We have no being beyond our stories. Our stories explain us, justify us, sustain us, humble us and forgive us.
– N. Scott Momaday

BOLLI members Alorie Parkhill and Marjorie Roemer were invited to present a session called “The Age of Memoir: Teaching Writing in a Lifelong Learning Setting” at the annual Conference on Composition and Communication in St. Louis this March. The 300-session conference draws some 2600 college writing teachers from all over the country, and acceptance on the program is highly selective. The theme of this year’s conference was Writing Gateways, a reference to the famous St. Louis Gateway Arch and the role of that city as “gateway to the west.” This metaphor provided a platform for speculation about gateways in the practice of writing: the thresholds, transition points, and explorations that are studied in the field of composition. But it was the Momaday quote above which framed the opening keynote address that spoke most directly to our work. (Momaday is a Pulitzer prize-winning Kiowa-Cherokee author).

We began by explaining BOLLI, its history and structure. Then our session reflected on the role of memoir-writing at BOLLI, its enduring popularity and significance. Using some of the work of narrative gerontologists and many references to our own memoir writers, we shared the power of our Brandeis writing communities.

To quote from Storying Later Life: Issues, Investigations, and Intervention in Narrative Gerontology by Kenyon, Bohlmeijer, and Randall:

In retirement we lose work identity. Being aged means we have been somebody.
The parent/partner role may be gone and narrative identity may be the only role left.
The self has a heroic job to do bringing parts of ourselves together in a coherent whole.

So, we presented our experiences in this learning community, the ways that our various narratives have been shaped and shared to offer us new ways of seeing our own stories and framing our experience in the new territory of aging. Our audience appeared to be moved and, as they claimed, “inspired” by our testimony, and we were happy to bear witness that not only does life go on in older age but vibrant re-exploration of that life through the telling of our stories. For an audience of teachers of all ages from all over the country, we were delighted to represent BOLLI and some of its remarkable work.
COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR 2012–2013

by Mike Segal, Council Chair-elect

As a participatory peer-member organization, BOLLI is served by volunteers who are the backbone of the BOLLI Program. In addition to the excellent Study Group Leaders, many BOLLI members besides Council members give of their time and energy to make the program an ongoing success.

I am pleased to report the BOLLI Committee Chairs for the 2012–2013 year who lead those various participating groups:

**Standing Committee Chairs:**
- Curriculum Committee: Naomi Schmidt
- Gift Funds Committee: Myra Snyder
- Lunch & Learn Committee: Diane Becker and Star Zieve
- Membership Committee: Richard Mansfield
- Study Group Support Committee: Joyce Hollman

**Special Committee Chairs:**
- Banner Committee: Richard Glantz
- Enhancement Committee: Neil Bernstein and Steve Messinger
- International Friends Committee: Lois Silver and Lyn Weiner
- Journal Committee: Joan Kleinman
- Mentoring Committee: Judith Cohen
- Scholar Program Committee: Carol Shedd
- Technology Committee: Joel Freedman

**ELECTION RESULTS FOR COUNCIL**

Alorie Parkhill  Charlie Raskin  Peter Schmidt

**LEAD THE WAY**

57% of our members have made a gift either to the Bernie Reisman Operations Fund, which helps our operating budget, or to the BOLLI Endowment Fund (EF) to help perpetuate our program. Thanks to your donations, the EF has grown to $1.3 million.

Please consider making a new gift to help us reach our goal of $2 million. Enclosed in the Banner is an envelope for your convenience.

- The Gift Funds Committee

The BOLLI Banner is published by the Banner Editorial Committee:

Richard Glantz, Publisher
Carole Grossman, Co-Editor
Susan Posner, Archivist
Phil Radoff, Co-Editor
Naomi Schmidt, Staff Writer
Andy Thurnauer, Secretary

Len Heier, photographer
Bonnie Alpert, Council liaison
Phyllis Pressman Cohen and Joan Kleinman, contributing writers

Banner archive: www.brandeis.edu/bolli/banner/index.html

Vol 12  Number 6  - 2 -  May 2012
Thirty-seven Summers

by Joan Kleinman

Arthur Sharenow considers himself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. In his new book, 37 Summers: My Years as a Director of a Children’s Summer Camp, he explains why.

Written largely in Ruth Jacobs’s BOLLI writing class, which Arthur took ten times in five years, the book is an anecdotal history. It reflects his passion for running an overnight summer camp as well as his understanding of the awesome responsibility of caring for other people’s children and the fact that his work could profoundly affect their lives. “Each summer we had the opportunity to create our own perfect little world,” he says.

The challenges and anxieties involved in organizing each upcoming season—finding staff, recruiting campers, maintaining the facilities—weighed heavily during the off-season. But Arthur considers that opening day—seeing the excitement and delight of arriving campers—more than compensated for the hard work.

After graduating from Brandeis University and Harvard Law School, Arthur joined a Boston law firm, but he soon realized that he was profoundly discontented with that profession. When the opportunity arose, he and his wife Judy agreed to venture into a world they had known and loved during their childhood, college years, and even through law school. They purchased Camps Kenwood and Evergreen in Wilmot NH, their “very own” camps where they had both been campers and counselors. And thus began what would become, Arthur explains, “an all-encompassing family business.”

Camps Kenwood and Evergreen are what is known as brother-sister camps—two separate entities running together. They accommodate about two hundred kids, ages seven to fifteen. Judy served as bookkeeper and menu planner and shopper, and ran many of the girls’ evening activities. Arthur involved himself with sports activities and overall administration. Both dealt with the unexpected surprises, like the time their lake turned orange! “When camp was in session,” Arthur emphasizes, “I never left the premises.”

A sure indicator of their excellent work is that a large number of campers and counselors returned again and again; in fact, about half of the counselors were former campers. Eventually, second and third generations from the same families came. Arthur knew the kids personally; “over the years,” he notes, he and Judy attended “thousands of bar/bat mitzvahs!” For Arthur, camp should not be a goal-oriented endeavor like school. A successful camp experience is “happiness and individual accomplishment.”

In the 37 summers from 1960 to 1996, Arthur maintains that the kids remained “pretty much the same” as they coalesced together into the camp environment. Two changes Arthur did notice were a downturn in the population of youngsters in the 1970s, causing about 20% of camps to close, and the recession of the late 1970s, necessitating a change from an eight- to a seven-week session.

After selling Kenwood/Evergreen (to another ex-lawyer) in 1996, Arthur and Judy continued to work there until 2004, when they officially retired. Looking back, Arthur delights in having a career that was so enjoyable, meaningful, and inspiring.
Camaraderie, love of singing, desire for musical expression, and an opportunity to learn more about classical music are among the reasons offered by BOLLI members who perform in choral groups. While they have a variety of musical backgrounds, all are enthusiastic chorus members.

Bob Keller grew up in a musical household and began singing in high school. In the 70s he sang with David Randolph’s chorus in New York. When he moved to Newton, he and his wife Barbara joined the Newton Choral Society. “We were a terrible chorus to begin with, but after 36 years, it has become one of the best community-based choruses in greater Boston and has performed in theaters here and in New York.”

Phil Radoff sang only for his own amusement until he was well into his 40s, when he joined the Reston Chorale in Virginia. For the past fifteen years he has performed with the Heritage Chorale based in Framingham, a group directed by the very able John Finney. Phil has also sung at the Berkshire Choral Festival every summer for the past ten years, both in Sheffield MA and abroad in such colorful venues as Vancouver and Umbria. This year he will be going to Salzburg.

Shirley Hurwitz sings with a women’s a cappella group, the Jeweltones, which performed at Lunch-and-Learn last fall. Alorie Parkhill’s childhood was filled with music — folk, blues, and jazz were the favored genres of her siblings, and she happily sang along. Later, she sang with the women’s faculty when she taught at the Cambridge School of Weston. Alorie currently sings with the choir of the First Parish Church in Sudbury. “The church choir is a real challenge,” says Alorie, “because you have to learn pieces so quickly, often the week before you sing them.”

Sheila Davison, also a member of the First Parish Church choir, explained that they present an entire Sunday Service of Music twice a year.

Bonnie Alpert is a member of Koleinu, the Jewish Community Chorus that rehearses at Hebrew College in Newton and “performs all kinds of Jewish music several times a year.” A special bonus for Bonnie is her daughter’s participation in the same group.

Leni Bloomenthal, an SGL for a choral music appreciation course, regularly sings with the Berkshire Choral Festival, the New World Chorale, and the Newton Choral Society.

Joyce Chartor’s parents were musical, and she has loved music as long as she can remember. Joyce attended the New England Conservatory of Music and sang with the NEC Chorus, the Girls’ Latin School Glee Club, and the All-Boston Chorus. More recently she has sung with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the Newton Choral Society, and the Heritage Chorale. “Music fills me the way nothing else does,” she says, adding that “it makes me wondrous like a child, joyful, and it soothes and calms me when I most need it.”

All of these BOLLI performers enjoy the challenge and pleasure of singing under the direction of a talented conductor. Bob Keller remarked that “a chorus is basically an ensemble, requiring precise teamwork,” adding that “correct timing is more important than the correct note.” What is the future of music in America? Bob, an advocate of music education, is disappointed with recent budget cuts. He points to El Sistema, a publicly financed music education program in Venezuela, as a great model. “We should only see something like this in the U.S.!”
BOLLI members are always eager for new course offerings in the Arts, and this semester we were fortunate to introduce three new SGLs leading classes in Fine Arts (Nancy Alimansky), Music (Leni Bloomenthal), and Poetry (Jan Schreiber).

Nancy has been a BOLLI member for a number of years, and as an artist and former docent, she has always wanted to teach a course in art history. In her former life she taught courses in Management and Technology and had a 20-year “gig” as Director of Newton’s Highland Jazz organization. Without an MFA degree, however, she was never able to teach what she really loved until BOLLI offered her the Fine Arts gig.

Nancy states that the participants in her course on “The Private Lives of the Impressionists and Their Art” are full of energy and curiosity, offering very insightful comments. She will offer this course again in the fall, and has plans for a future course on Post Impressionism.

Leni, also a BOLLI member for several years, has been singing in choruses ever since college, and attempts in her Choral Music class to give her students listening skills to enable them to get more out of their concert experiences. Sharing her love of choral music and making it interesting to people who have not listened to very much of it excites her, and she loves it when non-musicians “get it.”

Leni’s course has something for everyone, from the novice who never learned to read music to the person who has played an instrument for many years. From a “name that tune” challenge at the start of each class, where the notes for one line of a simple melody are projected on the screen, to the more complex four-part scores that students follow while listening to works such as Mendelssohn’s Elijah oratorio, class members are challenged at all levels.

Leni would like to repeat her just completed five-week class, and will think about some new material for the future. She says, “Every time I go to a concert or rehearse a piece I find myself saying, ‘Would this work at BOLLI?’”

Jan is new at BOLLI this semester, and we’re fortunate to have him here. After receiving his doctorate in English and American Literature from Brandeis in 1972, he taught only briefly before moving into fields where jobs were more plentiful. After retirement, he is happy to be teaching again, and in the process giving something back to Brandeis, which gave him a great deal.

Jan knows that 20th century poetry presents a vast and confusing scene, dominated by a few towering figures and containing many works that seem impenetrable, and his aim is to help people to sort out the exalted from the commonplace, the lasting from the ephemeral. The problem has been to condense the poetry of a prolific and eventful century into a ten-week course that meets only once a week. He hopes that the class discussions are sufficiently intriguing to spur participants to read and contemplate poetry more. Although he won’t be teaching this fall, he is inclined to teach the same course in the future or perhaps one concentrating on fewer poets.

We thank Nancy, Leni, and Jan for providing such enjoyable and stimulating courses, and look forward to seeing them in the front of the classroom in the future.
Have expertise, will travel may well be the motto for veteran BOLLI SGL’s Eileen Mitchell and Allan Kleinman. In early January, Eileen was preparing to leave for her customary winter stay in the San Diego area. Tucked into her suitcase was the winter-quarter catalog of the University of California San Diego’s Osher program, the course *Fun with Theater Arts* clearly circled as one she planned to take.

The phone rang. Calling from California was Marcia Wyrtzen, a UCSD Osher member who had met Eileen the previous winter and who was involved with UCSD Osher’s Theater World, an activity comparable to BOLLI’s Scene-iors. At that time, Marcia admitted, she had little theater experience and had unabashedly “picked Eileen’s brains.” Now she was explaining that the scheduled instructor for *Fun with Theater Arts* was ill; Marcia had agreed to substitute with a big if: IF Eileen would be her co-teacher. Eileen answered affirmatively and threw into her suitcase a few play scripts and books.

In one intensive week, they outlined their course. Challenges abounded. UCSD Osher classes meet for five two-hour sessions—little time to prepare plays for presentation. Furthermore, students enroll for the term but do not register for specific classes; they may take whatever courses they wish. So Eileen and Marcia had no idea who, or how many, would walk through their classroom door the first day. Twenty-four folks did and eighteen remained in ensuing weeks.

Eileen and Marcia selected two comedies: *Check Please*, Jonathan Rand’s spoof on blind dating, and Alice Gerstenberg’s *He Said and She Said* about gossip. Following one class of roundtable reading, they held auditions for parts, chose roles and rehearsed, offering coaching and acting tips. Students in the class, many of whom had never acted, grew excited and gained confidence. One shy student said, “I became someone else.”

The co-leaders shared an enjoyable and educational experience. The collaboration “was really great,” they commented in complete agreement.

Allan Kleinman had arranged to teach his course, *Genomics and Individualized Medicine*, far in advance. When he packed to travel west, notes, books, CDs, and other materials filled an entire suitcase. Allan’s class convened in a large classroom with a lecture format and sixty to seventy people attending. Following the culture of the California Osher, Allan recommended, but did not require, background reading.

Teaching a large group is very different from the BOLLI seminar style model, Allan noted, adding that he prefers smaller classes, which allow “an opportunity for more effective give and take.” He also favors the role of study group leader, co-learning with the class, as opposed to being considered the “sage on the stage.” Allan said that preparing polished presentations is incredibly time-consuming. On the other hand, he found his audience at UCSD receptive and inquisitive. Members were enthusiastic about the material and his engaging use of visuals and small videos. And as a snowbird he is pleased that teaching enables him to meet and get to know more UCSD Osher members.

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**BOLLI Choral Group Forming?**

Do you enjoy singing? Did you once sing in a chorus or choir and miss the experience now? If enough folks are interested in participating in a Choral Workshop, let Ilana know at ilevine@brandeis.edu. There’s a BOLLI member who may be willing to lead this singing group. The only requirement is that you be able to carry a tune.
**New Yorker Fiction Discussion Group**
We meet Wednesday at 10:30 A.M. in the Purple Room starting May 30 and continuing throughout the summer to Sep. 5. Watch for further details in the weekly BOLLI Bulletin. Join us for iconic literature, stimulating discussions and loads of laughs. Contact Sandy Traiger at sandyharristraiger@verizon.net or Phyllis Cohen at saffta@comcast.net

**Italian Conversation Group**
This newly-formed group will meet on an ad hoc basis during the summer. There are six members to date and other Italian-speakers are invited to join. The group read and discussed a short story by Paolo Villaggio and is considering other stories at an appropriate level. Contact: Na’ama Ansell at nsansell25@gmail.com, Joe More at j.more@yahoo.com, or Phil Radoff at plradoff@yahoo.com

**French Conversation Group**
The group meets biweekly and plans to continue meeting through the summer. The dozen or so members have chosen *L’Alouette* by Jean Anouilh for their next book. Contact: Barbara Apstein at bapstein@verizon.net, Susan Coppock at secoppock@yahoo.com, or Phil Radoff at plradoff@yahoo.com.

**Hebrew Conversation Group**
The group will continue to meet throughout the summer. As usual, the group will meet at 10 A.M. on the second Monday of each month. Notices will be sent out to the members prior to each meeting.

**Boston Midsummer Opera**
July 25, 27 (7:30 P.M.), July 29 (3 P.M.): *Don Pasquale*, at Tsai Performance Center at Boston University. $40 tickets available at 20% off ($32).

**Theater/Dinner Group**
(Events will either be preceded by lunch or followed by dinner)
• June 24: *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, a musical, at Turtle Lane Playhouse in Newton
• August 22: *Paragon Park*, a musical, at The Company Theatre in Norwell

**Faculty-Led Summer Seminars at BOLLI**
(prices and registration date will appear in the BOLLI Bulletin)

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<tr>
<td>Jun. 4-8</td>
<td>9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.</td>
<td>Paul Morrison</td>
<td>Depression-Era Movies</td>
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<td>Jun. 11-15</td>
<td>1:00-4:00 P.M.</td>
<td>Jill Greenlee</td>
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<td>Aug. 6-10</td>
<td>9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.</td>
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<td>Aug. 13-17</td>
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<td>Gil Harel</td>
<td>Jazz Survey</td>
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**Convergence**

To celebrate the Women’s Studies Research Center’s (WSRC) 10-year anniversary, the Kniznick Gallery presents a juried exhibition of art work by thirteen WSRC and Hadassah-Brandeis Institute scholars, staff, and board members. The exhibition will include photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, and more.

Ornit Barkai  
Patti Cassidy  
Emily Corbato  
Susan Eisenberg  

Fran Forman  
Karen Frostig  
Mary Hamill  
Ronni Kamarow  

Karen Rosenthal  
Rhoda Sapers  
Rosalie Shane  
Louise Weinberg  

Michele L’Heureux

Opening Reception: Thur., May 31 (4–6 P.M.)
with special multimedia performances by Alexandra Borrie

Closing Reception: Wed., Sep. 12 (5–7:30 P.M.)

**Occupy Sanhedrin**

The Kniznick Gallery at WSRC welcomes the fourth annual Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (HBI) Artist-in-Residence, Sarah Zell Young. The HBI residency provides artists the opportunity to be in residence at Brandeis University while working on a significant artistic project in the field of Jewish women's and gender studies.

Young is an artist working in several media—photography, sculpture, installation, and film—to explore issues of justice, Judaism, and the body. Her exhibition for the WSRC/HBI, *Occupy Sanhedrin*, will examine roles—both religious and secular—for Jewish women from the Second Temple to the present and will explore how bodies can become hazarded in the pursuit of justice. In addition to photographs, the exhibition will feature a large, site-specific installation: an interactive and participatory rendition of a Sanhedrin (rabbinic court).

**BOLLI Scene-iors**

The players will perform an outstanding one-act play by Clifford Odets. *Waiting for Lefty* is a vigorous, confrontational work, based on a 1934 strike of unionized New York cab drivers. Explicit political messages dominate the play, whose ultimate goal was nothing less than the promotion of a communist revolution in America. Appearing at the height of the Great Depression, the play’s original 1935 production was a critical and popular sensation. *Waiting for Lefty* was widely staged throughout the country and brought Odets sudden fame.