This much became clear to me soon after I arrived on July 2 to join this community as its next Director: BOLLI is an extraordinary program, birthed by Bernie Reisman, nurtured by Sharon Sokoloff, and tended by its members.

What is our secret? One ingredient of BOLLI’s success flows from member sweat equity: BOLLI members own their enterprise; they conceive it and create it, from the program to the pasta. A mere glance at the BOLLI Study Group Guide will convince anyone that with only three professional staff but 500 volunteers BOLLI runs its very own liberal arts college.

Additional sources of BOLLI’s success are more difficult to identify. Let me share a preliminary perspective—not solidly grounded in months of experience, but conjectural and impressionistic. I do so not because I’m certain I am correct, but because I aim to create conversations about the secrets of our success and how we can build on it.

My hunches are three—each an answer to the question, what makes BOLLI such an extraordinary learning community?

We are, to paraphrase my friend Myrna Cohen, “in this for the love of it.” Members approach what they do together as an end, and not merely a means. Learning in retirement is a cause for joy, an adventure, and an opportunity to make new and meaningful friendships. This sense of love, joy, and the intrinsic value of our undertaking colors everything we do.

Secondly, we are a civic, not an ethnic community, and we honor differences of all kinds. We include proud Jews, Episcopalians, Germans, Armenians, Unitarians, Israelis, African-Americans, Eastern Orthodox Christians, Irish, Secular Humanists, and indeed, free-thinkers who rebel against all labels and categories. We are a neighborhood, a comfortable place where one can converse with a diverse array of friends, share a cup of coffee, and a moment on life’s journey. Above all, to paraphrase another friend, Peter Schmidt, we are “democratic …we are equals in the BOLLI space!”

Finally, we are a learning organization. We are in the business of learning in the Council and committee room, not only the classroom; that is, we learn not only about Toni Morrison from Alorie Parkhill, but also about survey research from Richard Mansfield, and Web design from Tamara Chernow.

Each BOLLI member is a learner—this being a remarkable phenomenon by itself—but consider this: BOLLI the organization is a learner as well. To step within our community is to be in a dialogue about how to do what we do, and to do it better tomorrow. In this sense the American philosopher Emerson got us right when he wrote that the end of a true educational journey is not the destination but every step of the way.
Council Report
by Bonnie Alpert

• Planning for the spring curriculum is in process. Curriculum Committee Chair Naomi Schmidt reminds members wishing to lead a course that they should file an “Intent to Propose” by Nov. 5, and submit their actual proposal by Nov. 26.

• The Lunch & Learn Committee, chaired by Diane Becker, reports her group's success in lining up another fine roster of speakers for the spring.

• Enhancement Committee co-chairs, Steve Messinger and Arlene Bernstein, announce that presenters using copyrighted materials, including videos and DVDs, in their Enhancement education programs need to sign and file the new Guidelines form available in the BEC folder in the Gathering Place file cabinet.

• New members (and those who joined BOLLI in recent years) should watch for an email announcing the date of an upcoming new member “mingle,” reports Richard Mansfield, Membership Committee chair.

• Gift Fund chair, Myra Snyder, reminds members to consider making donations to the Endowment Fund or the Bernie Reisman Operations Fund to commemorate or memorialize special people in our lives.

• Joyce Hollman’s Study Group Support Committee continues to liaise with study group leaders and members to ensure leader and student satisfaction with our courses.

The New Yorker Fiction Salon
(formerly the New Yorker Fiction Group)

We will meet during the Fall term on Fridays in the Purple Room:
* Oct. 19, 26, and Nov. 2, 9 at 2:30 P.M.
* Nov. 16, 30 and Dec. 7 at 12:30 P.M.
During the school break, we will meet on Wednesdays at 10:30 A.M.

(See the BOLLI Bulletin for dates and other details on all meetings.)

Please join us. Contact Sandy Traiger or Phyllis Cohen for more information.
**Membership Trends**

_by Richard Glantz_

### Who Are Our New Members?

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<th>Acton</th>
<th>Carlisle</th>
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<td>Ina Burdine</td>
<td>Lincoln Pinsky</td>
<td>Gerald White</td>
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<td>Andover</td>
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<td>Ann Kazer</td>
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<td>Hannah Delfiner</td>
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<td>Margaret Gilbert</td>
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<td>Boston</td>
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<td>Mimi Halperin-Maya</td>
<td>Rosemary Levin</td>
<td>Susan Bornstein</td>
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<td>Joan Karol</td>
<td>Framingham</td>
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<td>Cambridge</td>
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Source: BOLLI Office

- Move to Turner St.
- Added 5-week courses
- Fall
- Spring
- Total Members
- New Members
- Added Fridays
THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

by Richard Glantz

Marlyn Katz Levenson opened her Friday Enhancement event with a quote she attributed to Isaac Bashevis Singer: “God is the great novelist, and every human being’s life is a novel.”

Susan Coppock’s memoir spoke of an experience when she was eleven-years old. She spent the summer with recently-widowed Aunt Selena, who, she learned, was not her aunt. How does a pre-teen try to comfort the bereaved? Fill the air with words so as to distract her “aunt”; and make them big words, like indubitably.

Mary Mansfield also wrote of herself at eleven. She spent the summer at camp. Her inner turmoil was reflected in her anxiety that no one would come to take her home when camp ended.

Karen Wagner described her anxiety as an entering freshman at Penn State, when her faculty advisor failed to show up to help her select courses. Like Mary, she had to cope with the unforeseen.

Canadian Linda Brooks spoke of her citizenship ceremony. She remembers with clarity the emotional impact of standing to recite the pledge of allegiance and much later, voting for an African-American to be president.

Ellen Friedlander disliked her mother’s lectures, “In my day ...”. When Ellen became a mother, she, too, had a list of admonitions; but how would she pass them on to her children?

The audience was so taken with the real-life stories of these five BOLLI members that they begged for more.

Like the excellent SGL she is, Marlyn had ensured that each person had an encore at hand; and we in the audience sat in delight for another 25 minutes.

UNMASKED JUDEOPHOBIA

by Stephen Messinger

On September 5th, the BOLLI Enhancement Committee presented the video Unmasked Judeophobia followed by a discussion led by the director/producer Gloria Greenfield. The video is a meticulous examination of rising anti-Jewish ideology. Ms. Greenfield traveled from Israel to Europe to North America to cover this phenomenon from all angles, including historical Christian and contemporary Islamic polemics against Jews, the proliferation of anti-Israeli bias in academia and cultural institutions, misinformation campaigns and state-sanctioned denials of Israel’s right to exist. She conducted interviews with a wide range of experts, including Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz, Senator Joe Lieberman, former UN ambassador John Bolton, human rights activists Natan Sharansky and Irwin Cotler, British attorney Anthony Julius, British journalist and blogger Melanie Phillips, Wall Street Journal columnist Bret Stephens, and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Ya’alon, among many others. As discussed in her question and answer session following the showing, the only missing personalities from the video were moderate Islamists. Ms. Greenfield explained that while she was able to interview some individuals, they were afraid to be shown.
For more than 20 years Sally Fleschner had a successful career as a lawyer for some of the largest corporations in the world. But a 2000 visit to her sister who was living in Cairo changed all that forever. A little burned out on trial work and a little bored with routine, she decided to begin a new life working abroad. So she became a legal specialist for the American Bar Association.

The next few years were spent mostly in Bosnia working on several different projects, including participating in a working group which drafted a law on enforcement of judgments procedure, conducting seminars to the legal and business communities on alternative dispute resolution, preparing training materials in mediation, drafting a mediation law, and designing a court mediation pilot project.

Fleschner’s next assignment moved her to Afghanistan, where, in 2007, she assisted the Huquq Department of the Ministry in carrying out a public education campaign designed to inform the public about their human, civic, and social rights. Some other aspects of her fascinating work in that war-torn country included supervising ten Afghan attorneys in establishing a policy and strategy unit within the Ministry, mentoring judges and lawyers in criminal law issues, and monitoring gender justice events. Her work has taken her back and forth from Kabul to Sarajevo, with some time spent in Pristina, Kosovo and in Ramallah on the West Bank.

With it all Sally has even spent a semester or two at BOLLI and picked up a couple of stray foreign cats which are now part of her entourage.

Sally also managed to lease a Lipizzaner horse, Ukrina, during her stay in Bosnia and spends much of her free weekend time riding and even taking other people (mostly Europeans) out exploring the mountains which she has come to know quite well. She is negotiating to buy the mare, whose owner is now willing to sell. It is her dream to ship the horse to California for her 10-year-old granddaughter, an avid rider, to have.

Danger does not seem to faze her. Even though her last name sounds Jewish—Sally is actually a Quaker—Fleschner has never experienced any bigotry in Muslim countries. She said, “The only environment that could be considered dangerous was Afghanistan. Bosnia, Kosovo, and Palestine were quite tame, and very comfortable. When I was in Afghanistan, a lot of people I knew from Bosnia were there and to us it didn’t seem dangerous. Once you get into a community, it is like anywhere else. I never felt I was brave—maybe foolish. There is something cool about getting on an airplane and going to a new environment.”

Sally intends to return to the States in the spring and will only accept short-term assignments in the future even though her family seems to have adjusted to her being abroad. International travel is grueling and it is the part of doing this work that is least pleasing to her.

She has greatly enjoyed working on rule of law issues with lawyers from all over the world. Currently, she is living in Sarajevo in a great apartment and has some wonderful friends. Sally describes it as a “beautiful city nestled in the mountains with great hiking and skiing.” She will be sad to leave it.
The Play's the Thing

by Naomi Schmidt

Who would have thought, when Verne Vance started teaching at BOLLI two years ago, that we were about to encounter an SGL who is not only a superb teacher, but is also an amateur actor and playwright?

During his working life Verne had been a practicing corporate attorney, but what he has found particularly interesting and exciting in recent years has been the opportunity to write and act in short theater pieces. This past summer he both wrote and performed a monologue at The Open Eye Theater, a community theater located in the Catskills that was founded in the 1970s by the mythologist Joseph Campbell and his wife.

Before retirement, Verne was a partner at Foley Hoag LLP, where he specialized in intellectual property, environmental litigation, commercial litigation, and municipal law. Also, after decades of public service in Newton, Verne has the distinction of being the only person to serve as both President of the Newton Board of Aldermen and Chair of the Newton School Committee. He is currently on the Board of Directors of Newton at Home.

Verne was invited to become a BOLLI Study Group Leader in Spring 2011 when the Curriculum Committee saw his course offerings listed in the catalog of a similar program at Regis College, where he continues to teach. He had heard what an excellent program and community of lifelong learners BOLLI has and was flattered to be asked to join us.

What he has most enjoyed about teaching at BOLLI is the interaction with the terrifically bright, engaged learners here who always bring to him new insights about the material. He has become carefully attuned to the particular, and sometimes differing, interests of each class so as to strike an appropriate balance in his use of the various teaching tools that he employs. These tools include “mini-lectures” interspersed with discussion, dramatic readings of excerpts from the works being studied, and video clips of films and theatrical presentations that allow the class to see on the stage what they have read on the page.

One remarkable aspect of Verne’s tenure as an SGL has been the wealth of ideas that he comes up with each semester, often asking the Curriculum Committee to choose among two or three courses that he is eager to teach. He has thus far taught classes on George Bernard Shaw, Small Town Plays, and Verse Drama; and his current list of future possibilities includes: classic American musicals, comic dramas about the battle of the sexes, plays from the 1890s by Wilde and Shaw, historic assassinations and their consequences, and Ross Lockridge’s great but neglected American novel, Raintree County. As evidenced by the scope of this list, Verne’s interests are both broad and deep, and we look forward to utilizing his enthusiasm for his subject matter and his classroom skills for many semesters to come.

BOLLI Scene-iors Are Coming Back to Entertain You


Encore: Friday, Dec. 14, at 1 P.M. at the Laurie Theater on campus

Vol 13 Number 2 - 6 - October 2012
VISIT THE BRANDEIS WOMEN’S STUDIES RESEARCH CENTER  
by Sandie Bernstein

Are you looking for something different to do between classes? Would you like to experience an exciting environment where you can view avant garde exhibits by women which will appeal to both genders?

Well, why not visit Brandeis University’s Women’s Studies Research Center? Just amble over to the South Street Market, turn left, cross the railroad tracks, and you’ll find the WSRC just ahead on your left. Shulamit Reinharz, the Center’s founder and director, has extended the following invitation:

To our dear BOLLI neighbors: You are welcome to stop by any time from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. to see our shows in the Kniznick Gallery of the Women’s Studies Research Center. Or drop an e-mail to the curator, Michele L’Heureux (mlheur@brandeis.edu) to schedule a guided tour.

I recently viewed Lydia Kann Nettler’s memorable exhibit, Embedded Legacies, that is showing through December 18. Her mother's wartime experience in the Gur labor/concentration camp is recreated as an imposing installation of a sculptural and charcoal-drawn forest scene. Entirely black-on-white, it features embedded prose functioning as narrative.

“How will I know if it is even true that she came and went from such a place?” is inscribed on one tree. Another bears the words, “She left behind solely her absence, what could they have felt but longing? For the breast, for the smell of her, for her voice…was it honey smooth or a throaty grumble?” Thus a daughter remembers the pain of her mother.

The installations at the Brandeis Women’s Studies Research Center, as well as the Center’s on-going programs of study and lectures, are valuable resources open to our entire BOLLI community.

BOLLI Theater Group

2 P.M., Sunday, Nov. 11,  
North Shore Music Circus, in Beverly  
Preceded by lunch at Kelly’s Roast Beef, in Danvers.

A story of irresponsible gamblers, Salvation Army do-gooders, night club entertainers, eccentrics, nonconformists, and various categories of jerks.

This musical comedy was one of the greatest successes that Broadway has known. Winning six Tony Awards, it had a run of 1,200 performances commencing in 1950, followed by five revivals for an additional 1,534 performances.

Great music and lyrics by Frank Loesser and hilarious book by Abe Burrows and Jo Swerling.

This popular show is not to be missed.

Please contact Sandy Phillips for further information, at sandy@zoomeasy.com
CAMPUS CULTURAL CALENDAR
compiled by Susan Posner

Except as noted, tickets are free.
Tickets may be purchased by telephone at 781-736-3400 ($2 handling fee)
or at the Shapiro Campus Center box office, which opens at noon, Mon.–Sat.
or on-line at brandeis.edu/tickets

SLOSBERG MUSIC CENTER

Sun., Nov. 4 (3 P.M.)
Barbara Cassidy Band
Eric Chasalow and Bob Nieske, Brandeis faculty
Pesky J. Nixon, Dave Mattacks, Goody Goodrich, and
Peter Mulvey, guests
Americana music with some jazz and pop mixed in
$40 and $20 (proceeds benefit hunger relief)

Wed., Nov. 14 (noon)
Lydian String Quartet
Preview of the Nov. 17 concert, in the atrium of the
Mandel Center for the Humanities

Sat., Nov. 17 (8 P.M. concert, 7 P.M. talk)
Lydian String Quartet
Mozart Quartet in D minor, K. 421
Harold Meltzer Aqua
Beethoven Quartet in A minor, Op. 132
$15 for BOLLI members

Sun., Nov. 18 (3 P.M.)
Kaleidoscope
Jill Dreeben and friends
Program for strings and woodwinds to be announced
Ticket prices to be announced

SPINGOLD THEATER CENTER

Nov. 16–17 (8 P.M.) and Nov. 17–18 (2 P.M.)
A King of Infinite Space—Hamlet in a Nutshell
Created and directed by Marya Lowry
Guest artist Kate Kohler Amory

This innovative encounter with Shakespeare’s melancholy Dane incorporates movement,
music, martial arts, sound, and song. The collaboration seeks to explore the flesh, blood, and bones of life in
Elsinore through the shards and fragments of the lives of its well-known players.

Nov. 29–Dec. 1 (8 P.M.) and Dec. 1–2 (2 P.M.)
The Glass Menagerie
Written by Tennessee Williams
Directed by Paula Plum

Characters drown in denial and illusion as an antidote to the pain of truth. In the character of Amanda Wingfield, Williams draws a portrait of a desperate woman refusing to accept the reality of her daughter’s crippling introversion and her son’s impotent artistic yearnings. It is a “memory play,” in which the characters are haunted by broken dreams yet still cling to the dreams of happiness, success, status, and, ultimately, salvation.
$5 for BOLLI members.

ROSE ART MUSEUM

Tue., Nov. 13 (5 P.M.)
Mary Ann Caws: “Looking After Surrealism: Objects, Parodies, and Obsessions”
An internationally respected scholar, she has written on surrealist and modernist art and literature and translated writers and poets such as André Breton, René Char, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Tristan Tzara.