FIRST TIME IN AMERICA

by Phyllis Pressman Cohen

Imagine that you have lived all of your life in a part of the world where the weather is always hot and humid, the trees are always green and leafy, and you never need snow boots or a heavy coat. Suddenly you find yourself studying in Waltham MA, where the trees in front of your apartment turn red and gold and drift to the ground, and falling temperatures chill you to the bone.

These are just some of the transitions that face those pursuing a degree in Sustainable International Development (SID) at the Heller School. Shepherding students through these changes is Doris Breay, Assistant Dean, Academic and Student Affairs. Her laid-back, warm and welcoming demeanor, together with a strong maternal instinct, sharply honed intellect, and caring manner, are well suited to the task.

Because the program was a new one when she joined it, there was no template for her to follow; she had to learn on the job. Doris jumped right in, listening to each student and assessing what their needs were, even taking some for 6 A.M. visits to the emergency room. Although 14 years ago the original class had only 5 students, the current enrollment is 197. As the program grew so did her expertise.

With an average age of over 30, students from more than 60 countries leave behind their families, including parents, spouses and children, their culture, and their traditions to study here. They return to their homelands to help improve the standard of living, eliminate poverty, increase opportunities for education, and deal with issues of gender equality and many other problems which face underdeveloped nations. It is part of Ms. Breay’s job to help them acclimate and acculturate and have a satisfying community experience in which they feel well cared for so that they, in turn, should be able to become agents for positive change in the developing world.

SID students live in apartments in Waltham which may not be close to one another. The Heller School therefore functions as their “home” or community center: the place where they can meet, socialize, and learn more about each other’s country and their host country.

She stressed that an equally valuable part of their experience here is the BOLLI community of SID friends who welcome students into their lives and homes. This interaction enriches their learning experience and their life experience, and demonstrates the generosity of Americans. Some relationships become enduring, while others remain transient. Doris noted that at orientation students always mention their BOLLI friends to incoming classmates; it is high on everyone’s list of program advantages.
Planning for Tomorrow

by Robert Cohen

A Planning Committee, chaired by Robert Cohen, was created in October of 2007 to “evaluate long-range strategic directions for BOLLI, consistent with the Director’s one-year plan…”

At the first meeting, held on November 1st, 2007, the committee was advised, with exceptional clarity and firmness, that we should not contemplate any proposals that required “…more/different space, days, and/or other.” The committee adopted a strategy assuming essentially no growth in membership, but focused on a continuous revitalization of our membership by enhancing conventional and value-added programs. The committee was subsequently informed that on a non-continuous basis there is a strong probability that BOLLI may be able to utilize some available space on campus for limited times (so called “white-space”). This time/space would most likely be available during periods when regular academic programs were not in session, i.e., the Brandeis intersession between semesters and during the summer.

Two subcommittees were created to flesh out suggestions for programs to utilize white-space. The first, comprising Beth Davis and Lyn Weiner, developed a proposal for the six-week period following the current Brandeis semester. The program is in addition to, and will not conflict with, the traditional BOLLI programs usually held between semesters. Each session will feature a Brandeis faculty member who will lead a discussion and question and answer period about his/her book. BOLLI members will be able to sign up for one, two, or three of the discussions, space permitting. Watch for details.

The second subcommittee, comprising Neil Bernstein and Robert Cohen, is working on developing programs that, although primarily focused on the intersession and summer recesses, can also be implemented at other times. The first program will be affinity-based, and will involve either a sports event or theatre/dinner event. At this writing too much remains to be worked out to give further details. The Committee is open to receiving your advice and comments. Just speak with any Committee member or send an email to robertcohen@brandeis.edu.

Become a Study Group Leader

A strong curriculum is the hallmark of a successful adult learning program. Please consider becoming a study group leader and submitting a course proposal. The Curriculum Committee will be happy to assist you throughout the entire Course Proposal process.

Proposals are due 12/3/08 for the Spring ’09 semester. Information can be found on our Web site, www.brandeis.edu/bolli, or contact myrna.cohen@comcast.net.

The BOLLI Banner is published by the Banner Editorial Committee:

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The BOLLI Staff: Who Does What

by Sharon Sokoloff

BOLLI’s staff has changed so much from the start of the 1999 planning year when Bernie Reisman, our founding director, worked with the founding Council to envision and plant the seeds of the program. Today, we have a team of three professionals and a stable of student workers. In the past two years, Carol, Mary Ann, and I have been planning, testing and improving how we function as a team.

Carol and Mary Ann, assistant directors, run BOLLI’s day-to-day program. Their division of responsibilities is based on their respective skill sets, professional goals, personal preferences, and program needs.

Each of our committees has a staff liaison. Carol Allman-Morton is liaison to Curriculum, Membership, BOLLI Banner, and Technology/Website Committees. Mary Ann Sliwa’s committees include Resource, Lunch & Learn, the Journal, International Friends, BOLLI Scholars, Volunteers, and Mentoring Committees.

I am the link to the Council, Rapaporte Seminars, New Programming, Endowment Fund, Grants, and Nominating Committees. In some cases, we work together; e.g., I work with Carol on Endowment and Grants, and with Mary Ann on Mentoring and strategies on “becoming indispensable” to Brandeis, a BOLLI goal.

Carol is responsible for the database structure and new developments, e.g., computerizing the course lottery (with our consultant) and the Website (with Len Heier and Brandeis information technology staff). She interfaces with the financial systems, extracts data, and transforms it into information on a monthly basis; she assists me with money management. She’s the primary link to our shuttle contract. Mary Ann hires and manages student workers, works with our “on call volunteer corps,” is the primary office manager and is working to improve our infrastructure and its documentation.

Both assistant directors respond to members’ emails and phone calls, update electronic databases (changing email addresses), and obtain space for and manage “extra” programs. They create materials (course catalogues, member handbooks, SGL handbooks, and mailings); and they stay abreast of supplies and equipment and other administrative necessities.

Given BOLLI’s growth, our terrific staff, and the increasing sophistication of lifelong learning and positive aging programming since 2000, the director’s role has changed. My primary responsibilities now include: being the University’s voice to the membership and the members’ voice to the University (both with the Council chair); working closely with the development office to build our endowment; interfacing with colleagues and leaders locally and nationally; working closely with the Vice Provost to strategize, plan, budget, and manage finances. The director is accountable to the University for the success of the program. This requires staying on top of “the whole” and the components that are BOLLI and identifying areas that need attention and the appropriate member-leaders who can address them. I meet regularly with Carol, Mary Ann, the Council chair, and key committee chairs. Curriculum and pedagogy are always on my screen. I write, present at conferences, and consult with other programs nationally. For the last two years, one of my top strategic priorities has been envisioning and developing the implementation of new programming.

These are some of the roles we three play. But BOLLI wouldn’t be possible without membership participation. From leading study groups, serving on the Council and committees, organizing “extras”, to helping in the office, it all contributes to our success.
**Hidden Treasure**

*by Elaine Adler*

I first heard about BOLLI when talking to Ruth Antonoff at Wilson Farm in June 2006. She made the program sound so great that I googled BOLLI as soon as I got home, and I immediately applied.

It is rewarding to be part of a learning community, to be on a college campus again, and to be stimulated intellectually. Feeling satisfied, I was surprised to receive a book called the *BOLLI Journal* last spring. After a cursory flip through the pages, I placed it on my nightstand, thinking it might make good bedtime reading. Its selection of juried offerings turned out to be a gem.

First, I sought out all the color photographs taken by BOLLI members. Beautiful peeks into their visual worlds. Then I read all the poems, some touching, even vulnerable. Finally, I started on the longer offerings: personal stories, poignant memories of childhood and parents, connections between events of the past and present, thoughtful moments of humor—aha!—and clarity. We have some awesome people in our community.

I wondered why I had never heard about this bonus gift. Is it one of the best kept secrets of BOLLI? By sharing themselves, each contributor allows us to know them on a deeper level. We are enriched and our views expanded by their offerings. Fascinated, I asked Joan Kleinman if I could join her committee. I learned that over 100 members did not pick up the *Journal* last year. All of them are missing out on interesting reading and getting to know fellow BOLLI members beyond the classroom.

I hope you are enticed to pick up your copy of the *BOLLI Journal* and read it. Maybe even submit a story, poem, drawing, or photo to be considered for the next issue, due out in Spring 2010.

[Send your submission to joankleinman@rcn.com]

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**The Resource Committee**

*by Donna Carleton*

The Resource Committee (RC) has had a very productive fall semester. On Tuesday, September 9th, the RC hosted an Orientation Get-Together for Study Group Leaders. The highlight of this program was a presentation and discussion led by Michaele Whelan, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, entitled “The Architecture of Teaching.” This presentation served as a stimulus for a wide-ranging discussion. Summaries of this shared input were distributed to the SGLs.

On Monday, November 3rd, the RC and SGLs will participate in an Air-and-Share meeting. This format allows SGLs to raise topics of interest and share ideas with other SGLs. Although there is no formal agenda, past Air-and-Share meetings have been devoted, in part, to discussing interim feedback, final evaluation, class presentations, and classroom techniques which work and those which don’t. SGLs are also encouraged to submit topics they wish to address.

The mission of the RC is to offer support to SGLs in order to provide members with optimal learning experiences in their BOLLI courses. Each year, the SGL Handbook is updated. The RC has welcomed the opportunity to interact and learn from our talented SGLs.
BOLLI is very proud of its Lunch and Learn Program. We continue to have an abundance of new, interesting, and enlightening speakers and programs and an audience that often numbers 100-150 people. There is excitement in the air as the overflow crowd scrambles for seats, anticipating the enjoyment of our diverse programming. Success is due to the Lunch & Learn Committee, which has a maximum of 18 members all bubbling over with ideas for programming and speakers, and to the suggestions of other BOLLI participants. The Committee meets two to three times a semester. Its mission is to schedule a variety of programs to be presented on each day that BOLLI has classes, with the exception of two dates reserved for members’ open forums.

This means the Lunch and Learn Committee is charged with obtaining 38 speakers per year, a large task, considering we do not provide an honorarium. We are very fortunate that the Boston area has many potential speakers from whom to draw. In addition to the faculty of many local universities including Brandeis, we rely on people whom our members have heard at various venues. We have had talks on a great variety of topics, such as: the sciences, arts, politics, show business, the media, medicine, music, history, economics, the environment, and government. The Committee strives to maintain a balance in choice of subject matter, weighted by our perception of the interest of the membership.

Examples of recent programs include:

- Dan Wasserman, syndicated political cartoonist at the Boston Globe, on The Art of Political Cartooning
- Noah Feldman, Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, constitutional law scholar and author on America’s future in the Middle East
- Jonathan Wilson, Director of the Center for Humanities and the Arts at Tufts University and author of Marc Chagall: A Biography
- Laura Carlo, Classical 99.5 WCRB’s Morning Program host of What it Takes to Survive in the Land of Rock, Hip-Hop, and Sports Talk
- Jeff Jacoby, op-ed columnist at the Boston Globe on Adventures on the Op-Ed Page
- Performances by the Lexington Symphony Chamber Group, the Lydian String Quartet, and a Brandeis student a cappella group.

We make every effort to maintain a gender balance in our selection process. Speakers may not come from the BOLLI membership, and generally no more than about 20 percent are from the Brandeis faculty.

On the day of the program, the Committee member who obtained the speaker acts as host, showing hospitality, acclimating the presenter to our facility, and answering any last minute questions. Typically that member introduces the speaker. Each receives a solid brass ruler with both the Brandeis and the Osher logos and the engraving, “YOU ARE THE MEASURE OF OUR SUCCESS.”

Suggestions by BOLLI members for programs are always appreciated. Contact Star or Irwin, or any committee member listed on the BOLLI Web site.
Learning Opportunities on the Internet

by Naomi Schmidt

In order to satisfy our love of learning, we come to BOLLI. Where else can we go for other learning experiences? To the Internet, where there exist literally hundreds of online courses and other educational resources, aimed not at providing credits or advanced degrees, but rather at satisfying the intellectual curiosity of hungry learners. While not offering the conviviality for which BOLLI is known, many Web sites do provide opportunities for enrichment and immersion in intellectual and cultural areas of interest. Here are some of them that I know of:

MIT Open Courseware:

ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/web/home/home/index.htm

A pioneer in providing university level course material free to the public via the Internet, this is a collection of 1800 MIT courses. Although most are topics in the sciences and engineering, there are also materials from the fields of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, as well as Health Sciences and Management. For example, in browsing this site I’ve come across a literature class titled “Forms of Western Narrative” with lecture notes on The Odyssey, Arthurian Romances, Don Quixote, Grimm’s Fairy Tales, Frankenstein, and Heart of Darkness.

Open Courseware Consortium: www.ocwconsortium.org/ (click on USE)

Building on the infrastructure developed by MIT Open Courseware, this is a collaboration of over 200 educational institutions from around the world. An Open Courseware site is a free and open digital publication of high-quality educational materials organized as courses, is available for use and adaptation under an open license, but does not typically provide certification or access to instructors. In browsing this site, I came across a set of literature lectures at UC Berkeley that was an audio broadcast of a lecture in class.

iTunes U: www.apple.com/education/itunesu_mobilelearning/itunesu.html

iTunes U delivers easy, 24/7 access to educational content from hundreds of top colleges, universities, and educationally focused organizations across the country. It’s accessible to anyone with a Mac or PC with iTunes software v6.0 or higher. For example, there are programs from the New York Historical Society, and lectures by distinguished professors and guest speakers at CUNY. You can search for materials by category or by educational provider. Learn more about the variety of courses by watching a short video, accessed by going to the above website and clicking on An introduction to iTunes U Watch video.

JBooks—the online Jewish Book Community: www.jbooks.com/secularculture

This site on secular Jewish culture and ideas, sponsored by the Center for Cultural Judaism, explores many ways secular Jews connect to their heritage: through art, history, language, philosophy, folklore, and politics. The current issue includes essays on Baruch Spinoza, Jews and Native Americans, and The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture, among others.


The site is different in that it does not offer free Internet-based courses, but rather is a collection of university level courses with the complete course lectures presented by top professors on DVD, CD, or cassette. Take a look at the large variety of topics offered, and you are sure to find some that intrigue you. The courses are not inexpensive, but every course goes on sale at least once a year, and most are available for loan from the Minuteman Library Network.
**Adventurers Go To Court**  
by Carol Shedd

Carved in stone on the facade of the Moakley Federal Court House in Boston, is an inscription by Justice Louis D. Brandeis, *Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or for ill, it teaches the whole world by its example.*

During the September BOLLI Adventurer’s tour of the courthouse, the excellent docents explained how the building itself, inside and outside, reinforces this ideal. Each brick that makes up the interior wall has been hand molded, representing the uniqueness of each citizen. The entire exterior facing the water is composed of glass, and steel mast-like supports, to remind visitors of the maritime origin of federal law, and to reflect the democratic openness of our court system. After touring the building and visiting a court session, we had a presentation by Paul Herron, a BOLLI Scholar, who spoke about The Bill of Rights and his Moakley experience as a Judicial Intern for the Honorable Nancy Gertner. The fifty participants then enjoyed a buffet lunch while looking out on Boston Harbor.

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New Yorker Fiction  
This discussion group meets on Wednesdays at 3 P.M. in the Gathering Place

Yiddish Circle  
Starting 11/11, this discussion group meets on Tuesdays at 3 P.M. in Nessel. For elementary Yiddish speakers and those who want to improve.

Banner now archived in print as well as on the BOLLI Website  
A notebook containing an archive of BOLLI Banner issues since 2000 is now available for browsing at the desk in Gosman. Take a walk down memory lane to see how BOLLI has developed since its beginning. But please remember to return the notebook to the desk when you have finished looking at it.  
- Naomi Schmidt

International Friends  
A successful year for the Friends Program: 54 BOLLI members have signed up with 65 students.  
- Lyn Weiner and Steve Baran

We Have Grown Again!  
BOLLI has three types of membership: *Active* (taking classes), *Associate* (Lunch and Learn), and *Inactive* (holding a spot for the next semester). Because of our growth, the BOLLI staff closed Fall registration as of the week before classes began. This put the admissions policy the Council approved last year into effect. In the Spring semester, registration will again be open; and we will offer membership to new members in accordance with the membership policy. We encourage those of you planning to be away in the Spring Semester to hold your place as an Inactive member, so you are guaranteed a spot when you get back.

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<tr>
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<th>Spring '07</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active</td>
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- Carol Allman-Morton

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**SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER**
(Brandeis Tickets: 781-736-3400)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Kristin Andreassen and Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>Around the World in a String Quartet:</td>
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<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Brandeis University Chamber Choir</td>
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<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Brandeis University Wind Ensemble</td>
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- Kristin Andreassen is an award-winning singer, songwriter, dancer, and instrumentalist who is well-known through her groups Uncle Earl, Sometymes Why, and The Footworks Percussive Dance Ensemble. Join Kristin and friends for an evening of great music, clogging, and maybe even patty cake. Free and open to the public.

- Lydian String Quartet plays music from Germany, China, and Austria.
  - Beethoven *Quartet in G Maj.*, Op. 18, No. 2
  - Bright Sheng *Quartet No. 4 “Silent Temple”*
  - Mozart *Quintet in G min.*, K. 516
  - Lecture at 7 P.M.
  - $10 for BOLLI members with i.d., in advance
  - $15, at the door

- A program of the music of Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), one of the first and greatest opera composers as well as one of the greatest composers of madrigals and church music.
  - $5 for BOLLI members

- Neal Hampton, conductor
  - Featuring Sibelius *Symphony No. 1*

- Thomas Souza, director
  - Guest soloists Jason Bielik and Peter Norman, clarinets
  - Works by Grainger (*Irish Tune* and *Shepherd's Hey* from County Derry), Bernstein (*Overture to Candide*), Mendelssohn, and music from Harry Potter.
  - $5 for BOLLI members

**SPINGOLD THEATER**

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

**Tea and Flowers, Purity and Grace**

- Nov. 20-22 (8 P.M.) and Nov. 22-23 (2 P.M.)
  - A dance play based on Edith Wharton’s *House of Mirth*
  - Created and choreographed by Susan Dibble
  - Edith Wharton’s novel *House of Mirth* serves as the inspiration of this lovely adaptation by acclaimed dancer and choreographer Susan Dibble. Young socialite Lily Bart brings her beauty, ambition, and cunning to bear on her attempt to climb New York’s social ladder by arranging an advantageous marriage for herself, as is expected by custom and society, yet all of her efforts are thwarted by her own desire for a life of luxury and greed. “Society is a revolving body,” Edith Wharton wrote; and the characters of her pages come to life in this work of 24 dances, a narrator, and music ranging from Chopin and Satie to Ragtime and Laurie Anderson.

**ROSE ART MUSEUM**

- Wednesdays (12 P.M.)
  - Lydian on Wednesdays
  - Wednesdays never sounded so sweet! Put the day on pause and enjoy a free noontime concert by the Lydian String Quartet.

- Nov. 9 (2 P.M.)
  - Bob Nieske 4
  - Avant-garde jazz, with Dave Tronzo (guitar), Phil Grenadier (trumpet), and John Hazilla (drums).
  - Free with admission