist and long-time collaborator Aaron Alexander, seriously grooving bassist David Richards, and keyboard phenom Shai Bachar, the quartet manages to simultaneously straddle the gates of the ancient and avant-garde, while creating a musical experience that is as timeless as the texts themselves. $10 for BOLLI members, in advance; $15 for BOLLI members, at the door</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Lydian String Quartet</td>
<td>Beethoven *Quartet in C Minor, Op. 18, #4&lt;br&gt;Reza Vali *Quartet #3&lt;br&gt;Leo Ornstein *Quartet #2, Op. 99&lt;br&gt;Pre-concert lecture at 7 P.M.&lt;br&gt;$10 for BOLLI members with I.D., in advance&lt;br&gt;$15 for BOLLI members with I.D., at the door</td>
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<td>Feb. 29</td>
<td>Bob Nieske 3 and Tre Corda</td>
<td>Joint concert by Tim Ray’s trio Tre Corda, featuring Tim Ray (piano), Greg Hopkins (trumpet), &amp; Eugene Friesen (cello); and the Bob Nieske 3, featuring Brandeis jazz professor Bob Nieske (piano), Phil Grenadier (trumpet), &amp; Nat Mugaveiro (drums)&lt;br&gt;$10 for BOLLI members with I.D., in advance&lt;br&gt;$15 for BOLLI members with I.D., at the door&lt;br&gt;Free admission if it’s your birthday</td>
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Spingold Theater

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

As You Like It

Feb. 7-9, 14-16 (8 P.M.) and Feb. 16, 17 (2 P.M.)

Directed by Adrienne Krstansky, faculty member. She directs Shakespeare’s whimsical, pastoral comedy with her own imaginative and innovative approach. “All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances and one man in his time plays many parts” –Act II, Scene 7

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