Reaching for the Future

by Robert Cohen

At a recent national conference of 120 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs), representing all 50 states, I was fortunate to meet and have discussions with representatives of many of them. It was not a surprise to find that they all had aspects of their programs of which they were justifiably proud. Nor was it a surprise to find that they each had problems or issues with their programs. What came as somewhat of a surprise was that so many of the issues they had were the same as or similar to issues that we have at BOLLI. Some of these issues were space and time in which to run their programs, maintaining a constant flow of new courses, getting sufficient SGLs, dealing with having classes in different locations on the campus and in many instances in totally separate locations in their own town or county, establishing the fees that should be charged, etc. More surprising was the fact that the commonality of issues existed despite the fact that most of the OLLIs were located at and supported by public colleges and universities. The courses offered varied from bocce to chemistry, from knitting to The Iliad.

What I carried away from the conference is that BOLLI is at least as well organized and operated as any of them. Our academic and course selection standards are among the highest, and the respect and admiration of Brandeis and BOLLI is widespread. We have a program, a community, and a university of which we can truly be proud. Many of the representatives took the time to tell me of their appreciation for the support and advice that they have received from Sharon over the years.

As part of our planning for the future, the Guidelines task force has been revising the Guidelines to make our governance clearer and less bureaucratic. Provisions are being made for holding elections electronically, creating co-chairs to provide for succession planning, and allowing for more member-created and led “autonomous groups.” The development of additional groups such as the Adventurers group, the Theatre-Dinner group, and the Scene-iors group will allow greater flexibility and less oversight. Members are encouraged to develop other such groups.

The Technology Assessment task force is working on a variety of projects to come to fruition in the near future. These include electronic voting, distance learning, Webinars, and co-operative projects with local public television.

A strategic planning task force is being developed, and I am seeking committed members to serve on it. Interested? Send your name to robertcohen@brandeis.edu.

BOLLI has a limitless future. Be part of it. Get involved.
**RECENT COUNCIL DECISIONS**

*by Sophie Freud*

The BOLLI Council made these decisions at recent meetings:

- The Caring Committee may send an Internet “get well” card to a member who is seriously ill, on which card it will ask permission to notify the BOLLI community of the member’s situation. (carried unanimously)
- No more than two SGLs per course qualify for bypassing the class lottery. (carried unanimously)
- On a trial basis, Rene Ross may distribute brochures in the Gathering Place which promote travel programs for BOLLI members, family, and friends. (carried 5 to 4)

Save the date: BOLLI Tenth Anniversary Celebration, May 13, 2010, 6–10 P.M. President Jehuda Reinharz is planning to attend

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**Sustaining a Learning Community**

**Six Ways to Support the BOLLI Endowment Fund**

*[courtesy of Brandeis Office of Development]*

- Establish a charitable gift annuity
  - Gift annuity provides a charitable deduction
  - Portion of annuity income is tax-free
  - Consult your tax advisor
- Write a check for a one-time gift
- Make a gift payable over several years
- Donate up to $100,000 from your IRA
  - Must be 70 1/2 or older
  - Gift must be made by December 31, 2009
  - Avoid tax on your IRA withdrawal
  - Consult your tax advisor
- Sponsor a program or space
- Include Brandeis in your will

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Current Single Life Gift Annuity Rates

Your support is a reflection of your devotion to BOLLI and sustaining our unique community of lifelong learners. Gift forms are available at brandeis.edu/bolli/endowmentfund.html.

For more information, contact BOLLI Endowment Fund co-Chairs Susan Posner (781-444-9138 or srposner@gmail.com) or Irwin Silver (508-877-2808 or winlosil@aol.com).
Osteoporosis: A Dilemma

by Jeff Becker, D.M.D.
Diplomate American Board of Orthodontics

As so many BOLLI members unfortunately know, osteoporosis is the most common type of bone disease, with an estimated 10 million Americans having osteoporosis, as well as another 18 million having osteopenia. Oral medications such as alendronate (Fosamax), Actonel, and Boniva—all forms of bisphosphonates used to combat these insidious diseases—have raised an interesting issue.

So, what is the issue? Aside from the readily-known side effects from these medications, a rare but serious disease called osteonecrosis (bone death) of the jaw (BRONJ) has made its appearance in those adults who have been taking the bisphosphonates for a long term (generally over 3 years). Fortunately, BRONJ is occurring in very small numbers for those taking the oral form. However, it is prevalent and serious enough that we must become informed and aware of ways to help protect ourselves. One such way is to understand the dental implications related to BRONJ.

A little history: reports of BRONJ first surfaced about five years ago, primarily in cancer patients who had received “IV” bisphosphonates for hypercalcemia and bone metastases. Experts generally accept the association between jaw osteonecrosis and “IV” bisphosphonates, which are often given repetitively in high doses to cancer patients.

Fortunately, the data is significantly less compelling for those taking oral bisphosphonates for osteoporosis. However, we now know that certain dental patients taking these medications long term need to be cautious about extractions, implants, major periodontal surgery and surgical endodontic procedures. As a lesser concern, bisphosphonates during orthodontic treatment alter the bone resorbing cells, and therefore may cause reduction in tooth movement to the desired position.

The dilemma: what should you do if you need dental surgery? The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons recommends no alteration or delay in necessary dental surgery for patients who have taken oral bisphosphonates for fewer than three years and who have none of the characteristics that are thought to be risk factors. However, for those who have taken oral bisphosphonates for longer than three years, the statement urges prescribing physicians to stop the drug three months before oral surgery or other invasive procedures, and to restart it only after osseous (bone) healing has occurred. Although these recommendations admittedly are based on opinion and not hard data, stopping the drug temporarily is reasonable.

On the one hand, no proof exists to show that interruption of bisphosphonate therapy will make the dental procedure foolproof, but it is believed that it will reduce the risk considerably; on the other hand, a 6–12 month “drug holiday” is unlikely to alter fracture risk substantially in a patient who has already taken a bisphosphonate for several years.

To be clear, this recommendation does not suggest anyone on these medications should avoid using them, certainly not without consulting one’s doctor.

In summary, if you are on an osteoporosis medication, tell your dentist and dental specialist. If you ever require special invasive dental care, your dentist will evaluate your situation and will likely first consider a less invasive procedure if possible or consider the benefits and need for a bisphosphonate holiday. I am happy to report that typical routine dental care is not at all a concern with this potential disease.

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH
St. Augustine wrote, “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.” Fortunately, many resources can help us turn the pages and find adventures abroad.

Besides the well-known Exploritas (formerly Elderhostel) and Overseas Adventure Travel, other agencies offer more specialized options.

Travel with Bike and Barge Holland Tours is by barge at night and by bicycle during the day. You select from two levels of difficulty for about six hours of biking, all on bike paths, with stops for food and interpretive talks. Tours around town often follow dinner. Because your room moves with you, there is no daily packing. If you decide not to bike one day, you can stay on the barge as it travels to its next destination. Sleeping rooms are small with private baths; meals are family style.

Viking River Cruises features European river cruises such as a journey from Budapest to Amsterdam on the Danube, Main, and Rhine Rivers or a cruise on the Saône and Rhone rivers through Burgundy and Provence. Each day brings a new city and tours with local guides. The boat, with hotel-like rooms, houses about 150 people; open seating at meals facilitates social interactions.

For a more independent and energetic water experience, try self-barging. Locaboat rents you the boat and you become the crew, steering your own way along canals in France—including locks! You anchor and sightsee as desired using their book of maps and suggestions.

Enjoy walking? Walking Adventures International blends walking with historic, cultural, and scenic highlights. Working with local walking clubs and guides, WAI provides interactions with ordinary people and insight into life in another country beyond just the typical tourist sites. A customer-oriented, family-owned business, WAI is flexible with easier and harder options on the walks. Emphasis is on local cuisine. Travel between cities is usually by bus or by boat or air for long distances.

To live like a local, rent a farmhouse, cottage, or apartment from Untours, which verifies all accommodations for cleanliness and comfort. Untours includes a rental car or public transportation pass, support staff for pre-planning, and detailed on-site guides. You are met on arrival and escorted to your rental home. Most of Untours’s profits are donated for low-interest loans that create jobs among disenfranchised populations, build low-income housing, and support Fair Trade products.

For planning a trip, there are three excellent guidebook series. DK Eyewitness Travel Guides feature full-color, detailed maps and photographs. Rick Steves’s European guidebooks stress local, sometimes off-the-beaten-track activities. Particularly helpful are room-by-room diagrammatic guides to what could be overwhelming museums (e.g., the Louvre). In the Access Guidebooks, like Access Paris, information is organized by neighborhoods, allowing you to construct efficient itineraries.

Mark Twain said, “Years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So sail away from the safe harbor. Explore. Dream. Discover.”
The Fat Lady Sings in Boston
by Phil Radoff

You don’t have to go to New York to see an opera. These days there are lots of ways to satisfy your operatic craving much closer to home.

Resident and Touring Companies
Boston’s two resident opera companies offer fully-staged and generally well-conducted performances, featuring good orchestras and occasionally outstanding young singers. The Boston Lyric Opera presents mainstream performances of mostly standard repertory operas (four this season). Opera Boston (OB) features lesser-known and infrequently seen works (three this season, including a world premier). OB offerings this season boast world-class singers Ewa Podles and Stephanie Blythe. OB’s general director, Carole Charnow, will be a Lunch & Learn speaker on November 17th. The Teatro Lirico d’Europa regularly visits Boston to perform the war horses of the operatic repertory (three this season).

Other Live Opera
High quality staged or semi-staged performances, typically of baroque or classical operas, are presented by the Boston Early Music Festival, Boston Baroque, and Boston Midsummer Opera.

Opera on the Big Screen
The Metropolitan Opera continues its program of broadcasting live, high-definition (HD) Saturday afternoon performances (nine this season) from the stage of the Met to movie theaters throughout the world, including nine within 22 miles of Brandeis. In addition, the Met makes digitally recorded “encore” performances available to movie-goers on Wednesday evenings following the live broadcasts. Area theaters differ in their policies of selling advance tickets to individual performances and of opening a second screen to accommodate an overflow audience for the Saturday broadcasts (which often sell out). Check with the theater of your choice before showing up without a ticket: click the HD window on the Web site and follow the links.

If you simply must see a live production of Wagner’s Ring or Verdi’s Aida, there is still no substitute for a trip to the Met; it may be a long time before Boston has the necessary resources to mount opera on a truly grand scale. But if you’re happy with opera on a smaller scale, the local companies can be very satisfying. And if you’re content to watch those neat Met chandeliers slowly rise to the ceiling on the big screen while you sit munching popcorn in a $20 seat at your favorite movie house, the Met’s HD series is for you.

Boston Baroque bostonbaroque.org
Boston Early Music bemf.org
Boston Lyric Opera blo.org
Boston Midsummer Opera bostonmidsummeropera.org

Metropolitan metopera.org
Opera Boston operaboston.org
Teatro Lirico maj.org

Stick ’em Up!
The BOLLI Tenth Anniversary Committee is looking for photos of BOLLI members and activities since the inception of the program. These can be from classes, excursions, SID events, or everyday activities. The photos will be assembled into poster-sized collages and shown at our anniversary celebration in May 2010. We can use either photo prints or emailed photo attachments. Please contact Meryl or Len Heier at lheier@gmail.com or 617-332-2155 if you are able to make a contribution to this effort. All photo prints will be returned in original condition.
MENTOR COMMITTEE

by Judy Cohen and Mary Ann Sliwa

Since its inception ten years ago, BOLLI has fostered a mutually interdependent relationship with Brandeis. This relationship has been beneficial to both the university students and members of BOLLI.

This past year, BOLLI established a Mentor Committee so that undergraduate and graduate students can avail themselves of the wisdom and experience of our BOLLI membership. Although vocations have changed over the years, the perspective of someone who has “been there” is invaluable, especially to the undergraduates as they begin to explore future careers. The key question students ask is, “Would you do it over again?”

The BOLLI Mentoring Committee is currently engaged in seeking mentors for particular “hot” careers, particularly people who have held jobs in the Federal government (especially the State Department), science, and health fields. Whatever your past experience, we are interested in including your name on our database should the opportunity come up to speak on a career panel or to mentor students.

For this purpose, we would appreciate knowing your area of work or volunteerism, with specific positions and areas of concentration. Most likely, you could be called upon to share this with the students as a panel member. Please email Barbara Apstein at bapstein@verizon.net.

JUST CALL ME UNCLE

by Richard Glantz

My SID student was lonely; he missed his wife and two-and-a-half year-old daughter. By January, their visas had come through. When we went to Logan airport to pick them up, I wondered how I would recognize his wife, whom I had never seen. She was probably going to be dressed in a black burqa, with only her eyes visible.

When she cleared Immigration and came through the swinging double doors, I realized how silly I was. She was dressed in a traditional Pakistani outfit: bright teal-colored gauzy cotton jacket and pants, head uncovered, and lips moistened with brown lip gloss.

I greeted her softly, “Welcome to America.” At that moment, the woman's cell phone rang. It was her parents back home, nervous because they had been told that after 9/11, all Muslims entering the U.S. are strip-searched. I asked her to reassure her parents that she and her daughter were safe in America.

I called out to the daughter by name, “Ushna! Ushna!” She ran right over to me. I took her picture, and I swept her up in my arms. When I put her down, she and I went running through the lobby of Terminal E. I caught up to her, placed her on my bended knee, and urged her to place my parking ticket into the slot of the payment machine. All the while, her arms around my neck, she called me "Uncle," the word of respect and endearment for an older person.

It seems both Americans and Pakistanis have fantasies about each other that need to be cleared up. Thank goodness for the innocence of children.
Our programs are running smoothly and successfully.
We are taking steps to make better use of technology, increase programming flexibility, and start strategic planning.

These were the messages delivered by Council Chair Robert Cohen at the Open Forum on Wednesday, October 29. Robert’s article on the front page of this issue of the Banner details the specific initiatives. During the meeting he also related his impressions after attending the national Osher Lifetime Learning organization conference (also detailed in the front page article).

Highlights of Neil Bernstein’s presentation on the budget were:
• BOLLI’s finances are stable. Last year BOLLI managed to end in the black by reducing operating expenses (by about $18,000) to offset the inability to access the Endowment Fund.
• While the Endowment Fund has regained some of its value, it is not clear how soon it will be available as a source of operating income again.
• The current year’s budget anticipates additional income of $10,500 from the new Hebrew Senior Life program at Newbridge.

Other items of general interest announced were:
• Planning is underway for an evening of fun and festivities to celebrate BOLLI’s 10th anniversary next May.
• BOLLI received a $25,000 grant from the Osher Foundation.
• Beginning next term, the Old South Street building will no longer be used for classes (except computer-related).
• The content of the BOLLI Web site will be updated in December.

Robert emphasized BOLLI’s core values of respect and courtesy, and he urged all BOLLI members to reach out to newcomers to make them feel welcome.

Rapaporte Seminars
January 4-8, 2009
9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
Hassenfeld

Antony and Cleopatra
Prof. Billy Flesch

Health Care Reform
Prof. Michael Doonan

The Four Bottles of Life

Which one are you on?
**SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER**  
(Brandeis Tickets: 781-736-3400)

Unless noted otherwise, tickets are $15 for BOLLI members with i.d., in advance; $20, at the door

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<tr>
<td>Sat., Dec. 5</td>
<td>8 P.M.</td>
<td><strong>Brandeis University Jazz Ensemble</strong></td>
<td>Bob Nieske, director</td>
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<td>New and old jazz classics for Big Band and Small Groups</td>
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<td>$5 for BOLLI members with i.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun., Dec. 6</td>
<td>7 P.M.</td>
<td><strong>Brandeis University Improv Collective</strong></td>
<td>Tom Hall, director</td>
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<td>“I don’t care too much about music. What I like is sounds” – Dizzie Gillespie</td>
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**SPINGOLD THEATER**

For tickets, click on go.brandeis.edu /BrandeisTickets or call (781-736-3400, option 5)

Save $2 handling fee by buying tickets at the box office, now located in Shapiro Student Center

Tickets are $50, $35, $29, and $15

Dec. 4, 11, 18 (7:30 P.M.), Dec. 5, 12, 19 (2 P.M. and 6 P.M.), and Dec. 6, 13, 20 (1:30 P.M. and 5:30 P.M.)

**The Nutcracker**

Performance by Ballet Theatre  
Directed by José Mateo

No holiday season is complete without dancing snowflakes, battling mice and soldiers, and dazzling Sugar Plum Fairies. Inspired by Tchaikovsky’s glorious score, this Nutcracker brings the story to life through the dancing, not the usual mime and theatrics. See Ballet Theatre’s acclaimed company dancers and over 100 children as mice, soldiers, angels, and more at this beautiful, audience-friendly theater. Festive sets, sumptuous costumes, and spectacular dancing make this affordable Nutcracker a delight for young and old.

**LAURIE THEATER**

For tickets, click on go.brandeis.edu /BrandeisTickets or call (781-736-3400, option 5)

Save $2 handling fee by buying tickets at the box office, now located in Shapiro Student Center

In addition, BOLLI members receive a $5 discount off the $18 or $20 price

Feb. 4–6, 11–13 (8 P.M.) and Feb. 13–14 (2 P.M.)

**Funnyhouse of a Negro**

Written by Adrienne Kennedy  
Choreography by Susan Dibble  
Directed by David Gammons

Sarah is young, black, and obsessed with whiteness and loses herself in her “funnyhouse” with various versions of herself including Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Hapsburg, and Jesus. This bold, phantasmagoric play about being a black woman in the 1960s made Adrienne Kennedy the most original voice of her generation.